



MID-OHIO REGIONAL  
**MORPC**  
PLANNING COMMISSION

111 Liberty Street, Suite 100  
Columbus, Ohio 43215  
morpc.org

T. 614. 228.2663  
TTY. 1.800.750.0750  
info@morpc.org

R05-24-A-040

**NARRATIVE INFORMATION SHEET**  
**Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC)**  
**FY2024 EPA Assessment Grant**

1. Applicant Identification:  
Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC)  
111 Liberty Street, Suite 100  
Columbus, Ohio 43215
2. Federal Funds Requested:
  - a) Assessment Grant type: Community-Wide
  - b) Federal Funds Requested: \$500,000
3. Location: MORPC's member counties (and their communities): Delaware, Fairfield, Fayette, Franklin, Hocking, Knox, Licking, Logan, Madison, Marion, Morrow, Perry, Pickaway, Ross, Union
4. Target Area and Priority Site Information:
  - a) W. Broad Street Bus Rapid Transit Corridor Target Area
    - i. Census Tracts 390490004200, 390490005001, 39049000502
    - ii. Priority site 1: 397 W. Broad Street, Columbus; Priority site 2: 551 & 555 W. Broad Street, Columbus
  - b) S. Linden Target Area
    - i. Census Tract 39049000730
    - ii. No current address, priority site @ NEC of Cleveland Avenue and 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, Columbus
  - c) Mt. Vernon Target Area
    - i. Census Tract 39083007100
    - ii. 105 N. Sandusky Street, Mt. Vernon
5. Contacts:
  - a) **Project Director:**  
Ms. Maria Schaper, AICP, Associate Director of Transportation Planning,  
Transportation and Infrastructure Development Director, MORPC  
111 Liberty Street, Suite 100, Columbus, Ohio 43215  
Phone: 614.233.4153, email: [mschaper@morpc.org](mailto:mschaper@morpc.org)

b) **Chief Executive:**

Mr. William Murdock, Executive Director, MORPC  
111 Liberty Street, Suite 100, Columbus, Ohio 43215  
Phone: 614.228.2663; E-mail: [wmurdock@morpc.org](mailto:wmurdock@morpc.org)

6. Population (Communities in which Target Areas/Priority Sites are located):  
City of Columbus: 908,372 (2022 ACS 1-year estimate)  
City of Mt. Vernon: 16,885 (2021 ACS 5-year estimate)
7. Other Factors Checklist: None of the Other Factors apply.
8. Letter from State or Tribal Environmental Authority: Attached
9. Releasing Copies of Application: N/A

**SUPPORT LETTERS FROM STATE AUTHORITIES**



October 31, 2023

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 5

ATTN: Ashley Green

77 West Jackson Boulevard

Mail Code SB-5J

Chicago, IL 60604-3507

**RE: Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission Community Wide Assessment Grant Proposal**

Dear Ashley Green:

I am pleased to offer Ohio EPA's support for the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) Community Wide Assessment Grant Proposal. MORPC is applying for a community-wide assessment grant with funding totaling \$500,000. We have worked with MORPC in the past and hope to provide support under the Assessment, Cleanup and Revolving Loan Fund Grant program established by the Small Business Liability Relief and Brownfield Revitalization Act (P.L. 107-118).

The funding MORPC is requesting under their community-wide assessment grant proposal will be used to conduct outreach, assessment, and cleanup planning needed to address individual priority brownfields in the Linden and West Broad Street Corridors in Columbus, Ohio. MORPC's third target area will be in the rural town of Mt. Vernon, with manufacturing plant closures and corresponding lack of good-paying jobs. All target areas contain dense impoverished neighborhoods facing continued decline of household income and environmental justice issues due to susceptibility to potential contaminants emanating from brownfield sites long imbedded within or immediately adjacent to the neighborhoods. Portions of all three TAs are also considered food deserts by the USDA, based on lack of access to fresh food by their low-income residents.

MORPC's grant project goals align with key elements of their Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), including encouraging economic development, redeveloping existing sites with adequate in-place infrastructure, addressing food insecurity and supporting county seats in their member counties. Use of assessment grant funds will allow MORPC to further leverage funding from local tax incentives and other sources such as JobsOhio and the Ohio Abandoned Gas Station Fund, as well as other public and private sources.

We look forward to working with MORPC and U.S. EPA on this project. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 614-644-2295 or via e-mail at [Lisa.Shook@epa.ohio.gov](mailto:Lisa.Shook@epa.ohio.gov).

Sincerely,

*Lisa Shook*

Lisa Shook, Manager

Ohio Environmental Protection Agency

Voluntary Action Program

cc: Maria Schaper, AICP, Associate Director, Transportation Planning, MORPC

Martin Smith, Ohio EPA, DERR/CDO



Department  
of Commerce

Division of State Fire Marshal

Sheryl Maxfield, Director



Mike DeWine, Governor  
Jon Husted, Lt. Governor

October 23, 2023

John Jurevis  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 5  
77 West Jackson Boulevard  
Mail Code SE-7J  
Chicago, IL 60604-3507

**RE: Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission Community Wide Brownfield Assessment Grant Proposal**

Dear Mr. Jurevis:

This letter acknowledges that the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission notified the Office of the Fire Marshal, Bureau of Underground Storage Tank Regulations (BUSTR) of its plans to use the \$500,000 grant proposal for a community-wide brownfield assessment for petroleum and hazardous waste. The targeted areas for this grant include the Linden and West Broad St. corridors in Columbus and the town of Mt. Vernon. These areas have high unemployment and poverty rates, historic manufacturing and industrial brownfields, acres of vacant or underdeveloped properties and portions of all three localities are considered food deserts by the USDA. Goals of the grant include assessment of blighted areas, improving access to infrastructure, promoting economic growth, and addressing local food insecurity.

I am pleased to offer BUSTR's support for the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission's Community Wide-Brownfield Assessment Grant proposal. We look forward to working with the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission and the U.S.EPA on this project.

Sincerely,

Christine G. Pyscher, P.G.  
Environmental Specialist  
Division of State Fire Marshal  
Ohio Department of Commerce

xc: Site File  
Maria Schaper, Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission

## **1. PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION AND PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION**

**1.a. Target Area and Brownfields-1.a.i. Overview of Brownfield Challenges and Description of Target Area:** The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) is applying for a Community-Wide Brownfields Assessment Grant. MORPC is Central Ohio's regional council with more than 80 local governments and community partners. **MORPC's goal is to grow capacity to support brownfield redevelopment and economic revitalization of underserved and older industrial areas throughout the region.** The region is centered on Columbus and the inner-ring towns surrounding it. Since the early 1900s, the Region has been a hub for transportation and commerce. By the 1940s, it had also become a major manufacturing hub. The mid-20<sup>th</sup> century construction of Interstate Freeways that crisscross the Region led to rapid suburban development. This exacerbated the isolation, and subsequently impacted the health and welfare of minority and sensitive populations who continued to live close to the brownfields in both urban and rural areas. Urban commercial sites, most of which are smaller (<2 acres), and rural, small-town multi-acre industrial sites, have fallen into disuse, restricting economic development, and posing serious health risks to those who live in the nearby neighborhoods. MORPC selected three Target Areas (TAs) to address barriers faced by underserved urban and rural communities, as well as leverage and support ongoing investment in key transportation corridors. The **West Broad Street Bus Rapid Transit Corridor (W. Broad) TA (CTs 42 & 50)**, in western Columbus, is home to numerous vacant, blighted buildings and impoverished residents living in low-income rental units. The **South Linden (S. Linden) TA (CT 75.30)**, in northeastern Columbus, is dense with low-income neighborhoods facing continued decline of household income and contains over 50 blighted, vacant buildings in its commercial districts. It is home to one of the highest concentrations of minority residents, 73.8% (2021 5-year est., *American Community Survey (ACS)*), in the Region. The **City of Mount Vernon (Mt. Vernon) TA (CT 71)**, in rural Knox County, is home to legacy industrial brownfields nestled in low-income neighborhoods. Residents in the TAs suffer from environmental justice issues due to susceptibility to potential contaminants emanating from brownfield sites (e.g., gas stations, car dealers, industrial operations) long imbedded within the neighborhoods. Grant funds will focus in the TAs to provide outreach, assessment, and cleanup planning needed to address individual priority brownfields.

**1.a.ii Description of Priority Brownfields Sites:** The TAs contains over 50 brownfields posing potential environmental and human health threats as well as barriers to anticipated redevelopment plans. Four brownfields have been selected as priority sites. **1. Former Spaghetti Warehouse Restaurant** priority site, in the W. Broad TA, is 1.6 acres. The onsite building, constructed in 1900, was declared unsafe for occupancy in 2022. It was originally an ice house. The site was developed with a gas station from the 1920s until sometime in the 1960s. Whether underground storage tanks (USTs) remain is unknown. Primary constituents of concern for soil are volatile organic compounds (VOCs), polyaromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), lead, cadmium and chromium. VOCs are a concern for groundwater and can lead to vapor intrusion. Given the age and condition of the building, asbestos-containing materials (ACMs) and lead based paint may be present. **2. Vacant Car Dealership** priority site, ½-acre in size, is also in the W. Broad TA. The onsite 39,000 square-foot building, constructed in 1945 and vacant for a decade, poses exposures to local kids and is a haven for vandals and other illicit activities. Whether USTs were present is unknown. Given the age and condition of the building, asbestos-containing materials (ACMs) and lead based paint may be present. **The two sites are in a key transportation corridor and are a priority for as an integral part of a planned high-capacity rapid transit system.** EPA grant funds will be used to assist future developers with their due diligence and cleanup planning prior to construction. **3. Former gas station and car dealership** priority site is in the S. Linden TA. The site is comprised of approximately ½ acre of now-vacant land. It was used as a gas station and car dealership from the late 1920s until sometime in the 1960s. It is imbedded in an impoverished neighborhood lacking basic amenities. Suspected contaminants include VOCs, PAHs, and metals. The site also presents high potential of off-site hazardous releases and vapor intrusion to adjacent homes.

**This brownfield is a priority as it has the potential to be redeveloped for more appropriate community needs. The location of the site can provide walkable access to amenities such as housing, health care clinics, and fresh foods.** Assessment will help identify/address potential impacts to surrounding residents, including from vapor intrusion, as well as support prospective purchasers and redevelopment. **4. Former Cooper Industries** priority site is in the Mt. Vernon TA. It began as a foundry in 1833, and expanded through the mid-1900s as a 25-acre, 10-building complex. Subsequent operations included steam engine, compression engine and gas turbine manufacturing. Employment decreased from 3,000 employees in the 1960s to 800 in 2014. Plant operations ceased in 2018. There are no available records associated with whether USTs were present. Potential impacts to soil and groundwater are VOCs, PAHs, chlorinated solvents, metals, and PCBs. Given the age and condition of some of the buildings, asbestos and lead based paint may be present. **This is a priority site due to potential impacts to the surrounding low-income neighborhood and potential for redevelopment of the site.** Grant funding will address potential contaminant impacts to the surrounding area and to assist future owners with due diligence and due care obligations.

*1.a.iii. Identifying Additional Sites:* Region-wide additional sites will be addressed as funding allows. MORPC's Economic Development Director and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Officer will coordinate with neighborhood groups, chambers of commerce, developers and County Commissioners to identify additional brownfield sites throughout the Region. Prioritization criteria will include whether a site is located in an underserved community or disadvantaged census tract; environmental, economic, and social benefits of brownfields redevelopment; and the impact on surrounding neighborhoods. The additional sites will be added to MORPC's brownfields inventory.

**1.b. Revitalization of Target Area-1.b.i Reuse Strategy, Alignment with Revitalization Plans:** MORPC's grant project goals are aligned with several key elements of their **Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS):** *build broad, inclusive growth and development across the region; support entrepreneurship; and promote economic vibrancy and equity.*

**LinkUS** is Central Ohio's mobility and growth initiative for key transportation corridors, including the W. Broad TA. LinkUS will *provide equitable mobility options for residents and visitors; ensure access to jobs and affordable housing; promote economic growth; and improve sustainability.* The Knox County (Mt. Vernon) **Comprehensive Plan** focuses on *industrial growth that pays sustainable wages and economic diversity.*

**1. Former Spaghetti Warehouse and 2. Vacant Car Dealership:** The planned redevelopment aligns with MORPC's goal of building broad, inclusive growth and development across the region and the LinkUS goal of providing equitable mobility options for residents and visitors. Plans include demolition of existing blighted buildings, while supporting new commercial developments along W. Broad Street.

**3. Former Gas Station and Car Dealership:** Located at the northwest corner of Cleveland Ave. and 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, the site is in a struggling residential commercial corridor. Subsequent to assessment and cleanup planning, the vision is to promote local entrepreneurship and provide the neighborhood with vital community needs by redeveloping the site with something like a fresh food market, barber/hair salon, etc. within walking distance. This reuse clearly aligns with CEDS elements listed above, especially support entrepreneurship; and promote economic vibrancy and equity.

**4. Former Cooper Industries:** The Knox County Land Bank acquired the site in 2020. The Land Bank and Mt. Vernon plan to sell portions of the site to entrepreneurs and start-ups. Four companies have already purchased parts of the site, resulting in good-paying employment opportunities for Mt. Vernon residents. Acquisition and reuse of remaining buildings aligns with Knox County's Comp Plan and MORPC's CEDS goal of building broad, inclusive growth and development across the region.

*1.b.ii Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategy:* **1. Former Spaghetti Warehouse and 2. Vacant Car Dealership:** Assessment and eventual removal of the sites blighted buildings will improve aesthetics of this gateway into Columbus. Results from assessment activities will provide



information needed for mitigating contamination. Project outcomes include elimination of safety hazards to children and others who walk by the unsecured site daily. Economic benefits are increasing property values, and providing nearby residents with reliable public transportation to jobs. **3. Former Gas Station and Car Dealership:** Assessment activities will provide information on continuing obligations required for prospective property owners to facilitate redevelopment. Project outcomes include productive reuse of a long vacant site. A key economic benefit is increasing property values in this underserved commercial corridor. **4. Former Cooper Industries:** Assessment will provide needed data for eventual cleanup (if necessary) and redevelopment of the site buildings. Project outcomes include evaluation of immediate and/or potential threat of contaminant release, especially from vapor intrusion to adjacent low-income neighborhoods. Benefits include putting the site into productive reuse, resulting in an increased tax base for Mt. Vernon.

**1.c. Strategy for Leveraging Resources – 1.c.i Resources Needed for Site Reuse:** To date, MORPC has leveraged \$15.6 MM during implementation of the FY2020 grant. Funds were primarily from the Ohio Dept. of Development (ODOD) Brownfield Cleanup Grant Program. Mt. Vernon’s Community Reinvestment Area program (CRA) is a direct incentive tax exemption program for property owners who renovate existing or construct new buildings. Their Tax Increment Financing (TIF) provides tax credits to fund rehabilitation and public infrastructure projects. MORPC and their members are eligible for the key funding sources below.

Source	Purpose/Activities	Amount
JobsOhio	Cleanup, demolition, revitalization.	Grant up to \$1M, loans up to \$5M
	Planning services (market studies, development planning & prospectus development).	Grants up to \$20K to eligible communities (based on population & poverty) through the Inclusive Project Planning Program.
Ohio Brownfield Fund	Demolition associated with cleanup of hazardous substances, asbestos, lead paint, & petroleum.	Loans up to \$5M.
U.S. EPA	Cleanup Grants: Brownfields cleanup. Multipurpose Grants: assessment & cleanup activities, develop revitalization plan for target area.	Site-specific Cleanup Grants up to \$500K and Multi-Purpose Grants up to \$800K.

**1.c.ii Use of Existing Infrastructure:** All priority sites contain infrastructure that may need to be updated to support previously discussed redevelopment plans. Resources such as TIF and applicable County Redevelopment Commission funds will likely support these upgrades. Sustainable reuse of the existing 10 buildings at the former Coopers Industries site (~600K sq ft) is likely and will produce greater environmental benefit than new construction. Due to poor conditions of other TA priority site buildings, demolition is likely and intact materials will be recycled. As developed, all sites require updated stormwater discharge plans that comply with the local and/or Ohio codes. This will be the responsibility of future owners.

**2 COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

**2.a. Community Need-2.a.i. Community’s Need for Funding:** The EPA grant will provide assessment/cleanup planning funds that are not available in the TAs and if funding allows, nonpriority brownfields throughout the region. The funds will directly improve the quality of life in the TAs by minimizing health risks, creating jobs, and removing barriers to redevelopment. In the past 15 years, Franklin (Columbus) and Knox Counties (Mt. Vernon) have suffered significant revenue depletion from loss of manufacturing jobs that led to population decline, impoverished neighborhoods, decreased tax revenues, staffing declines, and unsafe, underutilized brownfields. Their limited financial resources must address public safety and aging infrastructure needs.

Reference the table below unless otherwise noted. The TAs Median Household Income (MHI) ranges from \$24.8K to \$35.5K and is 25% less than Ohio’s and 37% less than the Country’s

MHI. TA residents suffer from poverty rates nearly triple (34.9%) to nearly five times (61.8%) higher than the State (13.4%). In the past 10 years, the Mt. Vernon TA has suffered significant revenue depletion from loss of manufacturing jobs. The percentage of Mt. Vernon residents with manufacturing jobs has decreased from 20.1% in 2013 to 16.3% in 2021 (2013 & 2021 ACS 5-year est.), contributing to higher poverty levels and vacant, unsafe sites impacting public safety. These job losses have led to impoverished neighborhoods, decreased tax revenues, and unsafe, underutilized brownfields. Franklin County’s (W. Broad & S. Linden TAs) annual budget has increased from \$1.3 billion in 2020 to nearly \$1.5 billion in 2023, while funds for economic development have decreased from \$19 million to \$15.1 in the same time frame (Franklin County Ofc. Of Mgt. and Budget).

The EPA grant will provide assessment/cleanup planning funds that are not available in the TAs and if funding allows, additional brownfields in the Region. The funds will directly improve the quality of life in the TAs by minimizing health risks, creating jobs, and removing barriers to redevelopment.

DEMOGRAPHICS	W. Broad	S. Linden	Mt. Vernon	Ohio	US
Population	9,171	3,629	3,618	11.8M	331.4M
%African American	20.0	74.0	4.1	14.4	14.2
% Individuals below poverty level	42.5	61.8	34.9	13.4	12.6
% < 18 yrs. living below poverty level	70.4	91.5	67.4	18.2	16.7
%Single female below poverty level with own children	65.4	90.8	89.1	39.4	33.6
% receiving SNAP w/children	39.8	53.3	46.3	28.8	30.6
%employed living below poverty level	42.5	61.8	34.9	13.4	12.6
% Unemployment	7.6	20.2	5.3	5.3	5.5
Median Household Income (MHI)	\$26.9K	\$24.8K	\$35.5K	\$61.9K	\$69.0K
Median Home Value (MHV)	\$87.1K	\$63.5K	\$122.1K	\$159.9	\$244.9K

W. Broad TA (Franklin County CTs 42,50.01, 50.02); S. Linden TA (Franklin County CT 7.30); Mt. Vernon TA (Knox County CT 71); all demographics from ACS 2021 5-year estimates

2.a.ii Threats to Sensitive Populations-(1) Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations: Reference the above table unless otherwise noted. The TAs are environmental justice (EJ) communities with high concentrations of impoverished residents, including children, single mothers, & families receiving SNAP benefits. 67.4% to 91.5% of children under the age of 18 live in poverty in the TA neighborhoods. More than two-thirds of families in the TAs are headed by single mothers with children living in poverty. In the S. Linden and Mt. Vernon TAs, the rate is more than double that of the State (39.4%) and nation (33.6%). Similarly, the percentage of TA households who rely on Food Stamps ranges from 39.8% to 53.3% (more than a third higher than the State and federal rates). A portion of the W. Broad TA and all of the S. Linden and Mt. Vernon TAs are classified as food deserts by the FDA, with limited access to nutritious food for the neediest residents. With the exception of the S. Linden TA, unemployment is low. **However, one-third to almost two-thirds of employed people in the TAs live below the poverty level, which is nearly three to more than four times the State and federal rates.**

The health and welfare of residents throughout the TAs are at risk due to exposure to neighborhood-imbedded brownfields sites that could result in particulate inhalation, vapor intrusion, direct contact with contaminants such as VOCs, lead/metals, friable asbestos, and chlorinated solvents in soils. These contaminants may cause birth defects, brain and developmental health damage to children as well as increase cancer and other disease rates for all residents. With EPA grant funds, MORPC will assess exposure from brownfields and develop plans to clean up the sites.

2.a.ii. (2) Greater Than Normal Incidence of Disease and Adverse Health Conditions: Cancer incidence and death rates and chronic lower respiratory deaths are only available at the County level. Comparisons to Ohio and national incidence and death rates are presented below.

Indicator	Franklin County	Knox County	Ohio	U.S.
-----------	-----------------	-------------	------	------

All cancer deaths <sup>1,3</sup>	155.9	165.0	166.1	149.4
Lung/Bronchus cancer incidence <sup>1,3</sup>	61.2	62.9	64.7	54.0
Lung/Bronchus cancer deaths <sup>1,3</sup>	39.4	43.2	42.9	35.0
Chronic Lower Respiratory Deaths <sup>2,3</sup>	39.3	44.5	44.6	36.4

<sup>1</sup> *statecancerprofiles.cancer.gov (2020)*; <sup>2</sup> *Franklin & Knox County Health Assessments(2020)*; <sup>3</sup> *cases per 100,000 population*

As shown in the above table, all cancer deaths in Franklin and Knox Counties, as well as lung cancer incidence and deaths, and chronic lower respiratory deaths are comparable to the State, but exceed U.S. rates. According to the report “Ohio Deaths of Despair” from Ohio University, from 2010 to 2019, deaths of despair (unintentional overdose, suicide, liver cirrhosis) doubled in Franklin County and increased by 30% in Knox County. The rate of deaths of despair was highest (80 per 100,000) for 30-50 year-olds. According to the report, the primary cause was loss/lack of employment opportunities. The Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST) addresses current and historic environmental injustices in disadvantaged communities. Data helps agencies ensure that these communities, marginalized, underserved, and overburdened by pollution, receive intended benefits from Federal programs. **According to the CEJST, the W. Broad and S. Linden TAs are in disadvantaged census tracts (CTs).** The W. Broad TA is in the 97th percentile for low life expectancy and low income (i.e., only 3% of all Ohio census tracts have a **higher** prevalence). The S. Linden TA is in the 92<sup>nd</sup> percentile for low life expectancy and 98<sup>th</sup> percentile for low income. The Mt. Vernon TA, not in a disadvantaged CT, is in the 81<sup>st</sup> percentile for low income.

Specific health threats to sensitive populations will be identified by completing grant-funded assessments that will identify the hazardous substances to which residents may be exposed. Exposures can be reduced by implementing remediation activities and/or putting engineering controls in place prior to or as a part of brownfields redevelopment.

**2.a.ii (3)(a) Identification of Environmental Issues: Along with two of the three TAs being in disadvantaged CTs (see previous section) under CEJST criteria,** residents in the TAs are challenged by significantly higher levels of exposure to toxic compounds posing higher risks to their health and well-being as compared to other residents in Ohio. The U.S. EPA’s Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool (EJSCREEN) combines environmental and demographic indicators to understand how existing pollution may present potential adverse human health or environmental effects on EJ communities. The highest EJ Index percentiles for the W. Broad and S. Linden TAs were Particulate Matter at 98 and 89 (i.e., only 2% and 11% of CTs in Ohio have a **higher exposure** level). The S. Linden TA was also in the 96<sup>th</sup> percentile for lead paint exposure. The Mt. Vernon TA was in the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile for traffic proximity.

**Residents in the TA are not only exposed to impacts from uncontrolled brownfields but toxic air pollution as well.**

The Median Home Values (MHV) for the TAs ranges from \$63.5K in the S. Linden TA to \$122.1K in the Mt. Vernon TA, and are 24% to 60% lower than the State (See Table in 2.a.i). Contributing to the low median home values is the age of the homes. The median year of home construction in the TAs range from 1951 to 1960, compared to 1976 and 1972 for Franklin and Knox Counties, leading to potential health exposures to friable asbestos and lead paint. The neighborhoods are disproportionately challenged by higher risks due to exposure to toxics, but also decreased property values and increased risk to public health and welfare due to surrounding brownfields and attraction of vandalism/vagrants to the sites.

**2.a.ii (3)(b) Advancing Environmental Justice:** The EPA Grant will facilitate assessment and revitalization will result in job creation, more diverse housing, safer neighborhoods, higher property values and reduction of risks due to exposure from brownfields. The proposed reuses of



the priority sites will minimize displacement of residents by providing reliable public transportation to jobs and neighborhood amenities within walking distance of home.

**2.b. Community Engagement-2.b.i Project Involvement, 2.b.ii. Project Roles (Table):** Partners listed below represent over 100 entities that will be engaged in eligible grant activities.

Partner Name	Point of contact	Specific role in the project
<p><b>Developers, Real Estate Professionals</b> ID potential site users for developable brownfield sites in the TAs &amp; region.</p>	<p>Eric Wagenbrenner, Thrive Companies, <a href="mailto:ewagenbrenner@thrivecos.com">ewagenbrenner@thrivecos.com</a>, 614.545.9247</p>	<p>Assist in redevelopment efforts by marketing priority and other assessed sites to companies and businesses.</p>
<p><b>Community Foundations and Organizations</b> represent community outreach and support initiatives in the region.  *Neighborhood groups in the TAs.</p>	<p>Doug Kridler, The Columbus Foundation, <a href="mailto:dkridler@columbusfoundation.org">dkridler@columbusfoundation.org</a>, 614.251.4000 *Jackie Miles, Franklinton (W. Broad) Neighborhood Commission (NC), [REDACTED] *Lois Ferguson, S. Linden NC, [REDACTED] Carolyn Fergus, Mt. Vernon Office - Knox County Interchurch Social Services, <a href="mailto:issexecutivedirector@gmail.com">issexecutivedirector@gmail.com</a>, 740.397.4825</p>	<p>Provide networks to ID potential sites, communicate site selection, cleanup and redevelopment activities to underserved minority and low-income neighborhoods in the TAs &amp; the region. During cleanup/redevelopment activities, identify and leverage other funding programs.</p>
<p><b>Economic Development / Lenders</b> promote TAs and region’s businesses, support business growth and attract new, quality investment.</p>	<p>Holly Gallucci, Columbus Region COC, <a href="mailto:hollygallucci@columbus.org">hollygallucci@columbus.org</a>, 614.221.1321 Curtiss Williams, Central OH Land Bank, <a href="mailto:cwilliams@cocic.org">cwilliams@cocic.org</a>, 614.724.5263 Jeff Gottke, Knox County Land Bank, <a href="mailto:jeff@knoxadf.com">jeff@knoxadf.com</a> 740.393.3806</p>	<p>Inform businesses about future cleanup and redevelopment potential of priority &amp; other sites. ID sites for assessment; ID &amp; leverage other funding programs. Provide financing for high-impact redevelopment projects.</p>

**2.b.iii. Incorporating Community Input:** During formation of MORPC’s CEDS, forums with residents from varying backgrounds, key focus groups and community partners were conducted. MORPC will build on this approach for community involvement in the grant project. Main stakeholders will be residents/property owners, community/citizens groups, nearby business organizations, and lenders and developers conducting or supporting the actual work. As sites are identified through public outreach, they will be added to MORPC’s brownfields inventory. As sites are prioritized, MORPC will present the reasoning for the selection on their internet forums and solicit public feedback as well as conduct stakeholder meetings/interviews. Public meetings will be held as close as possible to the impacted TA to obtain input from local residents, neighborhood groups, and businesses. The combination of social media, public meetings, and written information will allow for information sharing and give resident/citizen groups a way to voice and resolve their health and safety concerns for grant-funded assessments. As assessment, cleanup and/or redevelopment planning is initiated, more intensive involvement activities, including explanations of plans, rationales, and results will occur. Solicitation of comments and feedback on plans or results will be considered and recorded in meeting minutes. At the close of the grant project, MORPC will hold a public meeting to notify the community of project outcomes. Presentation materials used throughout the project will be archived and placed on MORPC’s website; hard copies will be available at local libraries. If necessary, MORPC will conduct meetings remotely.

Quarterly progress reports will be disseminated using community and partners websites, and newsletters, as well as online news sources because these are widely read online. MORPC will work with community partners to develop a pipeline for resident input and concerns. Individual neighborhoods/communities can identify sensitive populations and non-English speaking residents for development of outreach materials. All input will be considered with responses developed by MORPC, neighborhood representatives and if needed, the health department.

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

**3a. Description of Tasks/Activities and Outputs-3.a.i-3a.iv (Implementation, Schedule, Lead, Outputs):** MORPC will use the grant to assess priority sites and **other high-risk and developable sites (i.e., additional sites) identified during the performance period to support cleanup and redevelopment.** Project implementation, schedule, and costs are based on MORPC’s experience with their FY2020 EPA Assessment grant, as well as other state and federal grant management. The following 4 tasks will be implemented to accomplish this plan.

<p><b>Task 1 – Programmatic and Outreach</b></p> <p><b><i>i. Project Implementation</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The Work Plan will be prepared, and the Cooperative Agreement (CA) will be executed. Grant project tracking and financial systems will be set up and maintained. Compliance with CA Terms will be monitored. A QEP will be retained in compliance with applicable federal procurement regulations.</li> <li>-Reports will be submitted to the US EPA: Quarterly reports, MBE/WBE and financial reports and final project closeout documentation; the Assessment, Cleanup, and Redevelopment Exchange System (ACRES) will be updated.</li> <li>-Staff will attend EPA National Brownfields Conference</li> <li>-Project “kick-off” meetings will be hosted for individual neighborhoods and partners.</li> <li>-Internal team meetings, updates and status will take place monthly throughout the grant term.</li> <li>-Community outreach materials/press releases will be developed for social media outlets, local media outlets, and partners websites and social media pages. Up to 24 public/outreach meetings will be conducted through a mix of virtual and live events. Assistance will be requested from County Health departments as appropriate to understand and prioritize health risks at brownfield sites identified for assessment.</li> </ul> <p><b><i>ii. Anticipated Schedule</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The Work Plan will be prepared within one month of receiving notification of the grant award; CA will be executed by September 2024. CA Compliance Tracking and Financial Systems will be set up upon award of grant and maintained throughout term.</li> <li>-A QEP will be retained within three months of award.</li> <li>-Beginning January 2025, quarterly reports will be submitted within 30 days of the end of the quarterly reporting period, ACRES will be updated as sites are assessed, as well as with cleanup and/or redevelopment information during and/or after the performance period. Annual MBE/WBE reports submitted. Final project closeout documentation submitted once the performance period ends.</li> <li>-Staff will attend the 2025 EPA National Brownfields Conference.</li> <li>-A project “kick-off” meeting held within one month of receiving notification of the grant award for MORPC and project partners; Internal team meetings will begin; Kick-off meetings scheduled within TA neighborhoods by March 2025.</li> <li>-Community outreach activities begin immediately upon award announcement and continue throughout the performance period. QEP will assist with technical outreach materials.</li> </ul> <p><b><i>iii. Task/Activity Lead:</i></b> MORPC will lead this Task.</p> <p><b><i>iv. Outputs:</i></b> Work Plan, CA, quarterly reports (16); ACRES updates; MBE/WBE and financial reports (4) and final project closeout documentation; staff training; 24 outreach meetings and development of outreach materials throughout the term.</p>
<p><b>Task 2 – Site Inventory/Identifying Additional Sites</b></p> <p><b><i>i. Project Implementation:</i></b> Solicit input for sites in MORPC’s region; interview stakeholders and visit additional sites to determine if sites meet eligibility and prioritization scoring criteria. <b>Additional sites will be evaluated, prioritized, and added to the inventory.</b></p>

<p><b>ii. <u>Anticipated Schedule:</u></b> Inventory and prioritization activities will begin upon grant announcement and continue throughout 4-year term. Additional sites will be added to inventory.</p>
<p><b>iii. <u>Task/Activity Lead:</u></b> MORPC will be the lead for this Task.</p>
<p><b>iv. <u>Outputs:</u></b> Updated brownfields inventory and prioritization.</p>
<p><b>Task 3 – Site Assessment</b></p>
<p><b>i. <u>Project Implementation</u></b></p> <p>-Priority sites (<b>and nonpriority sites identified during performance period</b>) evaluated through performance of Phase I and/or Phase II assessments, in accordance with All Appropriate Inquiry (<i>Phase I: ASTM Standard E1527-13; Phase II ASTM E1903-19</i>) and other ASTM standards or practices required by the project. Health and Safety Plans (HASPs) will be prepared prior to each assessment.</p> <p>- QEP will prepare and submit a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) for U.S. EPA for approval and will conduct assessments on priority and nonpriority sites and issue reports.</p> <p>- MORPC will coordinate activities with stakeholders regarding site access, review reports for accuracy and report findings to stakeholders and oversee QEP to ensure individual assessments are progressing, and the overall project schedule is met.</p>
<p><b>ii. <u>Anticipated Schedule</u></b></p> <p>- Once sites are selected and site access is granted, EPA eligibility will be submitted for approval. Phase I assessments will begin by February 2025 and continue throughout the term.</p> <p>- Phase II Assessments begin once EPA approves the QAPP and associated Sampling and Analysis Plans (SAPs). Anticipated to begin by April 2025.</p> <p>- Assessments on both priority and non-priority sites continue throughout the performance period.</p> <p>- MORPC staff and QEP meet monthly to discuss priority sites, ensure required site access/eligibility have been secured, individual projects are progressing, and the overall project schedule is met.</p> <p>- MORPC staff meets with prospective purchasers, developers to determine their specific project needs for redevelopment, for overall design of project and to identify funding gaps and types of resources needed.</p>
<p><b>iii. <u>Task/Activity Lead:</u></b> The QEP will lead this task because they have the technical expertise.</p>
<p><b>iv. <u>Outputs:</u></b> Outputs: 1 QAPP and anticipated 17 completed Phase I ESAs, 5 Hazardous Materials Assessments, and 7 Phase II ESA reports.</p>
<p><b>Task 4 – Cleanup Planning</b></p>
<p><b>i. <u>Project Implementation</u></b></p> <p>- Cleanup/ redevelopment planning as required by various Ohio programs for priority and non-priority sites assessed using the grant where redevelopment is imminent. Assessment of brownfields cleanup/redevelopment alternatives, evaluation of needed institutional and engineering controls, preparation of cleanup and reuse plans.</p> <p>- MORPC and project partners will identify potential clean-up resources specific for redevelopment of sites including Ohio EPA, Ohio Jobs and EPA Brownfields Cleanup funding.</p>
<p><b>ii. <u>Anticipated Schedule:</u></b> -Anticipated by late 2025, selecting sites for cleanup planning will continue throughout the performance period.</p>
<p><b>iii. <u>Task/Activity Lead:</u></b> The QEP will lead this task. QEPs have the educational and technical experience required for evaluating/mitigating hazardous/petroleum releases to the environment.</p>
<p><b>iv. <u>Outputs:</u></b> 7 cleanup planning documents.</p>

**3b. Cost Estimates:** Approximately 77% of the \$500K budget will go directly to site assessment activities; 5% will go to indirect costs, and none to direct administrative costs. Indirect costs were determined by applying MORPC’s negotiated indirect rate to their direct cost base. No equipment or supplies costs will be incurred.

**Task 1 – Programmatic and Outreach: \$44,000**

**Personnel costs: \$20,000** - 400 hrs. @ \$50.00/hour for procurement, tracking outputs, program reporting, financial tracking & monthly progress meetings and outreach activities outlined above.

**Travel costs: \$4,000** - 2 people to attend National Brownfield Conference (\$2,000 per person: \$700 Airfare, 3 nights hotel \$700, 4 days per diem and incidentals \$600).

**Contractual: \$20,000: \$3,200**-technical summaries for 16 quarterly reports; **\$9,000**- attendance at monthly (and others as necessary) progress meetings; and **\$7,800**-stakeholder meetings throughout term of grant.

**Task 2 - Site Inventory and Prioritization: \$10,200**

**Personnel: \$5,700**-114 hrs.@ 50.00/hour for prioritization of sites, stakeholder interviews and meetings, project site visits throughout the grant term

**Travel: \$2,000**-40 hrs. @ \$50/hour for windshield reconnaissance of potential additional sites

**Contractual: \$2,500**- to assist in site selection and prioritization

**Task 3 – Site Assessment: \$383,500**

**Personnel: \$3,000**-60 hrs. @ \$50.00/hour to coordinate site access, contractor oversight, report review, stakeholder meetings regarding results throughout the grant term

**Contractual: \$380,500**

- 17 Phase I ESAs @ avg cost of \$4,000 = \$68,000
- 7 Phase II ESAs @ avg cost of \$40,000 = \$280,000
- 5 Haz Materials Surveys @ avg cost of \$6,000 = \$30,000
- 1 QAPP and updates = \$2,500

**Task 4 – Cleanup Planning: \$40,000**

**Personnel: \$5,000**-100 hrs. @ \$50.00/hour for contractor oversight, report review, and stakeholder meetings

**Contractual costs: 7 cleanup plans @ avg cost of \$5,000 = \$35,000**

<b>MORPC EPA Brownfields Assessment Budget Request FY2024-2028</b>					
<b>Program Tasks</b>	<b>Programmatic, Outreach</b>	<b>Inventory</b>	<b>Phase I, Phase II</b>	<b>Cleanup Planning</b>	<b>Budget</b>
<b>Budget Categories</b>					
Personnel-(non-admin) <sup>1</sup>	\$20,000	\$5,700	\$3,000	\$5,000	\$33,700
Travel	\$4,000	\$2,000	\$0	\$0	\$6,000
Contractual	\$20,000	\$2,500	\$380,500	\$35,000	\$438,000
<b>Total Direct Costs</b>	<b>\$44,000</b>	<b>\$10,200</b>	<b>\$383,500</b>	<b>\$40,000</b>	<b>\$477,700</b>
<b>Total Indirect Costs</b>	<b>\$12,200</b>	<b>\$4,100</b>	<b>\$1,900</b>	<b>\$4,100</b>	<b>\$22,300</b>
<b>Total Budget<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>\$56,200</b>	<b>\$14,300</b>	<b>\$385,400</b>	<b>\$44,100</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>

<sup>1</sup> In-kind staff time will be contributed for amounts over those accounted for under personnel.

**c. Plan to Measure & Evaluate Environmental Progress and Results:** MORPC will track, measure, and report on the success of the project in ACRES and quarterly reports. Outputs including the number of Phase I and II ESAs completed and number of cleanup planning documents will be tracked. The actual outputs will be compared to the estimated number of outputs listed in Section 3.b. MORPC will track/report the following **outcomes** in ACRES: acres of land assessed; land remediated and redeveloped; acres of parks and greenspace preserved or created; number of jobs created or retained; tax revenue generated; redevelopment investment value; and other funding leveraged. Outcomes/outputs that cannot be easily entered into ACRES (i.e., website updates, staff training, community outreach/meetings) will be reported in quarterly reports. MORPC will evaluate the project progress semi-annually and, if goals are not being met or are off schedule, will discuss with the EPA Project Officer and the QEP to identify shortcomings and adjust the project accordingly.

**4. PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE**

**4.a. Programmatic Capability 4.a.i – 4.a.iii Organizational Capacity, Organizational Structure and Description of Key Staff:** MORPC, supported by Community Partners and the QEP (the project team) will act as an advisory committee and provide guidance on how best to utilize grant

funds and leverage additional funding to promote viable reuse/redevelopment of brownfields. Monthly project team meetings will ensure individual projects are progressing and the project schedule is being met. As with the FY2020 grant MORPC, Community Partners, and TA stakeholders will provide input on site selection and prioritization, and community outreach for the FY2024 assessment grant. MORPC will also focus on maintaining and creating partnerships throughout the region to leverage EPA grant resources. MORPC will ensure compliance to the CA, as well as be responsible for financial tracking, outreach to stakeholders and liability management. MORPC, TA stakeholders, and Community Partners will provide input on site selection/prioritization, land assembly, and other regional economic impacts throughout the performance period.

MORPC's project team will be led by **Ms. Maria Schaper**, AICP, Associate Director of Transportation Planning. She assists in the administration of the Columbus Urbanized Area's Metropolitan Planning Organization, including management of USDOT formula and discretionary grant programs, most recently a Safe Streets and Roads For All Safety Action Plan award. She also manages the development of central Ohio's Metropolitan Transportation Plan, which currently sets the framework for \$30 billion in regional transportation investments. She will be responsible for directing, promoting and implementing the grant project and engaging the community. **Ms. Padmini Roy-Dixon**, Economic Development Director and Regional Innovation Officer, and **Ms. Ralonda Hampton**, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer, will use their network of community contacts in the TAs and Region to generate community outreach opportunities, especially in underserved communities, relating to brownfield assessment. Ms. Roy-Dixon will also assist Ms. Schaper with day-to-day project management and will take over primary project management should that become necessary. **Mr. Anthony Perry**, MORPC's Finance Director is experienced in using the Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP) program for MORPC's FY2020 EPA grant. He will continue to provide financial tracking and management support for the FY2024 grant.

*4.a.iv Acquiring Additional Resources-* MORPC will retain a QEP to manage technical grant activities and conduct environmental assessment tasks. They have a procurement process in place and have managed the procurement of contractors for multiple state and federal grant projects. The process complies with federal procurement regulations and includes guidance to attract and utilize disadvantaged, minority- and women-owned businesses, as possible. Once the CA is approved, MORPC will prepare the Request for Qualifications and will direct and oversee the procurement process. The selected QEP(s) will have managed U.S. EPA Assessment Grants and Ohio Voluntary Action Program (VAP) projects and be familiar with all programmatic requirements.

**4.b. Past Performance and Accomplishments:** *4.b.i Currently Has or Previously Received an EPA Brownfields Grant:* **(1) Accomplishments:** MORPC received a FY2020 EPA Brownfields Coalition Assessment Grant for Hazardous Substances and Petroleum. Outputs included 12 Phase I ESAs, 2 Hazardous Materials Assessments, 11 Phase II ESAs, and 1 Cleanup Plan. To date, five sites have redevelopment plans in place, and \$15.6 million in public and private funds leveraged to assist with cleanup and subsequent redevelopment of these sites. Outputs/outcomes, including leveraging, have been entered in ACRES.

**(2) Compliance with Grant Requirements:** MORPC successfully negotiated the CA with the U.S. EPA and received approval of its Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) and associated QAPP updates; all Sampling and Analysis Plans (SAPs) and Health and Safety Plans required for the Phase II activities completed using the Grant funds. Over 75% of the total budget was spent on Phase I/II assessment activities. MORPC complied with the Work Plan and associated schedules, terms, and conditions, submitted timely quarterly, entered required data into ACRES, conducted community engagement, and complied with financial status reporting requirements. MBE/WBE and final reports are in the process of being completed.

The FY20 grant started in October 2020 and ended in September 2023. As of October 1, 2023, \$571,131.50 (~72.7%) has been drawn down. The remainder is expected to draw down with \$0.00 remaining by December 2023.



**ATTACHMENT**  
**THRESHOLD CRITERIA**

**FY2024 USEPA BROWNFIELDS  
COMMUNITY-WIDE HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES AND  
PETROLEUM ASSESSMENT GRANT PROPOSAL**

**MID-OHIO REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**

**RESPONSES TO THRESHOLD CRITERIA**

1. Applicant Eligibility: The **Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC)** is a regional council of local governments. It is organized under the provisions of Ohio Revised Code 713.21 (attached).
2. During formation of MORPC's CEDS, forums with residents from varying backgrounds, key focus groups and community partners were conducted. MORPC will build on this approach for community involvement in the grant project. Main stakeholders will be residents/property owners, community/citizens groups, nearby business organizations, and lenders and developers conducting or supporting the actual work. As sites are identified through public outreach, they will be added to MORPC's brownfields inventory. As sites are prioritized, MORPC will present the reasoning for the selection on their internet forums and solicit public feedback as well as conduct stakeholder meetings/interviews. Public meetings will be held as close as possible to the impacted TA to obtain input from local residents/business. The combination of social media, public meetings, and written information will allow for information sharing and give resident/citizen groups a way to voice and resolve their health and safety concerns for grant-funded assessments. As assessment, cleanup and/or redevelopment planning is initiated, more intensive involvement activities, including explanations of plans, rationales, and results will occur. Solicitation of comments and feedback on plans or results will be considered and recorded in meeting minutes. At the close of the grant project, MORPC will hold a public meeting to notify the community of project outcomes. Presentation materials used throughout the project will be archived and placed on MORPC website and Facebook and hard copies will be available at local libraries.  
  
Quarterly progress reports will be disseminated using community and partners websites, and newsletters, as well as online news sources because these are widely read online. MORPC will work with community partners to develop a pipeline for resident input and concerns. Individual neighborhoods/communities can identify sensitive populations and non-English speaking residents for development of outreach materials. All input will be considered with responses developed by MORPC, neighborhood representatives and if needed, the health department.
3. Expenditure of Assessment Grant Funds: MORPC had a FY2020 EPA Brownfields Coalition Assessment Grant for Hazardous Substances and Petroleum. \$571,131.50 (95.2%) of the \$600,000 budget was drawn down and disbursed. The October 30, 2023 report from the Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP) documenting the drawdowns is attached.