



Serving the communities of Baker, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Nassau, Putnam and St. Johns Counties

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1. Applicant Identification

Northeast Florida Regional Council
100 Festival Park Avenue
Jacksonville, FL 32202

R04-24-A-006

2. Funding Requested

- a. Assessment Grant Type: Community-wide
- b. Federal Funds Requested: \$500,000

3. Location

- a) Welaka (Putnam Co.) & Green Cove Springs (Clay Co.)
- b) Clay & Putnam Counties
- c) Florida

4. Target Area and Priority Site Information

- **Target Areas:** Putnam County and Clay County
 - **Census Tracts:** 12019031400, 12019031500, and 12107951300
- **Priority Sites:**
 - Putnam County: Former St. Johns River Crab Company, 1 Palmetto Street, Welaka, FL 32193 (Census Tract 12107951300)
 - Clay County: Reynolds Park/Marina, 1063 Bulkhead Road, Green Cove Springs, FL 32043 (Census Tracts 12019031400, 12019031500)

5. Contacts

a. Project Director

Jack Shad, Economic Development Project Manager
904-699-5694
jshad@nefrc.org
100 Festival Park Avenue, Jacksonville, FL 32202

b. Chief Executive/Highest Ranking Elected Official

Elizabeth Payne, AICP, Chief Executive Officer
904-233-0423
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6. Population

Clay County: Green Cove Springs: 9,784

Putnam County: Welaka: 723

(US Census: 2017–2021 American Community Survey)

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. | NA |
| The priority site(s) is impacted by mine-scarred land. | NA |
| The priority site(s) is adjacent to a body of water (i.e., the border of the priority site(s) is contiguous or partially contiguous to the body of water, or would be contiguous or partially contiguous with a body of water but for a street, road, or other public thoroughfare separating them). | 1, 2 |
| The priority site(s) is in a federally designated flood plain. | 2, 3 |
| The reuse of the priority site(s) will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy. | 3 |
| The reuse of the priority site(s) will incorporate energy efficiency measures. | 3 |
| The proposed project will improve local climate adaptation/mitigation capacity and resilience to protect residents and community investments. | 3, 4 |
| At least 30% or more 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). | NA |
| 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. | NA |

8. Letter from the State or Tribal Environmental Authority

See attached.

9. Releasing Copies of Applications

Not Applicable.

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FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF Environmental Protection

Bob Martinez Center
2600 Blair Stone Road
Tallahassee, FL 32399-2400

Ron DeSantis
Governor

Jeanette Nuñez
Lt. Governor

Shawn Hamilton
Secretary

October 03, 2023

Esmeralda Vargas
Brownfields Program
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
61 Forsyth Street, S.W. 10th Floor
Atlanta, GA 30303-8960
Vargas.Esmeralda@epa.gov

Dear Ms. Vargas:

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (Department) acknowledges and supports the Northeast Florida Regional Council's Brownfields grant application for a Community-Wide Hazardous Substance and Petroleum or Petroleum Products Assessment Grant. The Department understands that this application has been prepared in accordance with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) guidance document EPA-OLEM-OBLR-23-12, titled "Guidelines for Brownfields Assessment Grants." This letter of acknowledgement addresses the requirement for a "Letter from the State or Tribal Environmental Authority," described in SECTION IV.D.8. EPA Brownfields grant funding will strengthen the Council's cleanup and redevelopment efforts. This federal grant effort also supports Florida's Brownfields Redevelopment Act and the Department's role in administration of site rehabilitation of contaminated sites.

The Department encourages EPA grant recipients to use the incentives and resources available through Florida's Brownfields Redevelopment Program with EPA grant funding to enhance the success of their Brownfields project. The Department recommends that the Council consider including Brownfields sites or areas that could potentially receive federal funding in a state-designated Brownfield area. The Council is also encouraged to contact Darrin McKeehen, P.G., the Northeast District Brownfields Coordinator, at (904) 256-1545 to learn more about the Florida Brownfields Redevelopment Program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Billy Hessman".

Billy Hessman, P.G., Environmental Manager
Brownfields and CERCLA Site Screening Section

BH/jc

cc:

Jack Shad, Northeast Florida Regional Council – jshad@nefrc.org

Elizabeth Payne, Northeast Florida Regional Council – epayne@nefrc.org

Kyle Hayes, Terracon – kyle.hayes@terracon.com

Darrin McKeehen, P.G., DEP Northeast District – darrin.mckeehen@floridadep.gov



**Northeast Florida Regional Council
FY24 Brownfields Assessment Grant
Narrative**

1. PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION AND PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION

a. Target Area and Brownfields i. Overview of Brownfield Challenges and Description of Target Area: The Northeast Florida Regional Council (Council) is a dynamic network of local governance serving seven counties (Baker, **Clay**, Duval, Flagler, **Putnam**, Nassau, and St. Johns) and 26 municipalities since 1977. The Council facilitates communication, coordination, and collaboration with public and private stakeholders throughout Northeast Florida and assists municipal and county staff with local planning and development efforts. The Council is the designated Economic Development District and covers 4,428 square miles with a population of approximately 1.5 million. Although major urban centers exist in and around Jacksonville, most of the area is rural/agricultural with industrial and commercial pockets. As populations across Florida increase, these small communities must deal with legacy contamination left behind by agriculture and commercial industry operations. Citrus producers and processors, cotton growers and processors, cattle ranching, river and port traffic, and industrial manufacturing once served the area, **creating legacy brownfield challenges throughout the region.** The area served by the Council is too large for practical implementation of area-wide assessments. For the purposes of this grant application, Duval County is excluded from the purview of the Council's request for funding as they are pursuing their own Brownfields Grant. The **geographic boundary** of this grant will be Baker, Clay, Flagler, Putnam, Nassau, and St. Johns counties. The Council has selected **two target areas (TA) for this Community-wide Assessment Grant** focused within Putnam and Clay Counties. The **first target area** in Putnam County is **Weleka**, consisting of **Census Tract (CT) 12107951300, a Justice40 disadvantaged community.** The **second target area** in Clay County is **Green Cove Springs (GCS)**, consisting of CTs 12019031400 and 12019031500. These areas were chosen due to strong redevelopment/growth potential that has been stifled by **low-income, high poverty, and unemployment disparities of the underserved communities** that are further exacerbated by deteriorating conditions and environmental concerns. The TAs are connected by and were developed as a result of the historic St. Johns River, providing a strong and historical economic benefit. But industries that once flourished in these areas are no longer viable and have left behind decades of misuse. Current and future industry based on tourism and suburban sprawl and influenced by infrastructure projects are now creating significant opportunity for redevelopment that will benefit these communities. The goal of this grant will be to direct funding toward assessment and cleanup planning for catalytic sites that have the greatest potential for revitalization within the underserved communities, thereby fostering local redevelopment, creation of jobs, and increased wages for citizens to help change the cycle of poverty.

ii. Description of the Priority Brownfield Site(s): Within the target areas, portions of the communities have fallen into states of disrepair and neglect. Based on a review of the state's online databases, over 150 documented sites pose potential threats to human health and the environment based on historical uses related to commercial/industrial manufacturing plants, marinas and boatyards, logging industry, fisheries, service stations and garages, citrus farms, military installments, and mining operations. These former uses have negatively impacted the environment and contributed to soil and groundwater contamination associated with a myriad of contaminants of concern including but not limited to **polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), volatile organic hydrocarbons (VOCs), pesticides, herbicides, metals, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), asbestos-containing materials (ACMs), and per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS).** The Council intends to identify and prioritize brownfield properties during an inventory process that will include city/county residents and staff, as well as project partners. Two properties,

which are ideally located along the St. Johns River, have been identified as catalytic sites and cornerstones for target-area redevelopment.

The first priority site is the **Marina St. Johns/Former St. Johns River Crab Company**. This privately owned 0.25-acre property operated as a fish and crab processing and canning facility from 1897 to 1974. With its waterfront property along the St. Johns River in Welaka (**federal flood zone AE**), it was a major economic driver for the community. The facility has undergone several partial restorations and renovations and has operated as an infrequently open restaurant for the past few years, being used mainly for storage. The property contains a 2,500 sq. ft. residential structure and a 2,500 sq. ft. commercial structure, both built in 1940, and a covered dock. Based on the long-term historical commercial use, the **potential exists for soil and groundwater contamination** at the site related to petroleum products (fuel oils, gasoline, diesel, and hydraulic fluid) used to power various aspects of the processing plant. Based on the age of the structures, **ACMs are incorporated into the building. Site access for assessment has been obtained.** Redevelopment plans for this property include a restaurant and bar with marina-style boat access and potential inclusion of adjacent off-site resort-style accommodations.

The second priority site is the **Reynolds Park/Marina**. Reynolds Park is located along the St. Johns River in GCS and has been an operational marina and boatyard for decades (**federal flood zone AE**). The marina property is part of a large 1,632-acre parcel owned by the Clay County Port that not only includes the marina but also an adjacent airfield. Portions of the marina are being used currently, while other areas have remained vacant for years. The marina and surrounding waterfront area was originally developed and used by the US Navy to berth over 600 ships on 13 1,500-foot piers. The marina site includes various office buildings and warehouses along with outdoor laydown yards, transfer rail lines, and various industrial equipment. Due to the various historical uses, documented releases have required cleanup on surrounding adjacent properties,¹ and the site has a **high risk for soil/groundwater and sediment contamination associated with petroleum products, pesticides/herbicides, PCBs, and metals**. There is also a **strong possibility for PFAS impacts** stemming from the historical use of the overall site for military aviation purposes and the use of firefighting foams. **Site access for assessment has been obtained.**

iii. **Identifying Additional Sites:** The Council will focus on identifying sites for assessment throughout the target areas. An in-depth, grant-funded site inventory and evaluation ranking criteria process (Budget Task 2) will be created as the Council works with TA residents to identify and prioritize sites within the underserved community. Those properties will be researched further by Council staff using the property appraiser's website. The evaluation criteria used to determine which sites are added to the inventory will be based on community need, project partner and resident input, Climate Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST), and US Census data to ensure underserved communities are benefiting from the project. In the event all TA sites have been addressed with grant funding, **the Council will work with project partners and residents throughout their geographic boundary to identify abandoned and underused properties**. The Council knows there are many underused /abandoned properties with the potential to experience brownfield-related challenges in redevelopment. Once identified, the Council will apply the already established evaluation ranking criteria (based on need of the underserved) to determine the order in which the additional sites will be addressed.

b. Revitalization of the Target Area i. **Reuse Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans:** The Council is seeking brownfield funding for Putnam County to create jobs and facilities/services as a public benefit for this **underserved** community (**Justice40 disadvantaged community**).

¹ <https://prodenv.dep.state.fl.us/DepNexus/public/searchPortal>

Revitalization of Welaka aligns directly with the **Putnam County Comprehensive Plan**, which includes a focus on vacant and undeveloped lands with environmental sensitivity. Last year, Welaka was awarded \$46,000 in state funds to plan for community growth and employment attraction. This plan is currently being developed, and Brownfields Grant dollars will work in concert with these efforts. The Council has also identified Green Cove Springs in Clay County as needing the considerable revitalization outlined in their **Community Visioning Plan**, which details the promotion of a business-friendly environment throughout the City with emphasis on supporting redevelopment of Reynolds Park. Enhancement of the Riverfront is a key component of the **GCS Economic Development Element**.² The selected priority sites, **Former St. Johns River Crab Company and the Reynolds Park/Marina**, will support redevelopment strategies that incorporate equitable development and sustainable practice/livability principles. The **Former St. Johns River Crab Company** priority site has parties interested in redeveloping the site as a restaurant. The redevelopment of this site into a thriving business that creates local jobs will be ideal for the community and aligns with the **Putnam County Comprehensive Plan**. The **Reynolds Park/Marina** priority site is a prime redevelopment location for mixed-use commercial and residential needs. Over the years, the site has drawn various redevelopment interests, but nothing has materialized due to the site's associated environmental stigma. For this reason, coupled with the newly developed and adjacent beltway, the site was included as a priority project in the **2018 GCS Community Visioning Plan**. These two sites are best suited to capitalize on current growth and development interest opportunities within the respective communities.

ii. Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategy: The anticipated reuse of the two priority sites (former **St. Johns River Crab Company and Reynolds Park/Marina**) in the TA aligns with various revitalization plans and will create an **economic benefit** of new **jobs/income sources**. Redevelopment is **anticipated to provide jobs** that will directly benefit residents. The Council's goal is to transform these areas of historical industrial blight into anchors for community redevelopment and thus foster outside capital investment. The resulting tax revenues will allow for the completion of additional projects throughout the target areas, which will facilitate continued revitalization. To promote sustainability, the **Putnam County Comprehensive Plan** encourages the incorporation of **energy conservation and efficiency** in future land use as required by Florida Legislature HB 697.³ **Renewable energy options** will be incorporated throughout the planned reuse where appropriate, especially in any development of green space throughout the target area. The **GCS Economic Development Plan** calls for incorporation of sustainable ecotourism to support the use and protection of the river while creating commerce.⁴ **Redevelopment will also take flood mitigation into consideration since the priority sites are located in a flood plain** and both areas are involved in current Vulnerability Assessments for future resiliency and mitigation funding requests.

Not only is environmental contamination a threat to these communities, but so also is sea level rise, which is projected to rise one foot by 2050 according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA) data and is expected to impact the communities along the St. Johns River. As such, these communities need redevelopment that takes into account resiliency strategies. The negative effects of **climate change** in the form of more frequent or **extreme weather events** are often magnified by the realities of poverty, an **underserved** population, and an impoverished local economy. The economic benefits of this project will give residents greater financial resources in new jobs and the communities an increased local tax base which will allow

² Economic Development Element, Goal 9, Develop Economic Development Strategy

³ Putnam County Comprehensive Plan, Future Land Use Element

⁴ Greencovesprings.com/comprehensive-plan

for a better local resilience to the effects of climate change. By instituting their collective revitalization plans and facilitating site reuse, the **underserved communities** within the TAs will gain a platform to **overcome the environmental justice issues** intertwined in their communities.

c. Strategy for Leveraging Resources i. Resources Needed for Site Reuse: The Council is eligible to apply for county, state, and federal grant funding. The Council and the counties included in their purview are making every effort to secure additional funding to further their Brownfield Program redevelopment goals and are currently pursuing and have already discussed funding opportunities with agency representatives. Funding will be sought from the US Economic Development Administration Public Works Grant for up to 50% match for infrastructure projects that create jobs to benefit the community, to include demolition of remediated brownfield sites with emphasis on affordable housing. The Council will apply for funding for boating access projects and other boating related activities on coastal/inland waters of Florida (Former St. Johns River Crab Co. & Reynolds Park/Marina) through the Florida Game and Fish Commission's Boating Improvement Programs. Competitive Florida Partnership Grants through the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity will be pursued for communities to market areas to developers and investors (Reynolds Park/Marina). As sites within the TAs are identified for cleanup, the Council will seek EPA Brownfield Cleanup Grant funding for remediation. Tax incentives such as the Opportunity Zones and use of Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) Brownfields Site Rehabilitation Agreements will be used by the Council and developers. Additionally, to assist in roads, streets, and bridge repairs and drainage improvements, funding will be pursued through the Florida Department of Transportation Small County Outreach Program.

ii. Use of Existing Infrastructure: The existing infrastructure (sewer, water, power, roads) throughout the target areas are suitable for redevelopment activities. Some of the counties within the region have made capital improvements over the past few years and are collectively working to use additional funding through state and federal grant opportunities/local taxes as improvements are needed to support redevelopment. The infrastructure currently in place for the priority sites will allow for immediate development.

2. COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

a. Community Need i. The Community's Need for Funding: The target areas are communities in need of revitalization. The **population of Welaka TA is 3,621 with a per capita income of \$23,862 and median household income of \$43,077.**⁵ GCS TA **population is 8,720 with a per capita income of \$27,817 and median household income of \$51,611**, significantly less than the US average (per capita \$37,638; median household \$69,021).⁵ Because of **low incomes and a small tax base** that impedes tax increases and translates to stagnant communities, these communities simply do not have the funds to assess brownfield sites on their own. The communities' limited funds are vital to maintaining the infrastructure and providing required capital improvements. Due to limited tax revenue, small population, and low incomes, the areas included in this grant request cannot afford to conduct brownfields assessments on their own, but the EPA funding can help identify contaminants and reduce the threats to residents through assessment, remediation, and redevelopment in the target areas.

ii. Threats to Sensitive Populations (1) Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations: Within the target areas, the sensitive populations include **non-white minorities, elderly, impoverished, those on government assistance, and lack of housing**. The target areas deal with **welfare issues such as low income, high unemployment, reliance on government assistance, and lower education attainment levels**. The percentage of families and people whose **income is below the**

⁵ US Census: 2017–2021 American Community Survey

the poverty level in the target area illustrates the need for revitalization. In GCS the percentage of people with a bachelor’s degree or higher is 26%, indicating a significant need for creation of lower skilled/trade focused jobs and affordable housing to compliment the area’s low-income levels.⁶ The Council will place strong emphasis for target-area brownfield funding on local job creation that will have a dramatic impact on the residents of the target-area communities. These communities have visible areas of blight, including vacant properties and run-down buildings, that mirror the plight of the residents themselves. The priority sites are expected to serve as catalytic anchors for redevelopment in their respective communities, helping to create jobs, increase incomes, and revitalize the blighted communities with modern land-planning initiatives that consider resiliency. By securing this Grant and promoting brownfield redevelopment opportunities, the Council will send a signal to developers and brownfields stakeholders that there is not just local but federal support for revitalization in these promising areas. Threats to residents will be reduced by bringing these sites to the public’s attention, completing assessments that identify the presence and extent of contamination, and directing remediation and redevelopment through engineering and/or institutional controls.

| | Weleka TA | GCS TA | US ⁶ |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|--------|-----------------|
| Population over 62 | 33% | 24% | 20% |
| Non-White Minorities | 70% | 17% | 32% |
| SNAP/Food Stamps | 20% | 17% | 11% |
| All families in poverty | 15% | 13% | 9% |
| All family’s w/ children 18 and younger in poverty | 27% | 19% | 14% |
| Female head of household w/ children 18 and younger in poverty | 40% | 46% | 34% |
| Unemployment Rate | 6% | 6% | 5.5% |
| Pop. over 25 less than 9 th grade education | 6% | 8% | 4.8% |
| Pop. over 25 less than high school education | 10% | 11% | 6% |

(2) Greater Than Normal Incidence of Disease and Adverse Health Conditions: The pervasiveness of brownfield sites throughout the TAs carries a high propensity for contaminants to cause health concerns for the sensitive target-area populations. The census tracts within the six counties included in this grant application have higher average mortality rates for certain diseases than the state mortality rates, illustrating the health complications of economically and environmentally vulnerable populations. **Asthma** hospitalizations in the target area totaled 239, with 860 emergency room visits in Clay County and 379 in Putnam County in 2021.⁷ The asthma health values within the priority site TAs are 8.9 and 9.5, above the state average of 8.7.⁷ The **cancer** health indicator within the priority site target areas is in the **54th and 97th percentiles** in the US.⁸ Within the target areas, the average **cancer** incidence rate per **100,000 is 485.83**, compared to the state of Florida’s rate of 453.9.⁷ The impacted media at the priority sites is directly associated with petroleum products and contaminants that are highly carcinogenic. Additionally, buildings like that of the Former St. Johns River Crab Co. include ACMs that further exacerbate these health conditions. The number of hospitalizations from diabetes was a staggering 335 within Putnam County alone compared to the rate of 208.5 per 100,000 for Florida.⁷ **Infant mortality rates** per 1,000 live births within Putnam County (**rate of 9.8**) and St. Johns County (**rate of 7.1**) are higher than the infant mortality rate at the state level (rate of 5.9).⁷ The economic redevelopment opportunities provided through the assessment and remediation of potential contaminants within these targeted census tracts have the potential to reduce cancer, diabetes, and infant mortality rates

⁶ US Census 2017–2021 ACS
⁷ Floridatracking.com/healthtracking
⁸ US EPA EJ Screen Report

over time. By identifying contaminants at brownfield sites throughout the blighted target-area communities through EPA Brownfield funding, threats to the sensitive populations' health will be reduced and opportunities for healthier lives will be made possible.

(3) Environmental Justice (a) Identification of Environmental Justice Issues: The TA suffers from **environmental justice** (EJ) disadvantages correlated to **low income, persistent poverty, and distressed neighborhoods**, which directly impact the non-white minority (African Americans & Latino) and aging populations who make up a significant proportion of target-area residents. The TAs suffer from unemployment rates in the **63rd and 66th** percentile in the US.⁹ Blight and the suspected environmentally impacted properties have created **distressed neighborhoods** that have **decreased taxable revenue and reduced the ability to market properties for redevelopment**. The TA communities are prime examples of **marginalized underserved communities**, as defined by the **Justice40 Initiative**, and desperately need the benefits of the covered programs designed to provide direct investments. **In fact, the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) has categorized CT 9513 as overburdened and underserved.** Priority site redevelopment will spawn ancillary redevelopment, which will in turn create jobs and tax revenues.

(b) Advancing Environmental Justice: The Brownfield Grant funds will be instrumental in combating the disadvantages these communities are most impacted by. The EPA Brownfield Grant Program will reduce and reverse **EJ impacts** by identifying contaminants through site assessment, allowing for remediation and subsequent redevelopment that will increase taxable revenue and property values and provide jobs and income sources. The priority site redevelopment within the target areas will promote outside investment in these communities. Funding from this Grant will affirm the EPA's commitment to address the **EJ disparities** in this area and will invigorate public engagement and dialogue in its planning and development efforts. Tackling these EJ concerns will facilitate a shift away from the former commercial/industrial practices that no longer serve the area to uses that directly benefit the immediate underserved community. **The redevelopment of the target area, and specifically the priority sites, will not displace residents or businesses.**

b. Community Engagement i. Project Involvement & ii. Project Roles:

| Name of Org. | Point of Contact | Specific involvement in the project or assistance provided |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Community Advisory Council (Welaka) | Jessica Finch, Chair 904-467-9800 | Council of citizens who solicit ideas from the community on how to improve Welaka. Will work to obtain public input and assist with site inventory & selection and future reuse planning. |
| GFWC Woman's Club of Welaka | Peggy McAninch 386-546-0588 | An international women's organization dedicated to community improvement. Will assist with the community outreach and site prioritization. |
| Rotary Club of Green Cove Springs | Don Fann, President 904-269-8630 | Business and professional leadership club dedicated to community service. Will assist community outreach and site inventory. |
| Village Improvement Association GCS | Larianne Stutts 904-284-3666 | Women's club dedicated to community improvement. Will gather input from the community and promote outreach. |

iii. Incorporating Community Input: The Council will work with county and city staff to identify stakeholder groups and determine the most influential pathways to directly interact/communicate with the underserved communities, especially those most affected by the project, within the target area regarding the goals of the Brownfield Program, as well as demonstrate the results. The Council will gather and respond to public input quarterly for determining which projects to pursue and will provide responses to the public via in-person meetings and webpage postings. The Council will work to create a **Brownfields Advisory Committee (BAC)**, made up of target-area residents, professionals, project partners, and business owners from each county. These citizens will be

⁹ US EPA EJ Screen Report

recruited based on their engagement in current civic and business organizations and will lead these efforts. A **Community Involvement Plan (CIP)** will be created, relying on input from the BAC/community, and will outline the planned engagement activities, programming schedule, and key players. The adopted CIP will be made available for public review at county offices. Planned public meetings will be held throughout the target areas and ADA accessible locations such as county offices and public venues. Options will be provided for virtual meetings for those who are unable or wish to not attend in person. Online meeting options will be made available to ensure those without access to direct involvement can participate. The Council will gather community input and document it in meeting minutes, which will be reviewed during quarterly meetings. The Council aims to work with each county to ensure information regarding the Brownfields Program is posted on their individual webpages. The Council will also work to post material and updates, including community meeting input and outcomes, on their website. Website content and public outreach materials will be developed during the first quarter of the grant, with postings/information refreshed monthly. Planned community meetings will be held over seven meetings throughout the target areas during the course of the grant. The Council will also report results through its Board of Directors, made up of 35 elected officials and other stakeholders from throughout the region. The Council’s goals for community involvement efforts are to give the public accessible, accurate, and timely information; ensure adequate opportunity for meaningful participation and for input to be considered; reflect community concerns, questions, and information needs in program activities and decisions; and respect and fully consider public input throughout the process.

3. TASK DESCRIPTIONS, COST ESTIMATES, AND MEASURING PROGRESS

a. Description of Tasks/Activities and Outputs: The Council is requesting \$500,000 in funding to implement this project based on the brownfield sites in the target area (discussed in 1.a.ii.) and the additional sites that will be found during the site inventory task.

| | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Task 1: Outreach | |
| i. | <i>Project Implementation:</i> The Council’s Brownfield (BF) Project Director will develop a Community Involvement Plan (CIP), outreach materials, BF Project website, and social media posts with the assistance of the environmental contractor (EC). Council staff will lead the community meetings to keep the public informed about project plans and updates. Supplies are budgeted for the printing of outreach materials (brochures/handouts) and office supplies to manage the grant. |
| ii. | <i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> CIP created within 3 months of award (upon completion, a more concrete schedule will follow). Community meetings held during the 1 st , 4 th , 6 th , 8 th , 10 th , 12 th , and 14 th quarters. Website and outreach materials created in the 1 st quarter and posted quarterly throughout the grant. |
| iii. | <i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> NERFC: Jack Shad, Econ. Dev. Project Manager, Brownfield (BF) Project Director |
| iv. | <i>Outputs:</i> CIP, Brownfield Website, 7 Community Meetings, Brochures/Handouts, Social Media Posts, Summary of Community Meetings in EPA required Quarterly Reports. |
| Task 2: Site Inventory | |
| i. | <i>Project Implementation:</i> The Council’s BF Project Director will work with the target-area residents during community meetings to create a thorough site inventory for assessment. Abandoned and underused properties identified by the target-area residents will be researched further by the Council and their EC, using a combination the property appraiser’s website, FDEP online MapDirect tool, and available county GIS data. Once a list is compiled, the EC will work with Council staff to create an evaluation ranking tool to determine with the help of residents the order in which the sites will be addressed, focusing first on helping the underserved population. |
| ii. | <i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> Outreach meeting held 1 st quarter will continue the preliminary inventory process that began with this application. Evaluation ranking process begins 2 nd quarter and continues throughout grant. |
| iii. | <i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> NERFC: Jack Shad, Econ. Dev. Project Manager, BF Project Director |

| | |
|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| iv. | <i>Outputs:</i> Evaluation Ranking Tool, Site Inventory List |
| Task 3: Assessment | |
| i. | <i>Project Implementation:</i> The EC will conduct Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) activities at sites selected and ranked through the Site Inventory Task (starting with two priority sites listed in the application). ASTM-AAI compliant Phase Is; Generic Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP); Phase IIs, which will include the SS-QAPP. Prior to assessment, site access agreements and property eligibility determinations approval will be obtained. |
| ii. | <i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> Assessments begin the 2 nd quarter and continue throughout the grant. |
| iii. | <i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> The EC will implement the technical aspects of the project with oversight from the Council: Monica Dominguez, Economic Development Program Manager; BF Project Technical Lead. |
| iv. | <i>Outputs:</i> 23 Phase I ESAs, 1 Generic QAPP, 9 Phase II ESAs including SS-QAPP, Site Access Agreements and Property Eligibility Determinations. |
| Task 4: Remediation/Reuse Planning | |
| i. | <i>Project Implementation:</i> For projects identified for cleanup, the EC will prepare the Analysis for Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA) and/or Cleanup Plans. Cleanup planning will include evaluating cleanup alternatives, calculating cleanup costs, and determining site-appropriate remediation and/or reuse planning to reduce health/environmental risks. The EC will assist the Council in hosting visioning sessions for key properties. A planner will assist with the creation of a Brownfield Revitalization Plan for the region. |
| ii. | <i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> Plans & Vision Sessions begin in the 6 th quarter, continue throughout the grant. |
| iii. | <i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> The EC will implement the technical aspects of the project with oversight from the Council: Monica Dominguez, Economic Development Program Manager; BF Project Technical Lead. |
| iv. | <i>Outputs:</i> 6 ABCAs, 2 Vision Sessions, 1 Brownfield Revitalization Plan |
| Task 5: Programmatic Support | |
| i. | <i>Project Implementation:</i> The Council will procure an EC to assist with the Brownfield Grant Project. The Council's BF Project Manager will oversee grant implementation and administration to ensure compliance with the EPA Cooperative Agreement Work Plan, schedule, and terms and conditions. The EC will assist the Council in completing ACRES Database Reporting, Yearly Financial Reporting, Quarterly Reporting, MBE/WBE Forms, and all additional Programmatic Support for the four-year term of the grant. Council staff travel budget allows for two staff members to attend three national/regional/grantee brownfield training events. |
| ii. | <i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> ACRES Reporting begins in the 1 st quarter, and Quarterly Reporting begins in the 2 nd quarter and continues throughout the grant project. Annual Reporting and Forms created in the 5 th , 9 th , and 13 th quarters and during final closeout. |
| iii. | <i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> NERFC: Jack Shad, Econ. Dev. Project Manager, BF Project Director |
| iv. | <i>Outputs:</i> ACRES Database Reporting, 4 Annual Financial Reports, 16 Quarterly Reports, 4 MBE/WBE Forms, Programmatic Support for the four-year grant period. Two staff to attend three conferences. |

b. Cost Estimates: Below are the anticipated project cost estimates *based on past brownfield projects as determined by local market standards with contractual hourly rates based on the skills needed for the specific tasks.* The budget for this project includes personnel, fringe, travel, supplies, and contractual costs only. Personnel pay rates average \$92.23 per hour and fringe rate 37.62%. **Sixty-three (63)% of the budget will be spent on site specific work through the Assessment Task.** **Task 1 Outreach:** Personnel: Community Involvement Plan \$3,689 (40hrs); Brownfield Website, Outreach Brochure/Handouts, Social Media Posts \$3,228 (35hrs); 7 Community Educational Meetings \$6,456 (\$935 per mtg; 10 hours per meeting to include preparation and execution). Contractual: Community Involvement Plan Review & Assistance \$1,000 (\$100 x 10hrs), Community Meeting Assistance \$1,000 (\$100 x 10hrs). Supplies: Outreach Supplies (maps, postage, ink, paper, printouts, software) \$505. **Task 2 Site Inventory:** Personnel: \$1,845 (20hrs). Contractual: Site Inventory & Evaluation Ranking Tool \$9,000 (\$125 x 72hrs). **Task 3 Assessment:** Personnel: Report Review \$3,044 (1hr per report; 33 reports). Contractual: 23 Phase

I ESAs \$3,500 each for a total of \$80,500; 1 Generic QAPP \$4,500; 9 Phase II ESAs including SS-QAPP at \$25,000 each for a total of \$225,000. **Task 4 Remediation/Reuse Planning:** Personnel: 2 Vision Sessions \$5,534 (\$2,767 per session; 30hrs per event prep and delivery), ABCA and Planning Document Reviews \$738 (2hr per report; 4 reports). Contractual: 4 ABCAs \$24,000 (\$6,000 each); 2 Vision Sessions \$4,000 (\$2,000/meeting); 1 Brownfields Revitalization Plan \$70,000 (Planner: \$150 x 200hrs; Market Analysts: \$125 x 170hrs; Environmental Professional: \$125 x 150hrs). **Task 5 Programmatic Support:** Personnel: ACRES Database Reporting, Yearly & Quarterly Reporting, MBE/WBE Forms, Programmatic Support for the four-year grant period \$23,058 (250hrs). Contractual: Quarterly Reporting assistance \$3,000 (\$100 x 30hrs). Travel: \$12,000 (flights \$800, 3 nights hotel (\$300/night), incidentals and per diem at \$75/day [4 days] x 2 attendees x 3 events).

| Category | Tasks | | | | | Totals |
|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| | Outreach | Site Inventory | Assessment | Remediation/Reuse Planning | Programmatic Support | |
| Personnel | \$13,373 | \$1,845 | \$3,044 | \$6,272 | \$23,058 | \$47,592 |
| Fringe | \$5,031 | \$694 | \$1,145 | \$2,359 | \$8,674 | \$17,903 |
| Travel | | | | | \$12,000 | \$12,000 |
| Supplies | \$505 | | | | | \$505 |
| Contractual | \$2,000 | \$9,000 | \$310,000 | \$98,000 | \$3,000 | \$422,000 |
| Total Budget | \$20,909 | \$11,539 | \$314,189 | \$106,631 | \$46,732 | \$500,000 |

c. Plan to Measure and Evaluate Environmental Progress and Results: To ensure this EPA Brownfield Project is on schedule, the Council’s internal Brownfields Team, which will include the consultant, will meet quarterly to track all **outputs identified in 3.a.** using an Excel spreadsheet and will report all progress in fulfilling the scope of work, goals, and objectives to the EPA via quarterly reports. The BAC will be consulted to ensure assessments align with identified sites. Project expenditures and activities will be compared to the projects schedule to ensure the grant project will be completed within the four-year time frame. Site specific information will be entered and tracked in the ACRES database. The outputs to be tracked include the number of neighborhood meetings, public meetings, meetings with community groups and community partners, environmental assessments, ABCAs, and cleanup redevelopment plans. The tracked outcomes include community participation, acres assessed, acres ready for reuse, redevelopment dollars leveraged, and jobs created. In the event the project is not being achieved in an efficient manner, the Council has countermeasures in place to address this problem. The Council will make monthly calls to their EPA Project Officer and, if needed, will create an EPA Corrective Action Plan.

4. PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE

a. Programmatic Capability i. Organizational Capacity, ii. Organizational Structure, & iii. Description of Key Staff: The Council was formed in 1977 by an interlocal agreement pursuant to Chapter 163, Florida Statutes. Chapter 186, Florida Statutes, states that Regional Planning Councils are quasi-governmental organizations created pursuant to Florida Statutes 186.501–186.515 to exercise responsibilities under Florida Statutes 186.001–186.031 and 186.801–186.901 in a particular region of the state. The Council serves seven counties (Baker, **Clay**, Duval, Flagler, **Putnam**, Nassau, and St. Johns) and 26 municipalities and is recognized as the Economic Development District (EDD) for NE FL. The Council has 18 employees who manage programs in community/urban planning, economic development, resiliency/environmental planning, emergency management, and healthcare, and it relies on a Board of Directors, made up of 35 elected officials and other stakeholders from throughout the region. **Jack Shad, Economic Development Project Manager**, will serve as **Brownfield Project Director** and manage the

overall grant. Mr. Shad is an urban planner and commercial real estate broker. His private sector work has focused on historic and infill redevelopment projects. He worked for the City of Jacksonville’s Planning and Development Department and led the Office of Public Parking from 2011 to 2015. Mr. Shad has four years of experience with the Council and in his current role is responsible for overseeing economic development initiatives and projects and interacting with governmental and community organizations. **Donna Starling, Chief Financial Officer**, will serve as the **Brownfield Project Financial Operations Manager**. Ms. Starling has worked for the Council for 29 years overseeing all aspects of Financial Services. As part of that oversight, she has managed the financial reporting requirements for numerous federal, state, and local grants and contracts. She will assist Mr. Shad with day-to-day management of the grant and be responsible for the timely and successful expenditure of funds and completion of administrative and financial requirements of the project. She will also be responsible for managing the grant finances and for all ASAP.gov drawdowns. **Ms. Monica Dominguez, Economic Development Program Manager**, will serve as the **Technical Lead**. Ms. Dominguez’s experience includes working with a hydroelectric utility and coordinating mining and forestry remediation projects. She has developed and implemented stakeholder engagement strategies as part of Environmental Assessments, supported environmental hearings, and negotiated Community Benefit Agreements. Ms. Dominguez has been with the Council for two years and serves as the Economic Development Program Manager. An environmental contractor will handle the technical portions of the project.

iv. Acquiring Additional Resources: The Council will procure a qualified environmental contractor and subcontractors to assist with technical and reporting aspects of the Brownfield Community-wide Assessment. Procurement procedures will comply with the local contracting and procurement process and also with EPA requirements for “Professional Service” including 2 CFR §§ 200 and 1500. The Council will promote strong practices, local/hiring, and will link members of the community to potential employment opportunities for all brownfield-related redevelopment via community outreach practices and project updates to project partners.

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 Council has received federal grants and has maintained a successful history of management through timely and accurate reporting. Examples include a **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)**: (\$700,000–12/9/21–12/9/25). This **ongoing** project analyzes various risks to develop recommendations and implement projects to mitigate impacts to infrastructure projection and essential clinical care service for the healthcare sector in the Region-3 Health Coalition Alliance in 18 counties. The Council also received funding from the **Economic Development Administration (EDA)**: Coronavirus Response, Recovery, and Long-Term Economic Resilience Planning for fiscal years 2020–2022 (\$400,000). The project provided funding to prepare a Regional Economic Resilience Plan through assessment of economic conditions resulting from the pandemic. All funds have been expended.

(2) Compliance with Grant Requirements: All terms and conditions of the awarding agencies were met on prior federal and nonfederal grants in a timely manner and in accordance with the designated workplan. No corrective measures were necessary. Reports and financials were submitted on time, and the completed grants have been closed. Mr. Shad and the Brownfield Team have the experience necessary of ensuring the successful and timely results of this Brownfield Project.



**Northeast Florida Regional Council
FY24 Brownfields Assessment Grant
Threshold Criteria & Attachments**

Threshold Criteria

1. Applicant Eligibility

- a. The Northeast Florida Regional Council (Council) was formed in 1977 by an interlocal agreement pursuant to and authorized by Chapter 163 Intergovernmental Programs and Chapter 186.504 Regional Planning Councils. The Council is a dynamic network of local governance serving seven counties (Baker, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Putnam, Nassau, and St. Johns). **Please see attached documents.** For the purposes of this grant application, Duval County is excluded from the purview of the Council's request for funding as they are pursuing their own Brownfields Grant.
- b. Northeast Florida Regional Council is not exempt from Federal taxation under section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code.

2. Community Involvement

The Council will work with county and city staff to identify stakeholder groups and determine the most influential pathways to directly interact/communicate with the underserved communities within the target area regarding the goals of the Brownfield Program, as well as demonstrate the results. The Council will gather and respond to public input quarterly for determining which projects to pursue and will provide responses to the public via in-person meetings and webpage postings. The Council will work to create a **Brownfields Advisory Committee (BAC)**, made up of target-area residents, professionals, project partners, and business owners from each county. These citizens will be recruited based on their engagement in current civic and business organizations and will lead these efforts. A **Community Involvement Plan (CIP)** will be created, relying on input from the BAC/community, and will outline the planned engagement activities, programming schedule, and key players. The adopted CIP will be made available for public review at county offices. Planned public meetings will be held throughout the target areas and ADA accessible locations such as county offices and public venues. Options will be provided for virtual meetings for those who are unable or wish to not attend in person. Online meeting options will be made available to ensure those without access to direct involvement can participate. The Council will gather community input and document it in meeting minutes, which will be reviewed during quarterly meetings. The Council aims to work with each county to ensure information regarding the Brownfields Program is posted on their individual webpages. The Council will also work to post material and updates, including community meeting input and outcomes, on their website. Website content and public outreach materials will be developed during the first quarter of the grant, with postings/information refreshed monthly. Planned community meetings will be held over seven meetings throughout the target areas during the course of the grant. The Council will also report results through its Board of Directors, made up of 35 elected officials and other stakeholders from throughout the region. The Council's goals for community involvement efforts are to give the public accessible, accurate, and timely information; ensure adequate opportunity for meaningful participation and for input to be considered; reflect community concerns, questions, and information needs in program activities and decisions; and respect and fully consider public input throughout the process.

3. Expenditure of Existing Grant Funds

The Council affirms that it does not have an open EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant or Multipurpose Grant.

4. Contractors and Named Subrecipients

Not Applicable.