



# TRI-COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

EST. 1958

1. Applicant Identification

Tri-County Regional Planning Commission  
456 Fulton Street, Suite 401  
Peoria, IL 61602

2. Funding Requested

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

3. Location

a) City of Peoria b) Peoria County c) State of Illinois

4. Target Area and Priority Site Information

Target Area: Southside Neighborhood, City of Peoria  
Census Tracts 17143000200, 17143000300, 17143000600, 17143000900, 17143004802,  
17143005000, 17143005100

Priority Sites:

Site 1: 1511 West Lincoln Avenue, Peoria, IL 61605

Site 2: 2727 West Krause Avenue, Peoria, IL 61605

5. Contacts

a. Project Director

Ray Lees, Planning Program Manager  
Tri-County Regional Planning Commission  
309-369-2867  
456 Fulton St., Suite 401  
Peoria, IL 61602  
rlees@tricitycountyrpc.org

b. Chief Executive/Highest Ranking Elected Official

Eric Miller, Executive Director  
Tri-County Regional Planning Commission  
309-673-9330  
456 Fulton St., Suite 401  
Peoria, IL 61602  
emiller@tricitycountyrpc.org

6. Population

City of Peoria, Illinois – 147,344 (US Census: 2017–2021 American Community Survey)



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## 7. Other Factors

<b>Other Factors</b>	<b>Page #</b>
Community population is 10,000 or less.	NA
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).	NA
The priority site(s) is in a federally designated flood plain.	1
The reuse of the priority site(s) will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy.	NA
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
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.	8, 9
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.	3

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

See attached.

## 9. Releasing Copies of Applications

Not Applicable.



# ILLINOIS ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

1021 NORTH GRAND AVENUE EAST, P.O. BOX 19276, SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS 62794-9276 • (217) 782-3397

JB PRITZKER, GOVERNOR

JOHN J. KIM, DIRECTOR

## **Subject: State Acknowledgement Letter for the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission FY2024 US EPA Brownfield Community Wide Assessment Grant Application**

10/18/2023

Tri-County Regional Planning Commission  
ATTN: Ray Lees  
Planning Program Manager  
Tri-County Regional Planning Commission  
456 Fulton Street  
Peoria, IL 61602

Dear Ray Lees,

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (Illinois EPA) has received your request for a letter of acknowledgement for an upcoming Community Wide Assessment Grant application to U.S. EPA. Tri-County Regional Planning Commission is applying for a \$500,000 Community Wide Assessment Grant.

The grant will be a Community Wide Assessment for Hazardous Substances and Petroleum.

Illinois EPA acknowledges Tri-County Regional Planning Commission's efforts to obtain federal Brownfields funds for this project. If you have any questions, I may be contacted at the above address or telephone numbers below, or at [Jacob.fink@illinois.gov](mailto:Jacob.fink@illinois.gov).

Sincerely,

Jacob Fink  
Brownfield Program Administrator  
Bureau of Land/Office of Site Evaluation  
Office# (217) 785-8726  
Cell# (217) 986-0818  
[Jacob.fink@illinois.gov](mailto:Jacob.fink@illinois.gov)



2125 S. First Street, Champaign, IL 61820 (217) 278-5800  
1101 Eastport Plaza Dr., Suite 100, Collinsville, IL 62234 (618) 346-5120  
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595 S. State Street, Elgin, IL 60123 (847) 608-3131

2309 W. Main Street, Suite 116, Marion, IL 62959 (618) 993-7200  
412 SW Washington Street, Suite D, Peoria, IL 61602 (309) 671-3022  
4302 N. Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103 (815) 987-7760



## 1. PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION AND PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION

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

Target Area: Peoria County (population 182,439), known as the “Heart of Illinois,” is in north-central Illinois and encompasses 629 square miles along the Illinois River. The County is comprised of 15 cities including the City of Peoria (eighth largest city in Illinois), which has a minority population of 34% with a high rate of poverty (14% vs. 9% in the US) and unemployment (9% vs. 6% in the US).<sup>1,2</sup> Because of its location on the Illinois River, in the 1800s Peoria was a major trade route and sparked an eager distilling industry that became the “Whiskey Capital of the World.” In 1854, Peoria also became the fourth largest regional hub in the American railroad system. Prohibition in 1920 suppressed the distilling industry, changing the business climate, though most distilleries reopened after Prohibition ended. Still, between 1981 and 1982, every distillery and brewery plant closed including distiller Hiram Walker, which employed 1,500 people, and Pabst, the nation’s fourth-largest brewery, putting another 750 people out of work. Beginning in the mid-1960s, annexation added new undeveloped land to the north side of the City. New development in these northern areas of Peoria brought more public investment in infrastructure and amenities, making these neighborhoods more appealing than the aging Southside, which was low-lying near the river and becoming disinvested. Households with financial wherewithal increasingly chose to move out of Southside to newer housing in other parts of the city, and over time, Southside experienced a growing concentration of households with incomes below the poverty line.

**The geographic boundary for this grant is Tri-County Regional Planning Commission’s (TCRPC) service area including Peoria, Tazewell, and Woodford Counties.** The target area (TA) in the City of Peoria has been identified as the **Southside Neighborhood** (Census Tracts [CTs] 2, 3, 6, 9, 48.02, 50, 51).<sup>3</sup> The 12.7-square-mile neighborhood is majority Black (52%) and living in poverty (51%), and **all seven CTs are identified as Justice40 Disadvantaged Communities**.<sup>1,4</sup> The Southside Neighborhood is in a low-lying area (including federally designated flood plains) cut off from the rest of the City by an abandoned industrial area and the Illinois River to the east, and a major highway, rail lines, and 50–100 foot bluffs to the west. In the Joint Commission on Racial Justice and Equity 2022, the study states that redlining started in the 1930s as Black families were systematically denied the right to purchase homes and live where they wanted. White landowners historically lived in the bluffs overlooking the valley where most working-class people lived. Those valleys in the Southside Neighborhood of Peoria experience severe blight and social problems today. It is the oldest neighborhood in Peoria and one of the most distressed in the nation. In addition, the TA is a food desert, and most of the community identified the need for grocery stores when responding to the open-ended development question for the Near Southside Housing Needs Assessment and Community Revitalization Plan.

In 2012, the Butternut Bread factory closed, resulting in over 100 jobs lost in the most underserved Southside Neighborhood. “The bakery served as an anchoring institution for the neighborhood. It was a place where you could work near where you lived. That’s what we lost,” said Robin Berry, housing development director for Peoria Citizens Committee for Economic Change. In 2017 Caterpillar Company moved its world headquarters out of Peoria after 90 years leaving thousands unemployed. Over the past several decades, Peoria’s population has been steadily decreasing due to two major factors: an aging population and the inability to attract new

<sup>1</sup> US Census: 2017–2021 American Community Survey

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.peoriacounty.gov/297/About-the-County#:~:text=Known%20as%20the%20Heart%20of, and%2028%20miles%20east%2F> Peoria County, Illinois

<sup>3</sup> There is a discrepancy in the US Census data CTs (listed as 5 and 1) and CEJST (listed as 51). Going forward, we will use CT 5 and CT 1 instead of 51.

<sup>4</sup> Climate and Economic Justice Screen Tool (CEJST)– Peoria Target Area



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talent. The City took a big hit to its economy during COVID-19, and some left to find jobs elsewhere and did not return. The City's history of deindustrialization and blight led to high volumes of vacant land (stemming from demolition and lack of reuse to developed land) and potential contamination.

The TA was selected due to: (1) high underserved minority population; (2) high number of identified and potential brownfield sites; (3) proximity to existing redevelopment projects; (4) existing economic development strategies and revitalization plans; (5) within designated Opportunity Zones (OZ) with environmental justice inadequacies; and (6) located within a designated **Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST) Justice40 Disadvantaged Community**.

ii. Description of the Priority Brownfield Site(s): The decline of local industries and resulting job loss created an abundance of brownfield sites that are visible in the TA and pose environmental and health threats to the community. The EJ Screen Report indicates 14 brownfield sites in the TA.<sup>5</sup> During an initial windshield survey, brownfield sites identified include seven auto body service shops, three gas stations, two laundromats, and 10 industrial sites. More sites will be identified and prioritized during a thorough grant-funded site inventory process involving the project partners and TA residents.

TCRPC has identified **two** priority sites. **Site 1: Former Butternut Bread Bakery**, 1511 West Lincoln Avenue (CT 5), is a 6.5-acre former factory site. The plant was a commercial bakery for over a century. Four buildings consisting of 90,000 square feet of space have been vacant for over a decade and are spread out over two city blocks. The buildings butt up to the sidewalks along Lincoln Avenue, Shelby Street, IL-8, and Louisa Street in a residential neighborhood and are nestled between Common Place Social Service Agency and Lincoln Branch Library. The dilapidated buildings and outdoor factory equipment have been vandalized with graffiti.

**Site 2: Former Harrison School**, 2727 West Krause Avenue (CT 1), is a 3.3-acre vacant site owned by the City of Peoria. **TCRPC has access to the site**. The school was built in 1901, sat vacant for 13 years, and was demolished in May 2023. The abandoned school became an illegal dumping ground for garbage and hundreds of used tires. The site is in a residential neighborhood directly across the street from the newly constructed Harrison Primary School. The site is unfenced and overgrown with weeds and vegetation, and demolition debris is present.

At **both priority sites**, the potential toxic chemicals that might have seeped into the ground and been carried throughout the TA by groundwater, stormwater runoff, and soil vapor include but are not limited to **volatile organic compounds (VOCs); semivolatile organic compounds (SVOCs) including polynuclear aromatics (PNAs); and metals (e.g., lead, chromium, arsenic)**. At some historical industrial/commercial/institutional operations, **polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs)** can also be a severe issue. **Possible orphaned leaking underground storage tanks (LUSTs)** might be at these sites due to the historical operations, allowing some VOCs, PNAs, and lead to leak into subsurface soil, groundwater, and soil vapor. The likely existence of **asbestos containing materials (ACM)** and **lead-based paint (LBP)** in the old building structures at these sites may impact nearby residents and children passing the sites. The migration pathways of these contaminants include direct contact, inhalation, and ingestion through surface and groundwater, soil, soil vapor, and air. All these contaminants can cause significant environmental impact and pose a threat to human health, especially TA sensitive populations.

iii. Identifying Additional Sites: An initial inventory identified over 20 brownfield sites in the TA. With funds from this grant and input from the low income, Black Southside community, project

<sup>5</sup> EPA EJ Screen Community Report: [https://ejscreen.epa.gov/mapper/ejscreen\\_SOE.aspx](https://ejscreen.epa.gov/mapper/ejscreen_SOE.aspx)



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partners, and the help of a brownfield advisory board, TCRPC will identify sites for eligible activities throughout the geographic boundary identified in the TA. Using US Census, Justice, and CEJST data, sites will be evaluated and ranked based on the greatest financial need for the sensitive populations in distressed neighborhoods according to the Justice40 Initiative. In the event grant funds remain after addressing the TA, evaluation criteria including underserved communities, alignment with area reuse plans, and ease of accessibility will be taken into consideration for identifying additional inventory throughout TCRPC's geographic boundary that includes communities with closing or **recently closed coal-fired power plants** directly south of the TA.

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

The City and TCRPC recognize the need to revitalize the TA by addressing potential brownfield sites. Plans incorporating community-member input, which will further the areas' revitalization and prosperity, have been developed. Such plans include the 2021 Near Southside Housing Needs and Community Revitalization Plan; 2019 South Village Revitalization Plan; 2023 Redeveloping McKinley and Harrison School Sites plan; 2023 Walk, Roll, Illinois—Active Transportation Plan; the 2020 Tri-County Emerging Mobility Strategy; The Big Table: Greater Peoria 2021–2025 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy; and 2023–2026 Tri-County Regional Planning Commission Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). These plans address affordable housing, transportation, and food insecurity needs. A key revitalization strategy in the TA, as stated in the Redeveloping McKinley and Harrison School Sites plan is redeveloping the **Former Harrison School priority site** into “Harrison Commons,” an **affordable rental housing and multipurpose neighborhood center managed by the Peoria Housing Authority**. The development will include services such as a satellite Illinois Central College campus for a “Meds and Trades Program,” police/EMS substation, primary care clinic, transportation shuttle, childcare center, expanded Boys and Girls Club programming, and a fresh food center. The Housing Needs Assessment and Community Revitalization Plan includes areas affecting **Former Butternut Factory priority site**, bringing **affordable housing, grocery stores, recreational activities, and parks** to the area, and will incorporate sources of energy-efficient materials and renewable energy into redevelopment.

ii. Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategy: Ultimately, the redevelopment efforts of the priority sites' (**Former Butternut Factory and Former Harrison School sites**) brownfields in Peoria depend on removing the stigma of the presence of contaminants. Addressing environmental and human health concerns of the **sensitive populations** living in these disadvantaged communities throughout the TA with site assessments and cleanup allows TCRPC to support the growth of the TA by improving the environment, human health, and quality of life for the **low-income, Black** population that has high unemployment due to the closing of industries. The assessment and remediation of TA sites will make properties available for redevelopment, which will help continue the mission of the Near Southside Housing Needs and Community Revitalization Plan by creating new opportunities for **affordable housing and fresh food establishments (noneconomic benefits) and will create new jobs (economic benefit)** for TA residents. Fortunately, **the Southside neighborhood TA is in designated OZs and TIF districts**, which the City of Peoria and TCRPC intend to continue to market to developers to spur revitalization.

Revitalization benefits from EPA assessment funding also include creating a sustainable mobility framework with a commitment to new transportation technology, scooters, and electric vehicle charging stations; revitalizing existing transportation routes (noneconomic benefit) to create a **local vibrant employment environment and retain people in the region** (economic benefit) as described in the Tri-County Emerging Mobility Strategy; and improving **local climate adaptation/mitigation capacity and resilience** to protect residents and community investments.





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Mobility hubs will provide options such as electric scooters or car share, along with bicycle storage. Electric charging facilities will be established within public parking districts and residential areas, and electrification of transit fleets will be promoted. As with many other brownfield sites identified in the TA, the goal is to create equitable and sustainable communities by creating greener, healthier neighborhoods, improving transportation, and improving property values by reducing blight and eliminating the risk of environmental contamination and the threat to public health. Addressing environmental and social concerns of the TA through site assessments and cleanup planning allows Peoria to support the growth of the disadvantaged communities by improving the environment, human health, and quality of life (noneconomic benefits) for its residents in these **distressed neighborhoods and promote environmental and social justice.**

**c. Strategy for Leveraging Resources** i. Resources Needed for Site Reuse: TCRPC is a form of government, eligible to apply for county, state, and federal grant funding. The City of Peoria has developed Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts for further TA redevelopment. TCRPC and the City are working to secure additional funding to further their Brownfield Program redevelopment goals and are currently exploring the following funding opportunities:

	Agency	Funding Purpose
Federal	HUD Choice Neighborhood Planning Grant (\$500,000)	<b>The City received this funding in 2023.</b> They will replace severely distressed public and HUD-assisted housing with high-quality mixed-income housing that is well-managed and responsive to the needs of the surrounding neighborhood.
Federal	US EPA Cleanup Grant (up to \$5M)	Remediation of sites after assessment and remediation planning.
State	Illinois EPA Revolving Loan Fund (up to \$1M per site)	Cleanup of TA brownfield sites after the assessment, and ensures full cycles of assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment.
State	Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity	Supports economic development and community development; concurrent with brownfield assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment.
State	Illinois Grocery Initiative	Funding for new or expanded grocery stores in food deserts.
Local	South Village TIF	Support housing rehabilitation, infrastructure improvements, and commercial redevelopment.
Local	Peoria County/Chamber of Commerce	Ensure the <b>OZ</b> tax incentives are marketed to developers and investors to further site reuse.

ii. Use of Existing Infrastructure: TA redevelopment will have access to existing City utilities including streets, bridges, power supplies, and sewer, which will provide sufficient infrastructure. In the event infrastructure improvements are needed, TCRPC will work with the City to apply for additional grant funding.

## **2. COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

**a. Community Need** i. The Community's Need for Funding: According to *Peoria Magazine about the impoverished TA*, "Peoria's South Side is one the 100 poorest zip codes in all of America. Along with poverty, come crime and underperforming schools."<sup>6</sup> The financial website 24-7 Wall Street ranked Peoria as the second worst city in the US for Black residents.<sup>7</sup> According to the Distressed Communities Index, the TA scores 99.6 (100 being the worst), and only 16% of the US population lives in distressed areas. **Due to the low income (\$31,697/family, \$16,814/per capita)** versus national income (\$69,021/family, \$37,638/per capita) and high unemployment rate in the underinvested community in the TA (18%), the Southside community needs assistance and revitalization.<sup>8</sup> Funding for environmental assessments is not available from TCRPC as they are a

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.peoriamagazine.com/archive/ibi\\_article/2014/building-blocks-vibrant-61605/](https://www.peoriamagazine.com/archive/ibi_article/2014/building-blocks-vibrant-61605/)

<sup>7</sup> <https://247wallst.com/special-report/2017/11/03/the-worst-cities-for-black-americans-2/3/>

<sup>8</sup> US Census: 2017–2021 American Community Survey



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form of government and operate on grant funds that are used for day-to-day operations. City funds provide basic services such as police, fire, and sanitation. The EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant will be used to spur economic development the City will otherwise be unable to fund.

ii. Threats to Sensitive Populations (1) Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations: The TA's sensitive populations are **youth, the elderly, minorities, and the impoverished**. Of the impoverished families within the TA, **52% are Black, 45% are receiving food stamps**, which is well above the state average of 14% Black and 13% receiving food stamps.<sup>9</sup> **Youth and the elderly make up 46% of the TA community versus 42% in the County, and unemployment is 18% in the TA versus 6% in the US.**<sup>9</sup> The TA has an average of **51% living below poverty level for female householders with children and no spouse present**, significantly higher than the state's 33% average.<sup>9</sup> **Impoverished Black** families living in a food desert in the Southside community TA have greater health and welfare issues. *Peoria Magazine* states, "This zip code also has health issues from living in a **USDA Food Desert**. Residents eat from convenience stores, which are filled with expensive, high-fat, high-salt, high-cholesterol items that contribute to heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, and childhood obesity."<sup>10</sup> The **lack of access to vehicles (TA 22%, US 8%)** is affecting the sensitive populations' ability to make healthy choices.<sup>9</sup> According to Peoria County Health Ranking, 36% of adults are obese and 24% are physically inactive. Vacant and blighted sites create safety concerns and hinder the TA residents' ability to engage in healthy activities. This grant will address and reduce those threats by spurring redevelopment of the sites. The City has many plans for grocery stores, affordable housing, and recreation facilities that could replace the vacant, blighted sites and increase healthier lifestyles at both the Former Butternut and Harrison School priority sites.

Affordable housing is greatly needed within the TA. The TA's average monthly rent is \$745 (US \$1,096), with the majority value of a home less than \$99,999 (US \$229,800).<sup>9</sup> Even with the low cost of monthly rent and low home values, the community is suffering as a significant portion of their annual income goes to cover housing. According to the CEJST, the TA is in the **86<sup>nd</sup> percentile of low-income households spending more than 30% of their income on housing**. The removal of blighted, dilapidated homes and the subsequent redevelopment of brownfield sites within the TA into viable housing and transportation options will not only address mobility issues, access to fresh foods and jobs, and affordable housing options, but it will also create an environment that will promote healthier lifestyle changes for generations to come.

(2) Greater Than Normal Incidence of Disease and Adverse Health Conditions: Sensitive populations in the TA such as the Black (52%) and single parent poverty-stricken households (51%) are disproportionately impacted by disease and adverse health conditions associated with exposure to environmental concerns including herbicides, petroleum products, solvents, heavy metals, and other hazardous substances.<sup>9</sup> All of the county's health concerns can be tied to exposure to these hazards. The TA ranks in the **87<sup>th</sup> percentile for lead-paint indicator** and **86<sup>th</sup> percentile for toxic air release in the US**. Eighty-six sites are reporting to the EPA for air pollution.<sup>11</sup> According to the 2022 Tri-County Health Assessment (CT/TA health data not available), Peoria suffers from 12.2% cases of **asthma** linked to the historical coal powered plant operations versus 8.2% in the state. **Cancer** rates compared to the state are significantly higher: 87.1 (per 100k) in the city and 64.25 (per 100k) in the state. Cancer and heart disease are the leading causes of death in the county, and 24% of residents in the TA have a low life expectancy compared to the national average of 20%. Sensitive populations are exposed to health hazards in

<sup>9</sup> US Census: 2017–2021 American Community Survey

<sup>10</sup> [https://www.peoriamagazine.com/archive/ibi\\_article/2014/building-blocks-vibrant-61605/](https://www.peoriamagazine.com/archive/ibi_article/2014/building-blocks-vibrant-61605/)

<sup>11</sup> EPA EJ Screen – Peoria Target Area





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their own neighborhood. This assessment and cleanup project will reduce potential exposure to site contaminants and potential health impacts due to direct contact, windborne soil, and water runoff.

(3) Environmental Justice (a) Identification of Environmental Justice Issues: According to CEJST, both the Former Harrison School priority site (CT 5) and Former Butternut Factory priority site (CT 1) are located in disadvantaged CTs. CT 5 has historic underinvestment due to high barriers accessing home loans and is in the 98<sup>th</sup> percentile for low income in the US.<sup>12</sup> CT 1 is in the 86<sup>th</sup> percentile for housing costs and the 99<sup>th</sup> percentile for low income.<sup>12</sup> CT 5 is in the 89<sup>th</sup> percentile for lack of green space, 94<sup>th</sup> percentile for wastewater discharge, and 95<sup>th</sup> percentile for proximity to risk management plan facilities.<sup>12</sup> Both priority site CTs have very high rates of asthma (94<sup>th</sup> and 98<sup>th</sup> percentiles), diabetes (97<sup>th</sup> and 94<sup>th</sup> percentiles), and heart disease (93<sup>rd</sup> and 83<sup>rd</sup> percentiles).<sup>12</sup> The Black Southside community has been segregated from the majority white city to the north via 50–100 foot bluffs. This **low income, high and persistent poverty, residential racial segregation, high housing cost burden and substandard housing, and distressed neighborhood** needs affordable, sustainable housing and grocery stores to help mitigate generational suffering.

(b) Advancing Environmental Justice: The City has identified affordable housing as the greatest need in the TA. Redeveloping the vacant sites in the community into affordable housing for the Southside community will advance environmental justice **without displacement of residents and businesses** among the underserved community, and, in fact, will provide housing for residents to stay in their community. Grocery stores will be built so the food desert can be turned into a community that has access to healthy food. Health in the community can begin to improve with better living conditions.

a. **Community Engagement** i. Project Involvement & ii. Project Roles:

Name of Org.	Point of Contact	Specific involvement in the project or assistance provided
Neighborhood House	Julie Bonar, President/CEO julieb@nhpeoria.org 309-674-1131	Local grassroots, 501(c)(3) organization providing a safe environment, <b>resources, and education</b> to empower the community. They will assist with community outreach and cleanup reuse planning and disseminate information to TA residents.
Peoria Citizens Committee for Economic Opportunity, Inc.	Jennifer Orban, Interim President/CEO jorban@pcceo.org 309-671-3900	Local grassroots, 501(c)(3) organization helping <b>low-income families</b> overcome life obstacles. Keeps local businesses informed about project status, events, and brownfield sites available for redevelopment on their website and printed materials.
Minority Business Development Center	Denise Moore, CEO/Founder dmoore@mbdcpeoria.org 309-966-3989	Local grassroots, 501(c)(3) organization providing training, development, and <b>workforce solutions</b> . They will assist with site identification, prioritization, and future reuse planning.
St. Ann Catholic Church	Father Jeremy parishoffice@saintannpeoria.com 309-674-5072	Place of worship in the community. Assist with project outreach and education.
George Washington Carver Community Center	Jacobie Proctor, CEO jproctor@thecarvercenter.com 309-839-0722	Local grassroots 501(c)(3) providing recreational, <b>educational, health, social</b> , and civic activities that foster and improve the character, desires, and ambitions of all persons and of all ages. They will provide space for community meetings.

Incorporating Community Input: TCRPC has been working to strengthen the City's Brownfield Program. On September 11, 2023, during the Tri-County Joint Commission ED Subcommittee, speakers educated an audience of over 15 people on brownfields and announced the grant

<sup>12</sup> Climate and Economic Justice Screen Tool – Peoria Target Area



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application that would benefit the disadvantaged residents in the underserved Southside community. TCRPC will continue to inform the public about the grant application in the monthly newsletter distributed in early November and other area newsletters. TCRPC will host events such as a modified tour of the TA and creating a video to share during a webinar. Community members will be encouraged to submit videos and photos for incorporation into the video. TCRPC plans to conduct several community meetings during the grant duration within the TA. Community meetings will educate TA residents, project partners, local organizations, and stakeholders about brownfield issues throughout the City of Peoria. These meetings will encourage input from TA residents on site inventory and prioritization and discuss cleanup alternatives and future land reuse that further the City's and County's redevelopment plans. Input from TA residents will be recorded in meeting minutes and evaluated during TCRPC/project partner meetings to prioritize the assessments in conjunction with community redevelopment plans. TCRPC will respond to each individual's comments/concerns within two weeks. To share project progress, a Community Involvement Plan (CIP) will be created to describe the planned community engagement activities, schedule, project background, and key players for the Brownfield Project. Residents can review the CIP at TCRPC's office. Communication and outreach to TA residents and project partner organizations will be optimized through all available outreach tools and methods. TCRPC will include the Brownfield Advisory Board during site prioritization activities including members: Leslie McNight, Ph.D., Director of Community Health Policy and Planning for Peoria County Health Department, Sally Hanley, Director of Business Assistance for the Greater Peoria EDC, Amy McLaren, Peoria County Engineer, and Patrick Urich, City of Peoria Manager. TCRPC will use multiple avenues to communicate with citizens, including its website and social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn), public postings, advertising, and utility inserts.

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

**a. Description of Tasks/Activities and Outputs:** TCRPC is requesting a US EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant in the amount of \$500,000 for community-wide assessment.

<b>Task 1: Outreach</b>	
i.	<i>Project Implementation:</i> TCRPC's Brownfield Project Director will develop a Community Involvement Plan (CIP), outreach materials, Brownfield Project website, and social media posts with the assistance of the environmental contractor (EC). TCRPC 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), office supplies, and software to manage the grant.
ii.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> Community meetings held twice a year for Years 1–3 and once in Year 4. CIP, website, and outreach materials will be created in the 1 <sup>st</sup> quarter and posted monthly throughout the grant.
iii.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> TCRPC: Ray Lees, Planning Program Manager, Brownfield 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.
<b>Task 2: Site Inventory</b>	
i.	<i>Project Implementation:</i> TCRPC's Brownfield Project Director will work with TA residents during community meetings to create a thorough site inventory for assessment. Abandoned and underused properties identified by TA residents will be researched further by TCRPC staff using the property appraiser's website. Once a list is compiled, the EC will work with TCRPC staff to create an evaluation ranking tool, with the help of residents, to determine the order in which the sites will be addressed.
ii.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> Community meeting held in the 1 <sup>st</sup> quarter will continue the preliminary inventory process which began with this application. Evaluation ranking process taking place in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter and continuing throughout the grant project.
iii.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> Ray Lees, Planning Program Manager, Brownfield Project Director



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iv.	<i>Outputs:</i> Evaluation Ranking Tool, Site Inventory List
<b>Task 3: Assessment</b>	
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 first with the two priority sites listed in this 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> Assessment activities begin in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> 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 TCRPC: Ray Lees, Planning Program Manager, Brownfield Project Director.
iv.	<i>Outputs:</i> 15 Phase I ESAs, 1 Generic QAPP, 8 Phase II ESAs including SS-QAPP, Site Access Agreements and Property Eligibility Determinations.
<b>Task 4: Remediation/Reuse Planning</b>	
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 TCRPC in hosting charrettes/visioning sessions to be held for key properties. A planner will create Site Reuse Assessments and Brownfield Revitalization Plan.
ii.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> Plans & Charrettes to begin in the 6 <sup>th</sup> 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 TCRPC: Ray Lees, Planning Program Manager, Brownfield Project Director.
iv.	<i>Outputs:</i> 4 ABCAs, 2 Vision Sessions/Charrettes, 2 Site Reuse Assessments, 1 BF Revitalization Plan
<b>Task 5: Programmatic Support</b>	
i.	<i>Project Implementation:</i> TCRPC will procure an EC to assist with the Brownfield Project. TCRPC's Brownfields Project Director oversees grant implementation and administration to ensure compliance with the EPA Cooperative Agreement Work Plan, schedule, and terms and conditions. The EC will assist TCRPC 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. TCRPC staff travel budget allows for two staff to attend three national/regional/grantee brownfield training conferences/workshops.
ii.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> ACRES Reporting begins in the 1 <sup>st</sup> quarter, and Quarterly Reporting begins in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter and continues throughout the grant project. Annual Reporting and Forms created in the 5 <sup>th</sup> , 9 <sup>th</sup> , 13 <sup>th</sup> quarters and during final closeout.
iii.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> TCRPC Ray Lees, Planning Program Manager, Brownfield 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 cost estimates for this project *based on past brownfield projects as determined by local market standards with contractual hourly rates based on the skills needed for the specific tasks. Approximately 60% of the budget will be spent on site-specific work through the Assessment Task, and 30% will be spent on areawide planning through the reuse/remediation planning task.*

**Task 1 Outreach:** Contractual: Community Involvement Plan \$3,000 (24hrs x \$125); Brownfield Website, Outreach Brochure/Handouts, Social Media Posts \$2,500 (20hrs x \$125); 7 Community Education Meetings \$7,000 (50hrs x \$140; \$1,000/meeting). Supplies: Outreach Supplies (software, printouts) \$500. **Task 2 Site Inventory:** Contractual: Potential Brownfield Site Inventory and Evaluation Ranking Tool Creation \$9,000 (60hrs x \$150). **Task 3 Assessment:**



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**Contractual:** 15 Phase I ESAs \$5,000 each for a total of \$75,000; 1 Generic QAPP \$5,000; 8 Phase II ESAs including SS-QAPP at \$27,000 each for a total of \$216,000. **Task 4 Remediation/Reuse Planning:** **Contractual:** 4 ABCAs \$6,000 for a total of \$24,000; 2 Vision Sessions/Charrettes \$4,000 (\$2,000/meeting); 2 Site Reuse Assessments \$25,000/assessment for a total of \$50,000 (Planner: 100hrs x \$150; Market Analysts: 40hrs x \$125; Environmental Professional: 40hrs x \$125 x 2 plans); 1 Brownfield Redevelopment Plan \$70,000 (Planner: 200hrs x \$150; Market Analysts: 160hrs x \$125; Environmental Professional: 160hrs x \$125). **Task 5 Programmatic Support:** **Contractual:** ACRES Database Reporting, Yearly Financial Reporting, Quarterly Reporting, MBE/WBE Forms, Programmatic Support for the four-year grant period \$22,000 (176hrs x \$125). **Travel:** Two staff to attend two conferences \$12,000 [(flights at \$800/each, 3 nights in hotel at \$300/day, incidentals and per diem at \$100/day) x 2 attendees x 2 events].

Category	Tasks					Totals
	<i>Outreach</i>	<i>Site Inventory</i>	<i>Assessment</i>	<i>Remediation/Reuse Planning</i>	<i>Programmatic Support</i>	
Travel					\$12,000	\$12,000
Supplies	\$500					\$500
Contractual	\$12,500	\$9,000	\$296,000	\$148,000	\$22,000	\$487,500
<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>\$13,000</b>	<b>\$9,000</b>	<b>\$296,000</b>	<b>\$148,000</b>	<b>\$34,000</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>

**c. Plan to Measure and Evaluate Environmental Progress and Results:** To ensure this EPA Brownfield Project is on schedule, TCRPC's internal Brownfields Team, which will include the EC, 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. In addition, 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 outcomes to be tracked include community participation, acres assessed, acres ready for reuse, redevelopment dollars leveraged, and jobs created. In the event the project is not being completed in an efficient manner, TCRPC has countermeasures in place to address this problem. TCRPC will make monthly calls to their EPA Project Officer and, if needed, will create a Corrective Action Plan to help the project to get back on schedule.

#### **4. PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE**

**a. Programmatic Capability** i. Organizational Capacity, ii. Organizational Structure, & iii.

**Description of Key Staff:** TCRPC is governed by a Board of Commission that is the policy-making body of the organization supporting the officers in carrying out TCRPC's objectives. TCRPC has the capacity and experience to execute the assessment project as they have completed hundreds of community improvement projects. TCRPC's Planning Program Manager, Ray Lees, has been with TCRPC for seven years and has been working in economic and workforce development for 45 years. He will serve as the **Brownfield Project Director** and will be responsible for the timely and successful expenditure of funds and completion of the projects. He oversees the development and execution of regional plans with diverse stakeholders addressing transportation, environmental, and land use issues in TCRPC's area. He led advocacy to bring \$26.4M for a bridge improvement and added pathway in Peoria. He has been Chairman of the City of Peoria Planning Commission for 17 years and directly involved in the development of comprehensive plans. Michael Bruner is a Senior Planner with TCRPC and has been with the organization for seven





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years. He will serve as the **Brownfield Project Manager**. Mr. Bruner leads the preparation and management of grants for a wide variety of project types and public entities. He was previously the grant writer and administrator for Western Illinois Regional Council. Mr. Lees and Mr. Bruner will be assisted by Rebecca Eisele, TCRPC's Accountant, who will serve as the **Brownfield Finance Manager** and is responsible for managing grant finances and grant drawdowns on ASAP.gov. She has 18 years of experience and is responsible for the accounting processes and procedures for grants totaling over \$3M. An environmental contractor will assist with the technical aspects of the project.

iv. Acquiring Additional Resources: Using local contracting requirements and procurement processes, TCRPC will procure a qualified environmental contractor to assist with technical and reporting portions of the Brownfield Community-wide Assessment, in addition to any other contractors needed to complete the project. TCRPC will ensure compliance with the EPA's "Professional Service" procurement process. TCRPC is committed to promoting strong labor practices, local hiring/procurement, and linking members of the community to employment opportunities in brownfields assessment, cleanup, or redevelopment. TCRPC will engage Peoria-based West Central Illinois Building and Construction Trades Council (WCIBCTC). WCIBCTC strives to improve quality of life and job opportunities for over 15,000 union members.

**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: TCRPC was awarded an Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) Human Rights Transportation Plan (H RTP) grant in 2021 in the amount of \$136,638. The purpose is to coordinate public transportation services and access in rural areas of Illinois, including Fulton, Knox, Marshall, Peoria, Stark, Tazewell, and Woodford Counties. Accomplishments include participation in the identification of transportation needs, holding bimonthly HSTP committee meetings, updating and adopting HSTP 2023, administering and completing NEPA for FTA Section 5310 funded projects, and applying for and securing FTA Section 5310 funding to provide updated FTA Section 5310 Program Management Plan. All grant funds were drawn down by June 30, 2023. TCRPC was awarded an IDOT 3-C Transportation Planning grant in July 2022 in the amount of \$1.02M for the purpose of developing an Activity-Based Travel Demand Model (ABM) for TCRPC's region. Accomplishments include procuring a consultant to develop ABM, participating in monthly meetings, acquiring base year socioeconomic data for the model, developing base year transit and highway network files, developing mobility and land use models to be incorporated into ABM, developing draft ABM, calibrating ABM with base year loaded auto and transit networks, and developing future year model for 2050 and technical document and user guide for ABM. Funds are expected to be drawn down by December 31, 2023.

(2) Compliance with Grant Requirements: Both grants included federal funds, and the 3-C grant included state funds. Funds were handled properly regarding compliance with work plans, schedules, and terms and conditions and within the scope of work identified in the Intergovernmental Agreement with IDOT. All grants have been or expected to be fully expended within the agreed upon timeframe and have met all the objectives. Mr. Michael Bruner tracks all project results individually and will be able to manage the requirements for tracking projects in ACRES if awarded a grant from the EPA. TCRPC has discussed with other communities and stakeholders with significant brownfield management experience to gain insights and good practices. With the experience of direct federal funding management and coordination with other funding agencies including IDOT with millions of dollars funding in TCRPC territory, TCRPC has the experience and capabilities to manage the Brownfield Grant if awarded.





**Tri-County Regional Planning Commission  
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Threshold Criteria**



## **Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, IL FY2024 US EPA Brownfields Assessment Threshold Criteria**

### **Threshold Criteria**

#### **1. Applicant Eligibility**

- a. Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC) is eligible to apply for the EPA Brownfield Community-wide Assessment grant as a form of government as described in the Resolution for Establishment. Please see attached Resolution for Establishment of Tri-County Regional Planning Commission.
- b. TCRPC is not exempt from Federal taxation under section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code.

#### **2. Community Involvement**

Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC) will work with the City of Peoria and project partners to assist in site inventory, selection prioritization, future reuse of sites, community education, and informing the public regarding project status and updates to benefit the disadvantaged residents in the underserved Southside community. Furthermore, TCRPC will work with target-area residents and local organizations to gather public input for assisting in site identification and sharing information with other residents. TCRPC will create a Community Involvement Plan (CIP) to describe upcoming community engagement activities, schedule of events, project background, and key players. The CIP will be made available for review at TCRPC's office.

TCRPC has and will continue to attend and provide project information during regularly scheduled public meetings to discuss the Brownfield Program by defining brownfields, addressing potential sites identified within Peoria, discussing brownfield project milestones, and informing target-area residents about how they can be involved in the process. Information gathered by target-area residents will be recorded and compiled in meeting minutes and thoroughly considered and evaluated as TCRPC works with the City and project partners in identifying and prioritizing sites for the Brownfield Program. TCRPC will discuss all individual comments and will respond to concerns within two weeks of receipt.

TCRPC conducted brownfield outreach at community meetings including the Tri-County Joint Commission ED Subcommittee on September 11, 2023. TCRPC understands the importance of using several forms of media to communicate Brownfield Program information to ensure a wide reach throughout the county. The TCRPC website is reaching a growing audience due to the increase in usage, creating a solid platform for sharing Brownfield Program information. Additionally, TCRPC will hand out fliers explaining the projects and the Brownfield Program. They will be distributed at community events and placed at City offices. Upcoming public meetings, meeting minutes, materials from past brownfield meetings, and project updates will be posted on TCRPC's website and Social Media including Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. Local media press releases will keep the community updated about Brownfield Assessment Project milestones.

#### **3. Expenditure of Existing Grant Funds**

Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC) affirms that there are no active EPA Brownfield Assessment Grants or Multipurpose Grants for the organization.

#### **4. Contractors and Named Subrecipients**

Not Applicable.