

NARRATIVE INFORMATION SHEET

**Brownfield Opportunities from Infrastructure Investments**

**1. Applicant Identification**

Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC)  
 6100 Southport Road  
 Portage, Indiana 46368

**2. Funding requested**

**IV.D.2.a Assessment Grant Type:** Coalition Assessment

**IV.D.2.b. Federal Funds Requested:** \$1,499,954

**3. Location**

Coalition Member	Role	Member Boundaries	Application Boundaries
Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC)	Lead	Lake, Porter, and LaPorte Counties, Indiana	Lake, Porter, and LaPorte Counties, Indiana
Northwestern Indiana Forum Foundation (NWIFF)	Non-lead	Lake, Porter, LaPorte, Jasper, Newton, Pulaski, Starke Counties, Indiana	Excluding Census Tracts areas ineligible due to open MARC Grant in Michigan City and pending results of FY 2024 Assessment and Multi-purpose Applications from Gary and Lake Station.
Urban League of Northwest Indiana (ULNWI)	Non-Lead	Lake, Porter, and LaPorte Counties, Indiana	

**4. Coalition Members' Target Areas and Priority Site Information**

NIRPC **Target Area 1** includes two [Transit Development Districts \(TDDs\)](#) in Hammond and East Chicago, which encompass all or part of census tracts **18089020300, 20400, 20500, 20600, 20700, 20800** and **108089030300, 30400, 30500, 30600, 30700**. It also includes [Quantum Corridor™](#) (Corridor) segments in Hammond, Whiting, and East Chicago. The Corridor is defined as an area bounded to the west at the Illinois-Indiana state line in Hammond, to the East at the LaPorte-St. Joseph County line and contained by census tracts within a 2-mile buffer of the I-90 centerline. Corridor census tracts in Target Area 1 include: **18089030100, 30200, 30800,30900, 31000 and 180890:20100,20200, 20900, 21000, 21100, 21300, 40100, 40200, 21400, 21700, 20800, 21900, 22000**.

**Target Area 1 Priority Sites:**

6151-6147 Columbia Ave & 1300 Field St, Hammond IN  
 5300 Indianapolis Blvd, East Chicago IN

ULNWI **Target Area 2** includes census tracts containing the Gary-Miller TDD, and Corridor segments through Gary (excluding two downtown tracts that are the Target Area a City of Gary’s FY 24 Multipurpose Grant Application.) These target areas include 23 census tracts. Target Area Census Tracts include the **18089010100, 10201, 10203, 10302, 10304, 10400, 10600, 10900, 11100, 11200, 11400,11500, 11600, 11800, 12100, 12200, 12300, 12800, 41100, 41200, 41700.**

**Target Area 2 Priority Sites:**

- 4620 E 8<sup>th</sup> & 4680 Melton Rd, Gary IN
- 6521 Melton Rd, Gary IN
- 210 N Grand Blvd, Gary IN
- 5400 W. 5<sup>th</sup> Ave, Gary, IN
- 5700-6100 W 15<sup>th</sup> Ave & 601 W 13<sup>th</sup> Ave, Gary IN

NWIFF **Target Area 3** is the Corridor from the Gary-Lake Station Boundary, Porter County and LaPorte County including all or part of 23 Census Tracts: **18089041500, 41600, 41700, 42000, 42400, 42500, 42600, 18127050101, 50103, 50202, 50203, 50300, 50402, 50501, 50503, 50505, 50506, 50507, 50508, 50509**

**5. Contacts**

**5.a. Project Director**

Ms. Kathy Luther  
 Director of Environmental Programs  
 NIRPC  
 6100 Southport Road,  
 Portage, Indiana 46368  
 Phone: (219) 254-2513  
 email: kluther@nirpc.org

**5.b. Chief Executive**

Mr. Ty Warner  
 Executive Director  
 NIRPC  
 6100 Southport Road  
 Portage, Indiana 46368  
 Phone: (219) 254-2524  
 E-mail: twarner@nirpc.org

**6. Population**

Population of Cities and Towns wholly or partially within Coalition Target Areas (2020 Census)

East Chicago	26,370	Beverly Shores	601	City of LaPorte	22,471
Gary	69,093	Burns Harbor	1,890	Westville	2,675
Hammond	77,879	Chesterton	14,121		
Lake Station	13,160	Dune Acres	182		
New Chicago	1,993	Ogden Dunes	1,168		
Whiting	4,546	Pines	596		
		Portage	37,926		
		Porter	5,210		

7.

Other Factors	Page #
Community population is 10,000 or less.	2
The applicant is, or will assist, a federally recognized Indian Tribe or United States Territory.	N/A
The priority site(s) is impacted by mine-scarred land.	N/A
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).	3
The priority site(s) is in a federally designated flood plain.	2, 5
The reuse of the priority site(s) will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy.	N/A
The reuse of the priority site(s) will incorporate energy efficiency measures.	5
The proposed project will improve local climate adaptation/mitigation capacity and resilience to protect residents and community investments.	5
At least 30% of the overall project budget will be spent on eligible reuse/area-wide planning activities, as described in Section I.B., for priority site(s) within the target area(s).	Y
The target area(s) is located within a community which a coal-fired power plant has recently closed (2013 or later) or is closing.	N/A

**IV.D.8. Letter from the State or Tribal Environmental Authority**

Please find attached a letter dated November 8 from Indiana Brownfields Program acknowledging our intent to apply for FY24 grant funds and conduct assessment activities.

State, Tribes, and Alaska Tribe Entities: Not Applicable

**IV.D.9. Releasing Copies of Applications**

N/A



# INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

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**Eric J. Holcomb**  
*Governor*

**Brian C. Rockensuess**  
*Commissioner*

November 8, 2023

Mr. Ty Warner, Executive Director  
Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission  
6100 Southport Road  
Portage, Indiana 46368

Re: IDEM Acknowledgement Letter  
U.S. E.P.A. Brownfields Grant Proposal  
Coalition Assessment Grant  
NIRPC  
Lake, Porter, and LaPorte Counties

Dear Mr. Warner:

This letter is provided in support of the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC) proposal to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) for Brownfields Coalition Assessment Grant funding. The Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) acknowledges that NIRPC is requesting \$1,500,000 for hazardous substances and/or petroleum assessment.

IDEM understands that NIRPC has demonstrated its commitment to redeveloping brownfields by taking advantage of financial and technical assistance offered through the Indiana Brownfields Program (Program) and that NIRPC, based on the information it has provided with its request, believes it has the capability to perform the proposed grant-funded activities. Two regional scale target areas have been identified for the two committed coalition partners, NIRPC and the Northwest Indiana Forum Foundation (NWI Forum). NIRPC remains in negotiation with their Community Based Organization Partner to identify a third target area.

Target Area 1 consists of the seven designated Transit Development Districts (TDDs) adopted by the Regional Development Authority in conjunction with the multi-million-dollar expansion and improvement in commuter rail to Chicago. Priority sites are still being solidified based on disadvantaged populations of Gary, Hammond, and East Chicago, current property use and ownership, and the results of previous and current screening and assessment work in Gary.

The NWI Forum has selected the I-90/Quantum Corridor as Target Area 2. NIRPC is currently screening a corridor width of 3 miles on either side of the I-90 to

finalize corridor boundaries with this area. TDD Target Areas will be excluded from this Target where the two coincide. In addition to the priority site criteria identified in Target Area 1, the NWI Forum will be working with the Quantum Corridor sponsors to identify site selection criteria most suitable for technology driven reuse.

NIRPC will also be identifying additional socioeconomic disadvantaged tracts and/or environmentally burdened tracts in Hammond, East Chicago, Lake Station, Portage, Westville, and LaPorte for potential priority sites. NIRPC also maintains close communication with the cities of Gary, Lake Station, LaPorte, and Michigan City and others to ensure they are not duplicating efforts with jurisdictions preferring to apply for community assessment grants.

Since NIRPC has not yet selected/indicated the specific sites that will benefit from U.S. EPA brownfield grant funding, IDEM cannot make site-specific eligibility determinations at this time. However, should NIRPC be awarded the requested grant funding, the Program will work together with U.S. EPA and NIRPC to determine site eligibility once NIRPC has established the sites intended for funding.

IDEM has worked with NIRPC on several projects. IDEM recognizes that NIRPC is committed to working with the Program and/or the IDEM Voluntary Remediation Program for technical oversight of grant-funded site activities as applicable during the grant project period. The Program and IDEM are committed to continuing to support brownfield redevelopment within NIRPC by providing technical and other assistance through the Program.

Based on the information submitted, IDEM considers the NIRPC an excellent candidate to receive U.S. EPA assessment grant funding to continue its brownfields redevelopment efforts, which support Indiana's brownfields initiative. IDEM looks forward to continuing its partnership with NIRPC and its constituent communities. For further assistance, please contact John Morris of the Indiana Brownfields Program directly at (317) 234-0235 and at [jmorris@ifa.in.gov](mailto:jmorris@ifa.in.gov).

Sincerely,



Andrea Robertson Habeck  
Technical Staff Coordinator  
Indiana Brownfields Program

cc: *(via electronic transmission)*

Ms. Kathy Luther, Director of Environmental Programs, NIRPC

## **Brownfield Opportunities with Infrastructure Investments: The Narrative**

### **1. Project Area Description and Plans for Revitalization**

**1.A.i. Coalition Members:** The Northwest Indiana Forum Foundation (NWIFF) is a 501 (C) (3) regional economic development organization. The NWIFF has 5 employees with a 4 average of \$51,600 in unrestricted revenue. The Urban League of Northwest Indiana (ULNWI) is a (501) (C) (3) that works to promote, encourage, and enhance services to improve the social, educational, and economic conditions of African Americans and minority groups in Lake, Porter, and LaPorte Counties with a staff of 3.

**1.A. ii. Overview of Brownfield Challenges and Description of Target Areas:** Over the past century, Northwest Indiana's economy was built on a foundation of integrated steel production, foundries, smelters, petroleum refining, cement manufacturing, and support industries. The largest polluting facilities were located along the Lake Michigan shoreline, which provided access to water and a place to dispose of waste. Prior to environmental regulation, steel slag, foundry sand, fly ash, refractory brick, and other waste materials were commonly disposed of in the ample low-lying coastal wetlands in north Lake County. Fast forward to today, industries have changed, consolidated, or mechanized. Today more steel is made with fewer workers. People with means moved farther south to escape proximity to the ones that remain. Thousands of acres of brownfields and urban blight dominate neighborhoods in Gary, Hammond, East Chicago, Michigan City, and LaPorte. These sites impact the health and welfare of impoverished minority residents, the environment, and the economic conditions of the region.

Our Coalition focuses on two types of target areas defined by regionally transformative public and private infrastructure Investments. The first type is [Transit Development Districts \(TDDs\)](#), areas identified adjacent to train stations provide economic tools and strategies to support implementation of high-quality transit-oriented development and to capture incremental growth in property and income tax revenue for public sector investment in infrastructure and amenities necessary for their success.

The second target area type encompasses areas complementing the public-private [Quantum Corridor™](#), a corridor to drive tech infrastructure to Indiana and create an information-sharing platform for academic researchers, scientific facilities, defense contractors and industry. The Coalition has outlined a brownfield investigation corridor bounded on the west by the Indiana-Illinois state line and by the LaPorte county eastern border, and 2 miles north and south of the I-90 centerline. Priority sites within the corridor will be in disadvantaged and/or environmentally burdened census tracts to enable quantum computing related development in brownfield challenged but infrastructure rich communities.

NIRPC: Target Area 1(TA1) includes TDDs in Hammond and East Chicago, which encompass all or part of census tracts **18089020300, 20400, 20500, 20600, 20700, 20800, and 108089030300, 30400, 30500, 30600, 30700**. Segments of the Corridor in the cities of Hammond and East Chicago are also included in this TA capture all or part of census tracts **18089030100, 30200, 30800,30900, 31000 and 18089020100,20200, 20900, 21000, 21100, 21300, 40100, 40200, 21400, 21700, 21900, 22000**. All 28 tracts were in the 90<sup>th</sup> %ile or higher for at least 1 of the 5 brownfield challenge metrics. 4 tracts were >90 %ile for all of them.

ULNWI: Target Area 2 is the City of Gary Corridor and the Gary-Miller TDD, excluding two downtown tracts prioritized in the City's Multipurpose Grant Application. Target Area 2(TA2) includes 23 census tracts. Of these, 15 have between 1 and 3 brownfield impact indicators in the 90<sup>th</sup>%ile. 12 of these 15 have at least one brownfield impact indicator >95%ile. TA2 tracts include the **180890: 10203, 10302, 10304, 10400, 10600, 10900, 11100, 11200, 11400, 11600, 11800, 12100, 12200, 12300, 12800, 41100, 41200**.

NWIFF Target Area 3 (TA3) include the following 23 tracts in Lake Station, New Chicago, Porter County and LaPorte County: **180890:41600, 41800, 180910:41500, 41600, 41700, 41800, 42000, 42400, 42500, 42600, 181270:50101, 50103, 50202, 50203, 50300, 50402, 50501, 50503, 50505, 50506, 50507, 50508, 50509**. One of these tracts showed an NPL Proximity of 96%ile, two others had UST Proximity of 88 and 89%ile. In the Corridor Target Area, there are several locations where the EPA EJ Screen reveals heavily burdened Census Block Groups along this route. For example, Block Group **180910426021** is in >90%ile for NPL, RMP, Hazardous Waste, and UST proximity. Block Group **180890418001** is in 97%ile and **180890417001** is in 94%ile for UST proximity. Block Group **180890418006** and **18089418002** are in the 95th%ile for Lead Paint.

**1.A.iii. Description of the Priority Brownfield Sites: NIRPC Priority Sites:** NIRPC GIS analysis shows densities of remediation sites between 5 and 20/mi<sup>2</sup> throughout Hammond, East Chicago, and Whiting within the target areas. Typical environmental conditions found at sites include heavy metals and PAHs in soils and groundwater, asbestos in buildings, and soil vapor concerns due to known solvent or VOC plumes. Some priority sites include:

- **Columbia Business Park Outlots**, 6141-6147, & 6151-6221 Columbia Ave & 1300 Field St, Hammond are owned by the Hammond Redevelopment Commission associated with Hammond's Columbia Business Park. The location is within the [Quantum Corridor™](#). Census Block Group 180890208004, adjacent of the site to the west is in the 95 %ile Superfund Proximity and Underground Storage Tanks and 99th% for Wastewater Discharge. The unemployment rate is in the 91<sup>st</sup> %ile, Over Age 64 of 95<sup>th</sup> %ile, and Low Life Expectancy is in the 94<sup>th</sup> %ile. The city has lost two developers as further investigation is needed at the site to adequately quantify remaining risk.. There are also are multiple nearby LUST sites, Hazardous Waste sites and a major rail switching yard.
- **5300 Indianapolis Blvd, East Chicago**, is a vacant 3.9-acre site city owned within the East Chicago TDD. The site is within one mile of a RCRA Corrective Action site and ten LUST sites, two of which remain open per Envirofacts FRS mapping tool.

**ULNWI Priority Sites:**

- **4680 Melton Road, Gary** is a vacant property in Census Tract 18089010200 and the Gary Miller TDD. The Coalition conducted a Phase I EA of the site with a previous EPA Brownfield Grant. RECs at the site include an adjacent car wash/former auto repair facility and nearby filling station. This site is owned by a real estate company and could be desirable for TDD related development.
- **5671 Melton Road, Gary** is also in Census Tract 18089010200 and the Gary Miller TDD. The property appears to be used for old truck and equipment storage with a high risk of contamination. The current owner is absent and is over \$50,000 behind in property taxes. Environmental Assessment could protect the city or county from acquiring an unknown liability through tax foreclosure.
- **200 N Grand Blvd, Gary** is a vacant former Gary Public School. The former Wirt-Emerson site is 18 acres near the Gary-Miller TDD. Phase I EA was performed with funds from a previous EPA Brownfield grant. The building contains asbestos, and 1 REC was found.
- **5400 West 5<sup>th</sup> Ave, Gary** is a vacant former Gary Public School. The Thomas Edison Middle School site is in census tract 18089010304, which is in the 89<sup>th</sup> %ile for low income, between 91<sup>st</sup> and 99<sup>th</sup> for the 4 CJEST Health Indicators, 99<sup>th</sup> %ile for Superfund site proximity, contains one or more Formerly Used Defense Sites. This 20-acre parcel was found to have 2 RECs in a Phase I EA conducted in a prior Coalition grant. It is also within proximity to Ivanhoe Nature Preserve, a globally rare wetland ecosystem.



**6100 West 15<sup>th</sup> Ave, Gary** is the 3<sup>rd</sup> of the vacant former school on the priority list in tract 18089010302. The former Ivanhoe School sites on 22 acres and was found to have 4 Recognized Environmental Conditions, plus asbestos in a 2019 Phase I EA. In addition to being in the 97<sup>th</sup> %ile of low median income, it is 96<sup>th</sup>, 98<sup>th</sup>, and 95<sup>th</sup> in asthma, diabetes, and low life expectancy.

**NWIFF Priority Sites:**

**Portage Vacant Land Parcel 64-02-36-376-802.000-016** is a 44 acre un-platted parcel in in tract 18127050407. The location is Portage’s Northside Redevelopment TIF district zoned for Planned Development. The location has 1 emergency response, 1 RCRA Corrective Action Site, 2 brownfield sites, and 3 non-NPL Superfund sites within a 1mile radius.

- **W Of I94&I90 W of Cnty, W of County Line Rd, Lake Station** are 2 parcels SE of I-94 in Lake Station between the highway right of way and the county line. Together they are 25 acres of un-platted land potentially attractive to quantum technology developers. The location is in census block group 180890418001 and EPA EJ Screen places in the 90<sup>th</sup> %ile in Air Toxics, 97<sup>th</sup> %ile for Underground Storage Tanks, and 98<sup>th</sup> %ile Unemployment.
- **Portage Vacant Land JLM Developers LLC , Portage** are 4 un-platted parcels NE of the I-90/Willowcreek Interchange totaling 25 un-platted acres in TA 3. EPA EnviroMapper places 25 RCRA Hazardous Waste sites within 1 mile of this location. Located in Census Block Group 181270504082 EPA EJ Mapper places this block group in the 82<sup>nd</sup> %ile for low income,90<sup>th</sup> %ile for Air Cancer Risk, 94<sup>th</sup> %ile Air Toxics, 90<sup>th</sup> for Lead Paint, 91<sup>st</sup> %ile for Hazardous Waste Proximity, and 96<sup>th</sup> for Wastewater Discharge.

**1.A. iv. Identifying Additional Sites:**The Coalition will adapt a previous brownfield site scoring tool created for an FY Coalition Assessment Grant. This simple tool will be adapted to reflect the FY 24 Program Guidance and input from our new coalition member, the ULNWI.

CRITERIA	SCORING QUESTION	Y/N/?
<b>Redevelopment Ready</b>	Proposed reuse consistent with current zoning and/or community plans?	1/0
	Redevelopment potential demonstrated by current or recent bona fide potential purchaser?	1/0
<b>Public Benefit</b>	Will assessing this site protect a public entity from environmental liability/preserve federal funding eligibility?	1/0
	Is the proposed reuse a public amenity or quality of place project?	1/0
<b>Economic Benefit</b>	Will proposed reuse create or retain jobs ?	1/0
	Does the proposed reuse advance goals or adopted regional economic development plans by NIRPC, NWIEDD, NWIFF, or other regional entities?	1/0
<b>Leverage</b>	Is the site in a special incentive zone such as TIF, TDD, Opportunity Zone, or CDE investment area?	1/0
	Does the project leverage other private, local, state, or federal investments in infrastructure, workforce development, or community development.	1/0



**Community Need**

Is the site in an Environmental Justice Area?

1/0

**I.B. Revitalization of the Target Areas –**

**1.B.i. Reuse Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans:** [Transit Development Districts \(TDDs\)](#) were enabled by Indiana State Legislation as a special type of Tax Increment Finance District designed to incentivize creation of mixed use, sustainable transit-oriented development areas within walkable distance of new and revitalized rail stations in Lake, Porter, and LaPorte Counties of Indiana. TDDs were adopted through a process that included development analysis, community-wide input, TOD expert consultants, and market analysis. The environmental assessments and site cleanup plans funded through this grant will help reduce uncertainties.

Several regional plans contain goals and strategies related to the diversification of the region’s economy and capitalization on new technologies, which will advance reuse of the [Quantum Corridor™](#) target areas: NIRPC’s NWI2050+ Regional Comprehensive Plan, NIRPC’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for Northwest Indiana, and the Northwest Indiana Forum (NWIFF)’s *Ignite the Region: Northwest Indiana’s Strategy for Economic Transformation*.

**1.B.ii. Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategy:** Historic reliance on the steel sector and heavy industry for jobs and tax revenue has led to a “boom and bust” cycle that is difficult to break without economic diversification. Diversification is difficult against the negative perception caused by brownfields. Northwest Indiana strongly believes that the [Quantum Corridor™](#) infrastructure investment represents a transformational change with leadership in new technology. Technology entrepreneurs, quantum research centers, and think tanks are all envisioned as new industries and businesses that can grow here. The new Transit Oriented Redevelopments in Gary, Hammond, and East Chicago will provide for equitable access to higher paying job opportunities in Chicago. Walkable neighborhoods with businesses on first levels will provide new spaces for small businesses to grow. These districts can become communities that will be safer and healthier places to live, work, and play. New construction now must meet Indiana’s newly adopted 2018 International Energy Conservation Standard building codes, and more convenient trains will reduce traffic congestion and accompanying carbon emissions.

Several priority sights are near waterways or floodplains, high quality natural areas, and even Indiana Dunes National Park. NIRPC has in place green infrastructure design guidelines and conservation planning partners are on the Partner list to help encourage redevelopment to design flood resilient projects. The City of Gary is working on a community resiliency plan and has very strong very strong green infrastructure and stormwater management standards in place. Redevelopment of Target Area 2 priority parcels will definitely increase the resilience in that community.

The project will support environmental justice communities and brownfield locations to be regionally competitive with rural, agricultural, and natural areas to receive investments from these economic redevelopment initiatives, thus preserving these regional resources. The project is consistent with NIRPC’s NWI2050+ plan Chapter 3: Climate and the environment, which contains land use strategy recommendations for reducing greenhouse gas emission, such as infill development and TODs.

**1.C. Strategy for Leveraging Resources:** This iteration of the NWI Brownfield Coalition, has a unique ability to bring brownfield experience and grant resources together with private economic development interest,

municipal support, and empowered community champions to diversify our regional economic base. The NWI Forum Foundation has used their regional *Ignite the Region: Northwest Indiana's Strategy for Economic Transformation* to generate a working group focused on workforce development to coordinate resources preparing talent ready for these new opportunities. As the Metropolitan Planning Organization, NIRPC has offered Transit Oriented Development Planning Grant Opportunity for local governments. The NWIFF has brought to the partnership Strategus LLC (CDE) that will bring New Market Tax Credit funding to our regional brownfield efforts for the first time.

**1.C.i. Resources Needed for Site Reuse:** In 2013 the Northwestern Indiana Brownfield Coalition (NWIBC) was awarded an EPA Brownfield RLF Grant which has a current balance of \$400,000 available to loan for additional brownfield cleanup. NIRPC's Economic Development District manages an EDA Revolving Loan Fund in LaPorte County which has \$200,000 revolving in the community for business expansion, and retention. The Transit Development Districts are anticipated to attract \$2.3 Billion in Private Investment through TIF based incentives like redevelopment subsidies, infrastructure improvement or other community improvement projects such as preparing brownfields for reuse.

**1.C.ii. Use of Existing Infrastructure:** Phase I of the Quantum Corridor™ is complete, connecting with a state investment of \$4M. This dark fiber cable infrastructure is capable of moving 40 terabits of data per second.

The Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD) operates the Southshore Line, Northwest Indiana's commuter rail to Chicago. NICTD is nearing completion of a \$649 million dollar infrastructure investment, - [Double Track NWI](#). Double Track NWI will increase service between Gary's Miller Station and downtown Chicago and cut 20 minutes off commute times.

## **2. Community Need and Community Engagement**

### **IV.E.2.a. Community Need**

**IV.E.2.a.i. The Community's Need for Funding:** The three counties within the Coalition geography contain 41 municipalities, 27 of which (66%) fit under EPA's definition of Small or Micro. Within the Target Areas, 10 of 15 municipalities fall under these categories and lack the resources to carry out environmental assessments.

**2.a.ii. Threats to Sensitive Populations:** The large cities of Gary and Hammond are in the 89th and 72nd percentile nationally and CJEST disadvantaged per CJEST. It is anticipated that Gary is applying for a Multipurpose grant to address a handful of brownfields in two census tracts.

As a region, we have learned that the extent of the brownfield problem is too large in Gary, Hammond, and East Chicago to address alone. It is more efficient and effective to work together sharing our individual capacities. The Coalition Assessment Grants benefits the region from efficiencies of scale. By using assessment dollars wisely, we can help the cities to preserve eligibility for cleanup funds for the intractable sites or public reuse projects.

The remaining cities or towns have populations between 20,000 and 50,000, of which 1 is rural and the rest inside urbanized or urbanizing area boundaries. Three of these are low-income: East Chicago (83rd%ile); City of LaPorte (74th%ile), and Michigan City (69th%ile). East Chicago and LaPorte are both within Target Areas. Both qualify as disadvantaged for low income in CJEST.

**2.a.ii.1 Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations:** NIRPC used CJEST and EJScreen Census Tract Data to identify sensitive groups and selected health and welfare criteria for each Target Area in the tables below. Health and Welfare metrics selected are Linguistic Isolation, Population < 100% of Federal Poverty Level, Asthma, Lead Paint Exposure Diesel Particulate Exposure, Traffic Density & Volume, and Low Life Expectancy.

Target Area	TA1: East Chicago & Hammond -TDD and Corridor		TA2: Gary -Miller TDD and Corridor		TA3: Corridor -Portage, Porter County, Westville, LaPorte, LaPorte County	
Sensitive Group	TA #	% of TA	TA #	% of TA or TA %ile	TA #	% of TA
Kids<10, # = individuals and % of TA Pop.	13600	14%	7937	13%	14557	11 %
Adults >65, # = individuals and % of TA	12341	12%	10712	18%	20972	16 %
POC=# = individuals and % of TA Pop.	72504	72%	47300	79%	27132	20 %
Language Isolated Households, # of tracts and Percentile of % TA	15	70th %ile	1	23rd %ile	0	25th %ile
< 100% Fed. Poverty Line, # tracts over 70th %ile and %ile of TA	19	76th %ile	17	83rd %ile	5	50th %ile
Diesel Particulate Exposure, # of tracts over 70th %ile and TA %ile.	28	81st %ile	71	71st %ile	2	56th %ile
Traffic Proximity & Volume,# of tracts over 70th %ile and TA %ile	24	80th %ile	10	52nd %ile	3	49th %ile

**2.A.ii.2 Greater Than Normal Incidence of Disease and Adverse Health Conditions:** Many of the disease and health conditions of most concern published at the county level. In 2021 out of 92 counties in the state, Lake County ranked 90th socio-economic health factors and 92nd in physical environment health factors. The county cancer mortality rate of 176 per 100,000 is 20% higher than the US rate of 146. This data is not sufficient to truly show the health challenges in the target areas. Lake County census tracts in these Target Areas show dramatically higher socio-economic disadvantage, legacy pollution, and environmental burdens than those even two miles further south.

NIRPC reviewed Community Health Needs Assessments (CHNA) from regional hospital systems with facilities in and outside of our Target Area communities and areas to identify data showing differences. According to Methodist Hospitals, Lake County tested over 1,000 children from the East Chicago USS Lead Superfund Site for lead poisoning in 2015. Those in the West Calumet Housing Complex had 3 times higher rates of dangerous lead levels than the rest of East Chicago. Published data does not allow identification of the census tracts or even the cities in which these lead poisonings occurred. However, we do know from the EPA EJ Screen Mapper that that target area 1 ranks in the 89th %ile for lead paint exposure, with 14 out of 28 tracts exceeding the 90th %ile. Target Area 2 ranks in the 78th %ile with 7 tracts over 90th %ile.

Target Area	TA1: East Chicago & Hammond -TDD and Corridor		TA2: Gary -Miller TDD and Corridor		TA3: Corridor -Portage, Porter County, Westville, LaPorte, LaPorte County	
	Disease or Condition > Normal Incidence	Tracts with >90th%ile	Avg %ile of TA	# Tracts in TA	Avg %ile of TA	# Tracts with >90th%ile
Diabetes	13	82nd	17	96th	0	62nd
Asthma	7	68th	16	90th	0	56th
Heart Disease	10	67th	11	87th	1	59th
Low Life Expectancy	8	77th	16	85th	0	65th

The Coalition believes the reuse strategies of TDD with walkable neighborhoods, urban agriculture, and clean electric train travel to Chicago will improve health outcomes in these census tracts by improving air quality and making physical activity safer. Quantum Technology commercialization in Northwest Indiana will offer a cleaner economic engine with more diverse opportunities when paired with simultaneous investments in workforce development.

**2.A.ii.3. Environmental Justice**

**2.A.ii.(3)(a) Identification of Environmental Justice Issues:** All of the data presented above clearly shows that the neighborhoods within Target Areas 1 and 2 have concentrated numbers of low-income people of color living among the heaviest industries and highest densities of clean-up sites in the nation. 11 tracts in TA 1, 8 in TA 2, and 1 in TA 3 are historically redlined neighborhoods. . An example of Environmental Justice issues today is probably demonstrated in ongoing conflicts over redevelopment around sectors such as trucking, truck services or recycling operations in Gary.

**2.A.ii.(3)(b) Advancing Environmental Justice:** Three of the priority sites are former neighborhood schools. These once proud community assets remain dangerous structures used primarily for waste dumping and unsafe activities. The Coalition would like to secure a consultant to conduct market feasibility studies and host Brownfield Reuse Visioning and Reuse Workshops with community leaders from the Federation of Block Clubs, churches, and City staff to increase the likelihood that the community will have a voice and a stake in the future of development of the properties.

**2.B. Community Engagement**

**2.B.i. Project Involvement:** There are four pathways to involvement built into the project. **Youth Engagement (YE) led by ULNWI** will be accomplished by integrating brownfields into a virtual and experiential STEM College and Career Readiness (CCR) program that is in place in disadvantaged schools

including 12 schools in our Tas. **Community Organization Engagement (COE)** will be led by the ULNWI to recruit and stipend two Community Ambassadors to reach out to new potential partners and the community at large. **Economic Development Engagement (EDE)** will be led by NWIFF. These stakeholders will be engaged through existing partnerships, committees, and activities, plus webinars, presentations, and brownfield workshops. Stakeholders will be engaged Local Economic Development Organizations, Chambers of Commerce, Industrial and Commercial Developers, Universities, Real Estate Brokers, and state ED agencies. NIRPC will lead **Municipal Engagement (ME)**. NIRPC hosts elected officials, city engineers, planners, and others at meetings throughout the year. NIRPC will also invite each of the TA jurisdictions to participate in a Brownfield Advisory Working Group to maximize coordination with city plans , current and potential MARC grantees. The table below lists partner organizations, contact information, and abbreviates their involvement pathway.

**2.B.ii. Project Roles**

Partner Organization	Point of Contact Name and Email		Role
Audubon Great Lakes	Daniel Suarez	<a href="mailto:daniel.suarez@audubon.org">daniel.suarez@audubon.org</a>	CE
Boy Scouts of America	Kellauna Mack	[REDACTED]	YE
Brown Faces Green Spaces	Kimmie Gordon	<a href="mailto:brownfacesgreenspaces@gmail.com">brownfacesgreenspaces@gmail.com</a>	CE
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc. Gary Alumnae Chapter	Lisa Derico	<a href="mailto:gacpresident1@gmail.com">gacpresident1@gmail.com</a>	CE
Flourish Church	Pastor Dexter Harris	<a href="mailto:dexter@flourishchurchnwi.org">dexter@flourishchurchnwi.org</a>	CE
Gary Community Partnership	Jeffrey Edwards	<a href="mailto:jedwars@garycommunitypartnership.com">jedwars@garycommunitypartnership.com</a>	CE
Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Gary Alumni Chapter	Ryan Rogers	<a href="mailto:garyinman_78@yahoo.com">garyinman_78@yahoo.com</a>	CE
NAACP	Darian Collins	[REDACTED]	CE
NAACP-ACT-SO (youth program)	Jeana Payne	<a href="mailto:actso.gary.3050@gmail.com">actso.gary.3050@gmail.com</a>	YE
National Council of Negro Women (NCNW)	Josetta Bulerin	<a href="mailto:ncnw@sbcglobal.net">ncnw@sbcglobal.net</a>	CE
Northwest Indiana Area Health Education Center	Dr. Beverly Lewis	<a href="mailto:lewis706@pnw.edu">lewis706@pnw.edu</a>	CE
Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority	LaToya Dubose-Lowe	<a href="mailto:as2sgrhobasileus@gmail.com">as2sgrhobasileus@gmail.com</a>	CE
St. John Baptist Church	Rev. R.E. Robinson	<a href="mailto:revrerobinson@yahoo.com">revrerobinson@yahoo.com</a>	CE
St. Timothy Community Church	Rev Dr. Rameen Jackson	<a href="mailto:rmjackson@sttimothychurch.org">rmjackson@sttimothychurch.org</a>	CE
The Wetlands Initiative	Harry Kutner	<a href="mailto:hkuttner@wetlands-initiative.org">hkuttner@wetlands-initiative.org</a>	CE
Wild Indigo Associate	Jennifer Johnson	<a href="mailto:jennifer.johnson@audubon.org">jennifer.johnson@audubon.org</a>	CE
Shirley Heinze Land Trust	Kris Krouse	<a href="mailto:kkrouse@heinzetrust.org">kkrouse@heinzetrust.org</a>	CE
Strategus LLC	Frank Hoffman	<a href="mailto:frank.hoffman@strategusllc.com">frank.hoffman@strategusllc.com</a>	CDE
Regional Development Corporation	Erica Dombey	<a href="mailto:erica@rdc504.org">erica@rdc504.org</a>	EDE

McColly Bennett Commercial Advantage	Lori Tubbs, Partner	<a href="mailto:Lori.tubbs@mccolly.com">Lori.tubbs@mccolly.com</a>	EDE
Dakich Law	Tom Dakich	tdakich@dakichlaw.com	EDE
NIRPC municipal brownfield coordination group (includes representatives from East Chicago, Gary, Hammond, Lake Station, LaPorte, Lake Station, Michigan City, Portage, Porter County, and Westville)			ME

**2.B.iii. Incorporating Community Input:** As detailed above, Community Organization Engagement (COE) will be led by the ULNWI, building heavily on existing partnerships. ULNWI’s Block Club Federation coordinator will be included in monthly project calls. Information will be shared at Block Club meetings per year, via the Block Club quarterly newsletter, media releases, and NIRPC and partner social media posts. Community input received through the events and channels listed above will be incorporated into site prioritization and plans.

**3. Task Descriptions, Cost Estimates, and Measuring Progress**

3.A	<b>Task 1: Programmatic</b>
i	<b>Activity: Procurement</b> – Assisting Coalition in drafting and publishing RFQ for Qualified Environmental Professional and Planning Contractor
ii	Quarter 1
iii	NIRPC Procurement Manager
iv	Outputs: 2 Federally Compliant RFQ processes and 1-2 Contractors Selected.
3B	\$7,912=100 Hrs of Procurement Manager @\$45/hr + .74 Fringe Allocation.
3C	N/A
3.A.i	<b>Activity: Project Management, Coalition Coordination, and Municipal Engagement:</b> NIRPC staff will manage the grant and reporting, coordinate coalition meetings and communication, and establish a brownfield steering committee, inviting staff from all jurisdictions in the target area and other MARC grantees in the region. Travel to brownfield conference.
A.ii	Quarter 1 – 16
A.iii	NIRPC Director of Environmental Programs
A.iv	Executed Cooperative Agreement, Executed QEP Contract & Planning Contract, 16 Quarterly Reports in ACRES, 30 Eligibility Determination Submissions. Updated NWIBC Inventory. 40 coalition Coordinating Calls or Project Meetings with agendas and notes.
3B	Environmental Director: \$113,147= 284 hrs/yr @ \$56.63/hr + Fringe. Asst:\$11,427=168 hrs/yr @ \$21.03/hr + Fringe (2% annual increase projected) NIRPC CY24 approved Fringe rate is 0.74. Future year rate est @ 0.76. 2 staff/Member x \$2,000 ea to attend Brownfield Conferences. \$2500/yr x 3.5 yrs for QEP programmatic support for coalition calls, eligibility and quarterly reporting. Supplies: prorated shares of NIRPC GIS and Constant Contact @ \$1,000 each. + \$400/yr misc. copying
3C	Quarterly Reports will be used to evaluate progress on other task deliverables, check in on any obstacles or minor budget modifications needed.
3.A.i	<b>Activity: Quality Assurance Project Plan</b> – Preparation, submission, and maintenance of QAPP.
3.A.ii	Quarter 2
3.A.iii	Procured Qualified Environmental Professional
3.A.iv	1 EPA Approved Quality Assurance Project Plan
3B	Estimated at \$5,000 based on previous QEP procurements
3C	N/A

3.A.	<b>Task 2: Community Involvement</b>
	<b>Activity: Youth Engagement-</b> Addition of a brownfield component to the successful multi-city STEM
13.a.i	College and Career Readiness (CCR) project operated by the ULNWI
3.a.ii	Beginning in Spring 2025, 2 8 week sessions per year & Annual Science Fair. Anticipated for Q3, Q5,
3.a.iii	Q7, Q9, Q11, Q13,
3.a.iv	ULNWI Career and College Readiness Coordinator
3B	325+ disadvantaged teens experiencing brownfield career and environmental education programs
3C	Total = \$48,000; CCR Program Coordinator: \$28,080= 6 hrs/week x 156 weeks x \$30/hr; Clean Water/Environment science kits: \$4,500=30 kits x 3 yrs @25/kit; Environmental Science/Earth Science Discovery kits for Annual Science Fair Projects: \$3,000= 25 kits x 3 yrs @ \$40; Nature Preserve Clean-Up Field Trips: \$6,300= \$1,000 Van Rental + \$150 driver per trip x 2 trips/yr x 3 yrs; Student Science Fair Incentives (t-shirts, awards etc)= 25 students x 3 years x \$50 each; Supplies and Printing:\$2370= \$790/yr x 3 yrs,
3C	ULNWI evaluates program success through student participation rates, students entering college or pursuing post high school training, and programs of study. Long-term outcomes hoped for would be that these young adults pursue future environmental careers and become active participants in the future of their communities.
3.a.i	<b>Activity: Community Engagement</b> - ULNWI will integrate 3 community brownfield training events per year into its Federation of Block Club Program. The FOBC program helps neighborhoods in the City of Gary learn how to work together to identify solutions to their common concerns and have a stronger voice in their community. Staff will also participate in Coalition Coordinating Calls and contractor selection.
3.A.ii	3 Fed of Block Clubs Events per year beginning in Summer 2025. Anticipated for Q4, Q5, Q7, Q8, Q9, Q11, Q12. Q13, Q15.
3.A.iii	ULNWI Federation of Block Clubs Coordinator
3.A.iv	9 FOBC Training Events or Workshops
3B	Total = \$48,600; FOBC Program Coordinator: \$28,080= 6 hrs/week x 156 weeks x \$30/hr; Venue rental \$7200=\$800@ x 9 events; Event Supplies, Printing, Promotion: \$13,200=4,440 x 9 events;
3C	Coalition will evaluate brownfield training events by monitoring number of participants, mentions in participating organizations newsletters and subscribers to project social media outlets. Post-event surveys to evaluate increase in participants understanding of brownfields in their community. The long-term outcome of this project will contribute toward EPA Strategic Plan Objective 2.1 and 2.2.
3.a.i	<b>Activity: Participant Support</b> - In the form of quarterly or event based stipends will be provided to Community Liaisons, Students committing to a 20 hr brownfield focused learning experience included hands on projects, and community leaders assisting with training events with reasonable stipends for their participation.
3.a.ii	Beginning in Q2 and ongoing.
3.a.iii	ULNWI
3.a.iv	2 Community Liaisons. 75 Students with Brownfield Focused experiential learning, 12 opportunities for direct community leadership in events.
3B	Total = \$29,400; 2 Community Liaisons: \$700/quarter x 9 quarters = \$12,600; FBOC Event Assistants: 4 helpers * \$50 stipend * 9 events = \$1,800, 25 students x \$200 stipend x 3 years=\$15,000
3C	Community Liaisons will track contacts and engagements made. ULNWI hopes a short term outcome will be expansion of the FOBC to other disadvantaged neighborhoods in the region. The long-term outcome of this project will contribute toward EPA Strategic Plan Objective 2.1 and 2.2.



3.A.i	<b>Activity: Economic Development Stakeholder Engagement</b> -Includes outreach and engagement with Local Econ Dev Organizations, Developers, Workforce Development, Financial Institutions, Community Based Entities. NWIFF will assist with screening developers, participate in contractor selection, host brownfield workshops and webinars keep economic partners informed and engaged throughout the project.
3.A.ii	Beginning in Q2 and ongoing.
3.A.iii	NWIFF Environmental Director
3.A.iv	2 Brownfield Workshops, 3 webinars per year, 6 presentations per year. 20 developer screening calls per year.
3B	Total = \$93,325; Environmental Director: \$41/hour x 24 hrs/month x 48 mo \$52,366; Economic Director: \$32/hr x 24 hrs/mo =\$40,959
3C	The Coalition will monitor stakeholder group participation in brownfield redevelopment and evaluate long term understanding of processes necessary to achieve equitable and economically viable redevelopment projects using modern best practices. If successful, the activity will advance EPA Strategic Plan Objectives 2.1 and 2.2.
3A.i	<b>Site Specific Planning Activities</b> - The Coalition will procure a consultant to support site-specific planning activities. Throughout the series of FOBC brownfield training events, one of the former Gary School priority sites will be selected by the FOBC for reuse visioning & market analysis.
3A.ii	Year 2 Activity
3A.iii	NIRPC
3A.iv	1 Site Reuse Vision, with supporting market and infrastructure analysis.
3.B.	The Coalition has budgeted \$75,000 for Site-Specific Planning Activities.
3.C.	NIRPC hopes that by bringing an educated group of neighborhood leaders together and walking them through the process and considerations involved in getting to a marketable, feasible, community envisioned site reuse that this will contribute to EPA Strategic Goals 2.1 and 2.2.
3A.i	<b>Task 4: Environmental Site Assessment</b> - The procured Qualified Environmental Professional will prepare Site Assessment Plans and Health and Safety Plans, negotiate site access, and conduct Phase I and Phase 2 Environmental Assessments, and Asbestos Surveys at eligible sites.
3A.ii	Beginning Q3 - through Q 15.
3A.iii	Qualified Environmental Professional
3A.iv	20 Phase 1 EAs, 24 Phase II EAs, 4 Asbestos Surveys, 8 Remedial Work Plans
3B	Total = \$898,000; Phase1 \$3,500 x 22 = \$70,000; Phase 2 \$25,000 x 20 simple=\$550,000 + \$75,000 x 2 complex=150,000; Asbestos Surveys \$22,000 x 6=132,000
3C	Monthly Coalition Calls to track progress. Quarterly reporting to monitor costs and achievements. Long term outcomes support EPA Strategic Objectives 2.2 and 6.1.
3A.i	<b>Task 5: Site Clean Up Planning</b> - The procured Qualified Environmental Professional will support End User negotiations with Indiana Brownfield Program and End User, generate ABCAs or Remedial Work Plans, or Asbestos Abatement Bid Specifications.
3A.ii	Beginning Q3 - through Q 15.
3A.iii	Qualified Environmental Professional
3A.iv	8 Site Specific Clean Up Plans
3B	Total = \$96,000 @\$12,000 x 8 sites.
3C	Monthly Coalition Calls to track progress. Quarterly reporting to monitor costs and achievements. Long term outcomes supports EPA Strategic Objectives 2.2 and 6.1.

#### 4 Programmatic Capability and Past Performance

#### **4.A. Programmatic Capability**

**4.A.i-4.A.iii Organizational Capacity and Staff:** NIRPC will be the grantee and administrator for this grant. NIRPC receives, manages, or passes through an average of \$10 million of federal funding annually from Federal Transit Administration, US Forest Service, Economic Development Administration, US Federal Highway Administration, Indiana Department of Transportation (FHWA), Indiana Department of Natural Resources (NOAA), and Indiana Department of Environmental Management (USEPA). NIRPC is audited for fiscal and federal administrative compliance annually under the auspices of the State Board of Accounts. NIRPC Chief Financial Officer will oversee financial and compliance reporting. NIRPC Procurement Coordinator will ensure proper competitive procurement of our QEP and planning consultants.

NIRPC Director of Environmental Programs, Kathy Luther, will act as the Project Manager. Ms. Luther has 28 years of experience in the public and private environmental field including > 14 years related to brownfields, including 10 managing or co-managing EPA Assessment Grants. Luther provides the technical and programmatic oversight to the project. NIRPC Chief Financial Officer, Talaya Jones will oversee financial and compliance reporting. Ms. Jones has 18 years of professional accounting experience including 8 years in Indiana public agencies. Lisa Todd has been NIRPC's Procurement Manager since 2017. Ms Todd has completed 4 courses in Federal Procurement from the National Transit Institute. She will ensure proper competitive procurement of our QEP and planning consultants.

**4.A.iv. Acquiring Additional Resources:** NIRPC has established, federal procurement policies and procedures in place. The agency has procured QEPs for a previous EPA Brownfield grant and dozens of planning consultants for multiple federal funding sources. The process complies with federal procurement regulations (40 CFR §31.36) and includes guidance to attract and utilize minority- and women-owned businesses, as possible.

**IV.E.4.b.i.1 Accomplishments:** NIRPC closed out Agreement BF-00E2718, an FY 2019 EPA Brownfield Coalition Assessment Grant. During the performance period, which included a pandemic, 8 Phase I Environmental Assessments, 8 Phase II Environmental Assessments, 3 Asbestos Surveys, and 3 Clean Up Plans were completed at 12 brownfield sites. This investment has resulted in 6 private purchases and redevelopments.

**IV.E.4.b.i.2. Compliance with Grant Requirements:** NIRPC received and closed out one EPA Brownfields MARC Grant, BF 00E2718. The team met workplan, schedule, and terms and conditions in the grant agreement and submitted quarterly reports through ACRES in a timely manner. Property profile updates continue as new developments or investments occur. Fewer Assessments were completed than originally planned, largely due to the expense of a mid project Phase II on a large former municipal incinerator property requiring unexpectedly costly dioxin analysis.

NIRPC did not spend \$18,347.81 of the grant. Staff believed all dollars were obligated to projects long before the last project quarter. Staffing issues at the QEP led to somewhat haphazard billing efforts during year 3 of the project, so that NIRPC was not aware until after the Period of Performance ended that small savings in several projects had resulted in an unanticipated unexpended balance. NIRPC will require QEPs to include financial management system information in their proposals to avoid this circumstance in future.

**FY2024 USEPA BROWNFIELDS  
Coalition Assessment Grant Proposal  
Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission**

**RESPONSES TO THRESHOLD CRITERIA**

**Applicant Eligibility:** The Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC) is eligible as a regional council of local governments organized under the provisions of Indiana Code 36-7-7.6 (attached).

**Non-lead Coalition Members.**

There are 2 Non-lead Coalition Members:

1. Northwest Indiana Forum Foundation is a 501(c) (3). Documentation is attached.
2. Urban League of Northwest Indiana is a 501(c)(3) Community Based Organization. Documentation is attached.

The Northwest Indiana Forum Foundation has never received a Brownfields Grant.

The Urban League of Northwest Indiana has never received a Brownfields Grant.

**The Coalition's Target Areas are non-overlapping areas described as follows:**

- Target Area 1 is Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commissions Target Area and includes census tracts ONLY within the cities of East Chicago, Hammond, and Whiting.
- Target Area 2 is the Urban League of Northwest Indiana's Target Area and includes only Census Tracts within the City of Gary, excluding two census tracts in downtown Gary that the City is submitting for a Multipurpose Grant to address.
- Target Area 3 is the Northwest Indiana Forum Foundations Target Area. It begins at the Lake Station -Gary boundary in a Corridor defined by by that boundary on the west, through Porter and LaPorte County-St. Joseph County boundary on the east. The Corridor is a buffer width 2 miles on either side of the I-90 Center line, plus the balance of any census tracts that may be partially within said Corridor.

**Community Involvement**

There are four pathways to involvement built into the project. **Youth Engagement (YE) led by ULNWI** will be accomplished by integrating brownfields into a virtual and experiential STEM College and Career Readiness (CCR) program that is in place in disadvantaged schools including 12 schools in our Tas. **Community Organization Engagement (COE)** will be led by the ULNWI to recruit and stipend two Community Ambassadors to reach out to new potential partners and the community at large. **Economic Development Engagement (EDE)** will be led by NWIFF. These stakeholders will be engaged through existing partnerships, committees, and activities, plus webinars, presentations, and brownfield workshops. Stakeholders will be engaged Local Economic Development Organizations, Chambers of Commerce, Industrial and Commercial Developers, Universities, Real Estate Brokers, and state ED agencies.

NIRPC will lead **Municipal Engagement (ME)**. NIRPC hosts elected officials, city engineers, planners, and others at meetings throughout the year. NIRPC will also invite each of the TA jurisdictions to participate in a Brownfield Advisory Working Group to maximize coordination with city plans, current and potential MARC grantees. The table below lists partner organizations, contact information, and abbreviates their involvement pathway.

The Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission has no open Brownfield Grants of any kind.

The Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission has not procured any contractors for purposes of implementing this grant and will not prior to an executed grant agreement.