



City of Baker

"Great American Hometown"

R06-24-A-004

1. Applicant Identification

City of Baker
3325 Groom Road
Baker, Louisiana 70714

2. Funding Requested

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

3. Location

a) City of Baker b) East Baton Rouge Parish c) Louisiana

4. Target Area and Priority Site/Property Information

Target Area: City Limits (8 square miles)

Priority Site 1: La Petite Shopping Center, 1110 Main Street, Baker, Louisiana 70714

Priority Site 2: Former Baker Tire Shop, 1006 Main Street, Baker, Louisiana 70714

5. Contacts

a. Project Director

Angela Machen, PhD
City Administrative Officer
225-778-0300
AMachen@cityofbakerla.com
cc: strategiccommunitysolutionsofla@yahoo.com
3325 Groom Road, Baker, Louisiana 70714

b. Chief Executive/Highest Ranking Elected Official

Mayor Darnell Waites
225-778-0300
dwaites@cityofbakerla.com
cc: awilliams@cityofbakerla.com
3325 Groom Road, Baker, Louisiana 70714

6. Population

City of Baker, Louisiana: 12,894 (US Census: 2017–2021 American Community Survey)



City of Baker

“Great American Hometown”

7. Other Factors

Other Factors	Page #
Community population is 10,000 or less.	NA
The applicant is, or will assist, a federally recognized Indian tribe or United States territory.	NA
The priority site(s) is impacted by mine-scarred land.	NA
The priority site(s) is adjacent to a body of water (i.e., the border of the priority site(s) is contiguous or partially contiguous to the body of water, or would be contiguous or partially contiguous with a body of water but for a street, road, or other public thoroughfare separating them).	NA
The priority site(s) is in a federally designated flood plain.	1
The reuse of the priority site(s) will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy.	3
The reuse of the priority site(s) will incorporate energy efficiency measures.	3
The proposed project will improve local climate adaptation/mitigation capacity and resilience to protect residents and community investments.	3
At least 30% or more of the overall project budget will be spent on eligible reuse/area-wide planning activities, as described in Section I.B., for priority site(s) within the target area-	8
The target area(s) is located within a community in which a coal-fired power plant has recently closed (2013 or later) or is closing.	NA

8. Letter from the State or Tribal Environmental Authority

See attached.

9. Releasing Copies of Applications

Not Applicable.



State of Louisiana
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

November 3, 2023

Angela Roberts Machen, PhD
City Administrative Officer
City of Baker
3325 Groom Road
Baker, LA 70714

RE: Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality acknowledgement of City of Baker's FY24 Community-Wide Brownfield Assessment Grant Application to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Dear Dr. Machen:

Thank you for your efforts to enhance Louisiana's environment, economy, and quality of life by addressing environmental concerns at vacant and underutilized sites in your community through the Brownfields Program. The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) acknowledges the City of Baker's application for a Community-Wide Brownfields Assessment Grant to address sites under the federal Small Business Liability Relief and Brownfields Revitalization Act and the Brownfields Utilization, Investment and Local Development Act, and recognizes that the City of Baker will be conducting assessment activities in LDEQ's jurisdiction. In addition to providing regulatory oversight of your projects, LDEQ is also willing to provide technical assistance to your Brownfield Program as resources permit.

We look forward to partnering with you to facilitate the redevelopment of Brownfield sites in Louisiana! Please contact me at (504) 736-7069 or Rebecca.Otte@LA.gov if you have any questions or need further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rebecca Otte".

Rebecca Otte
Brownfields Coordinator
Remediation Division, Office of Environmental Assessment

cc: Imaging Operations – IAS AI 178641



**FY24 Brownfield Assessment Grant
Narrative**



1. PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION AND PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION

a. Target Area and Brownfields i. Overview of Brownfield Challenges and Description of Target Area: The City of Baker (City), founded in 1812, sits on land that once operated as a cotton plantation. In 1888, the City's name was changed to Baker after Josephus Baker, the settler who owned the Cottonville Plantation¹ that supported the city's economy. As the textile industry waned throughout the South, other industrial opportunities such as oil and petroleum processing moved into the area. Industry flourished throughout the region, and 25 industrial plants employed thousands of workers in an area proximate to the City commonly referred to as "**Death Alley**" (also known as "**Cancer Alley**").² Communities along the 85-mile stretch of the Mississippi River from New Orleans to Baton Rouge rely on these industrial plants to support local economies. Life-threatening waste emitted as a byproduct from these industries contains hundreds of carcinogens that cause birth defects, cardiovascular complications, autoimmune disorders, and respiratory diseases. Unsurprisingly, **residents experience high rates of death from cancer and heart, respiratory, and autoimmune diseases.**

In recent years, **climate change and natural disasters** have repeatedly affected the City. The City experienced what is locally referred to as the "Great Flood of 2016" where the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) identified that 3,601 of 5,601 housing units (64%) had experienced flooding. Of these homes, 1,422 (40%) experienced more than two feet of water. The City has been working tirelessly to restore and rebuild. However, in August 2021, Hurricane Ida left more destruction in her wake, creating more brownfield challenges.

The geographic boundary and target area for this Community-wide Assessment Grant will be the city limits of Baker (eight square miles) which includes three Justice 40 disadvantaged Census Tracts (CT) (22033004201, 2203304203, and 22033004204). A large minority (**85% African American**) population lives among severely blighted properties that pose environmental dangers to the residents.³ The City recognizes the tremendous economic growth potential of this area due to its easy access to the Baton Rouge Metro Airport, Lane Memorial Medical Center, the newly renovated Baton Rouge Zoo, and shopping areas. The City has established the Baker Economic Development District along Plank Road and hopes to establish a convention center, encourage commercial development in the area, and establish a **transportation hub** to supplement the single public transit line that exists in Baker. Additionally, the City hopes to revitalize and redevelop the Main Street Corridor (Hwy 19) between Hwy 3006 and Groom Road, located near Baker High School, with restaurants and commercial spaces. Highway 19 currently serves as the main thoroughfare between Baton Rouge to the south and the more affluent city of Zachary to the north. However, environmental assessment is needed to move forward with any planned redevelopment.

ii. Description of the Priority Brownfield Site(s): With over a **dozen** abandoned businesses and properties falling into various states of disrepair over the last several decades, the City has identified properties that present a potential hazard to residents, including dry cleaners and filling stations. Two of these properties have been selected as priority sites for redevelopment due to their location on the borders of two different **disadvantaged CTs** and potential benefit to **underserved** residents. Access to the priority sites is under negotiation, and the City will continue these discussions as more sites are identified. The City intends to prioritize additional properties during a brownfield site inventory process involving project partners and city residents. This will include a thorough discussion about integrating these properties into the City's Brownfields Revitalization

¹ <https://www.lib.lsu.edu/sites/default/files/sc/findaid/4548.pdf>

² <https://www.enddeathalley.org/>

³ US Census: 2017–2021 American Community Survey



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Plan that will be developed as part of this grant. **A portion of the target area is located within FEMA-designated flood zone AE. The City intends to make feasible flood mitigation efforts for all planned redevelopments.**

The first priority site, **La Petite Shopping Center**, is one of the largest multitenant developments on Main Street. This priority site is in a commercial strip mall/plaza near Groom Road and Main Street—both major thoroughfares in the city—and sits near existing commercial establishments, a church, City Hall, and the only high school in the City. This 1.5-acre site, developed prior to 1985, is home to an underused 25,000-square-foot shopping center that is falling into disrepair with overgrown vegetation, broken pavement, and boarded windows. The only occupied unit is on the north end of the complex and is used by the property owner as an active dental office. The property owner has recently acquired an off-site property with the intention of moving the dental office into the new space, leaving the **La Petite Shopping Center** completely vacant. Due to the age of the building, a high potential for **asbestos and lead-based paint** exists. In addition, a former restaurant building stands on the frontage of the shopping center. The restaurant closed three years ago following a fire and was recently condemned by the City based on the physical condition of the building and the potential for **mold and hazardous materials**, all of which endanger public welfare. Significant foot traffic near the property **and its proximity to downtown, a school, and residential areas** make the site a **top priority for commercial redevelopment**.

The second priority site, **Former Baker Tire Shop**, is a 0.6-acre site of a former filling station and tire shop, currently vacant, unused, and with boarded-up windows. The site has a history of subsurface gasoline contamination dating back to the 1980s that has been documented but never adequately addressed. Gasoline contaminants are known to include **volatile organic compounds (VOCs), total petroleum hydrocarbons (TPHs), and heavy metals**. Additionally, the building was developed prior to 1985, indicating a high potential for **asbestos and lead-based paint**. Based on the site's location on Main Street within a block of the La Petite Shopping Center, a school, existing businesses, and a residential area, this site would serve as an excellent spot for a **new restaurant attraction**. The assessment and reuse will work in conjunction with the shopping center to spur further redevelopment in that corridor, helping to meet a local need for better amenities for residents and bring revenue into the City from nonresidents as they pass between Baton Rouge and Zachary. The City has an existing relationship with the property owner and intends to pursue a public/private partnership to redevelop.

iii. Identifying Additional Sites: The City will work to determine additional eligible sites within the 8-square-mile city limits if grant funds remain following the appropriate allocation to all target-area work. Due to its history as a primarily industry-focused community, many underused/abandoned buildings within the City have the potential to experience brownfields-related challenges in redevelopment and safe reuse, and the City will work with project partners and residents to identify such sites and add them to the brownfields inventory. The City will also seek to incorporate community responses to prioritize the identified sites with a focus on proximity to sensitive populations and greatest need as determined by poverty and low-income levels as driving criteria. The City will use the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST) to help identify the most **underserved** communities and **disadvantaged census tracts**. The CEJST, combined with feedback from target-area residents, will help the City identify the particular issues faced by residents in a given area, whether it be high rates of health issues, legacy pollution and environmental justice, or low income and high rates of unemployment.

b. Revitalization of the Target Area i. Reuse Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans: The **2018 Baker United Strategic Recovery Plan** (Baker United) provides a foundation for the



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development of the downtown area. A Steering Committee comprised of **residents, business owners, and City officials** directed the plan. The Committee held 35 internal meetings and 2 community meetings to develop goals related to community planning, housing, infrastructure, **economic development**, health and social services, and natural and cultural resources. The meetings identified a need for economic stimulus throughout the City. Revitalization of the **La Petite Shopping Center** and the **Former Baker Tire Shop Priority Sites** would provide opportunities and newly available commercial spaces for local businesses to provide jobs and support the local economy. The commercial spaces will also be available to a variety of other entities, including **medical services, social services, or nonprofit organizations**, locating them near the residents they serve. These reuse strategies directly align with the **Baker United Plan**.

The **2020 City of Baker Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan** is a driving force behind the City's redevelopment and revitalization efforts. The Plan is geared toward improving quality of life for residents and visitors, increasing access to bicycle and pedestrian facilities, improving safety, promoting education and awareness for roadway users, and collaborating with the community for future developments and plans. The result is a **collaborative, community-based plan** focused on growth efforts within current city limits.

Recognizing the need to continue to address potential brownfields, a **Brownfields Revitalization Plan, Site Reuse Assessments, and a Market Study** have been budgeted in this project to ensure successful implementation that includes community vision and surrounding conditions.

ii. Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategy: The City's revitalization efforts support projects that aim to secure citizens' safety while also aiding with high transportation costs and incorporating energy-efficient design with an eye to the future. However, some areas within the City disrupt the cohesion between residential properties and much-needed community and commercial resources. The **La Petite Shopping Center and Former Baker Tire Shop Priority Sites**, both on Main Street, are in one of these areas. Assessment and cleanup of **both priority sites** and other blighted parcels would restore residents' connection to community and commercial resources, a **vital noneconomic benefit**. **Economic benefits** include bringing outside dollars into the community, increasing availability of commercial spaces and thus business opportunities and new jobs, and creating a stronger tax base. **Noneconomic** will include new amenities within walking distance and promoting healthier lifestyle choices. The **underserved community** is disproportionately forced to rely on the inadequate public transit system in Baker, which highlights the need for amenities within walking distance of residents. As a multi-unit commercial structure, the **Le Petite Shopping Center** has the flexibility to host multiple types of businesses and amenities at once, potentially meeting several community needs simultaneously: spaces for businesses to provide **economic benefits**, and spaces for medical services or community/social services to provide **noneconomic benefits**. Planning for a sustainable future, all redevelopments will include designs to maximize **energy efficiency, use renewable energy resources when applicable**, and incorporate all necessary flood mitigation plans for each site. Effects of climate change such as severe flooding or extreme weather events are often magnified by the realities of poverty and absence of a strong local economy. The economic benefits of this project will put dollars into the pockets of residents in the form of new jobs and more resources into the hands of the City in the form of an increased individual and business tax base. Those added resources will increase the community's capacity for **climate adaptation** by providing the means for residents and the City to rebound more rapidly from ever-worsening and more frequent natural disasters.



c. **Strategy for Leveraging Resources** i. Resources Needed for Site Reuse: As a local government, the City will continue to pursue state and federal grant funding and private-public partnerships. Additional funding options available for the City include the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality's (LDEQ) **Brownfield Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund** and LDEQ's **Targeted Brownfield Assessment (TBA) Program**. In early 2021, the Louisiana Division of Administration (LDOA) Office of Community Development announced the availability of Brownfield funding for future assessment and remediation. The City will apply for **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for the removal of blight through demolition of vacant, derelict properties**. The City will apply for **EPA Brownfield Cleanup Grant funding for remediation** of assessed properties requiring remediation.

ii. Use of Existing Infrastructure: The target-area infrastructure (streets, sewer, water) is sufficient for redevelopment as well as infrastructure at the priority sites. If additional infrastructure is needed to further its revitalization effort, the City will look to state and federal funding sources.

2. **COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

a. **Community Need** i. The Community's Need for Funding: Having struggled to meet the challenges brought about by a global pandemic, the Great Flood of 2016, and reoccurring hurricanes, Baker is actively pursuing pathways toward growth. With limited funding available due to decades of disinvestment and public health crises, the City's path to progress has been slow. This struggle is burdened by the growing need to remove severely blighted structures that represent safety and environmental hazards to the community. Removal will facilitate investment in new large-scale business and residential developments, which the City has not seen in nearly 40 years.

The **target-area population (12,736)** is concentrated in an area of approximately eight square miles.⁴ Residents suffer from **low income, ranking in the 81st percentile in the US according to the EPA EJ Screen Report**. This is also evident in the **low median earnings** for workers of **\$32,722 (US \$45,937)**, **median family income of \$68,032 (US \$85,028)** and **per capita income of \$29,321 (US \$37,638)**.⁴

Although the City has allocated limited funds toward planned projects in the past, the confluence of the 2016 Great Flood, the COVID-19 pandemic, and Hurricane Ida in 2021 have made this impossible in recent years. Due to these obstacles, the City needs financial assistance to assess brownfields throughout the city limits. With the **low-income population (32%)** and lack of growth in the tax base over the last three to four decades, raising taxes to fund additional projects is impossible.⁴ Funding assistance from an EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant will pave the way for the City to pursue new economic opportunities that would bring jobs and more easily accessible amenities, drastically improving the quality of life for Baker residents.

ii. Threats to Sensitive Populations (1) Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations: **Within the City, sensitive populations include both low-income and minority populations**. Thirty years ago the minority population was less than 20%; today **African Americans make up 89% (US 13%)**.⁴ The percentage of **families living with children below the poverty level is 22% (US 14%)**.⁴ The percentage of all **children living below the poverty level in the city is 28% (US 17%)**.⁴

Issues of health and wellness affecting the target area's sensitive populations are worsened when living in poverty. The City is located within a **USDA Food Desert**. Further compounding this issue, **17% of families rely on food stamps (US 11%)**.⁴ **Eighty-three percent (83%) of riders on the one bus line that services the City within its inadequate public transportation system are minority, 66% of all riders have a household income of less than \$50,000 per year, and 93%**

⁴ US Census 2017–2021 American Community Survey



of riders had no access to a personal car.⁵ Reducing the concentration of blighted and derelict properties will encourage the use of outside infrastructure (sidewalks, parks, recreational facilities), help provide a safe, pedestrian-friendly community for those most in need, and support the addition of local, walkable employment opportunities for **disadvantaged residents**. Encouraging outside activities promotes healthier choices, which is vital considering the well-documented increase in diseases, poor health, and other detrimental lifestyle practices in low-income and minority populations and communities. The identification of contaminants at brownfield sites will reduce threats to the sensitive populations and a reduction in blighted and derelict properties would give the City the means to encourage the development of new businesses such as restaurants and grocery stores, addressing the issue of food access.

(2) **Greater Than Normal Incidence of Disease and Adverse Health Conditions:** The City is located within what is locally known as “Death Alley.” Communities along the 85-mile stretch of the Mississippi River from New Orleans to Baton Rouge rely on industrial plants to support local economies. Waste from the refinery industries is life threatening, **emitting hundreds of known cancer-causing chemicals that also cause birth defects**, cardiovascular complications, **autoimmune disorders, and respiratory diseases. Cancer is the second leading cause of death within the state (168/100k), nearly 13% higher than the national rate (149/100k).**⁶ **Baker ranks in the 84th percentile for NATA Cancer Risk in US.**⁷ In a 10-year data analysis conducted by the National Cancer Institute, African American males have a higher cancer incidence rate than Caucasian males and females.⁶ With an 85% African American population in Baker, this data is concerning.⁸ Furthermore, the potential contaminants at the priority sites are asbestos, VOCs, heavy metals, and petroleum products, all of which can cause several forms of cancer. City residents experience high rates of death not just from cancer, but also respiratory and autoimmune diseases. The City ranks in the **70th percentile for respiratory hazards.**⁷ A 2019 report from the Louisiana Department of Health indicated that the City experiences a higher rate of **asthma** than the rest of the state. Asthma-related hospitalization rates in the City are **29% higher** than other Louisiana parishes.⁹ Sensitive populations are most at risk when it comes to disease and health conditions that can arise from brownfield sites. The **Former Baker Tire Shop priority site** is a prime example of this, with former fueling operations having potentially left VOCs in the soil and water. Exposure to these chemicals can lead to increased risk of **cancer and respiratory ailments**. Lead paint and asbestos exposure associated with aging structures such as the **La Petite Shopping Center priority site** pose increased risks to sensitive populations, especially among the target area’s African American population, children, elderly, and impoverished. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), children six years and younger are the most susceptible to the effects of lead, including **birth defects**, reduced IQ, developmental problems, and behavioral problems. In adults, lead exposure can contribute to cardiovascular effects, decreased kidney function, and reproductive problems. Asbestos exposure increases the risk of developing lung disease and cancer (mesothelioma). For the brownfield sites identified, petroleum and other hazardous substances are a cause for concern, especially when contaminants could be affecting the health of sensitive target-area populations. Through site assessment and remediation, residents will be protected from exposure to dangerous contaminants in their drinking water, soil, and air in their own community, mitigating health risks for generations to come.

⁵ https://cityofbakerla.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/LMACOMACH_2021-2022.pdf

⁶ National Cancer Institute statecancerprofile.cancer.gov

⁷ EPA EJ Screen Report

⁸ US Census: 2017–2021 American Community Survey

⁹ 2019 Preliminary Asthma Data Review in East Baton Rouge Parish https://ldh.la.gov/assets/oph/Center-EH/envepi/Reports/EBR_Asthma_EXTENDED.pdf



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(3) Environmental Justice (a) Identification of Environmental Justice Issues: Since Baker’s inception, African American residents have suffered from environmental justice and socioeconomic issues. During Reconstruction, emancipated African Americans formed small towns that grew from their slave quarters on the plantations. As years passed, large-scale industrial facilities were constructed at the closed plantations throughout the 85-mile stretch known as “Death Alley.” Those Black historical “freetowns” have become today’s “fenceline” communities.¹⁰ Residents of the City experience conditions common to ***underserved communities*** including ***low income, high poverty rates, substandard education (area public schools—94% African American), and low transportation access***. The negative environmental consequences caused by the abandoned and blighted properties and the **disproportionate and cumulative impacts** of pollution from “Death Alley” continues to burden the **low-income communities of color, as the disproportionate environmental stressors** from industrial practices have been forced upon the sensitive populations of the City. This is evident by the target area’s **high risk for cancer**, which is the second leading cause of death in the city, and the ranking of **89th percentile for Low Life Expectancy**.¹¹ City leaders are working diligently to address the negative effects of industrial practices within the city limits, especially the three **disadvantaged CTs** within the **target area**. Progress by these same **low-income communities of color** is hindered by **low transportation access**, with only a single transit line servicing the entire City. A lack of reliable transportation impedes residents’ ability to move about the city for **employment and accessing food or healthcare**. The City is located within a **USDA Food Desert**. Without access to transportation, the simplest trip becomes extremely difficult. (b) Advancing Environmental Justice: Development of a transportation hub, made possible by a Brownfield grant, will address issues of **low transportation access**. Improving transportation access for **target-area** residents will help address the issue of being located within a **food desert** while also giving residents better mobility to address issues of **low income** or **access to healthcare**. Redevelopment of both **priority sites** will address the issues of **low mobility, poor food access, and poor access to healthcare** by creating commercial spaces for food-related businesses, medical clinics, and amenities in the heart of the community. While both sites technically lie across the street from **disadvantaged CTs**, the strategic locations of both sites undeniably impact the **underserved** residents within those Justice 40 CTs. **None of the planned redevelopments are expected to displace existing residents or businesses**, and the City will employ redevelopment strategies designed to mitigate and minimize any potential displacement. As with any redevelopments in an urban setting, the possibility of gentrification is a concern. The City is committed to preventing it and will work closely with residents or businesses who have the potential to be displaced in the future. With Brownfield funding, careful planning and coordination with **underserved** residents, redevelopment will create new jobs, make basic amenities more accessible, and ease the burden of inadequate transportation, directly addressing many of the environmental justice issues addressed above which plague the city and drastically changing the lives of target-area residents.

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

Partner Name	Point of Contact	Specific role in project
Baker Chamber of Commerce (CoC)	Michelle Woods 225-412-4311	The CoC is a nonprofit business advocacy organization which strives to deliver benefits that offer a true competitive advantage to member businesses. The Chamber will assist with future reuse planning and fundraising assistance .

¹⁰ <https://forensic-architecture.org/investigation/environmental-racism-in-death-alley-louisiana>

¹¹ EPA EJ Screen Report



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Baker Pilot Club (BPC)	Dawn Brewster 225-775-5891	BPC is a nonprofit organization composed of citizens who have come together in friendship and service to better their community. BPC will assist with community outreach and education , in addition to fundraising assistance.
Redemption Life Fellowship	Pastors Larry and Gretha Alexander 225-774-8858	The Redemption Life Fellowship church has partnered with the City to create new opportunities to support the residents. It will assist with community outreach to local businesses by informing them of project status and fundraising assistance.
City of Baker Community Foundation	Angela Trahan 225-485-9862	The foundation’s mission is to secure philanthropic support to advance, promote, and benefit the City and residents, and all initiatives that improve the City’s infrastructures and quality of life. They will assist with site identification and prioritization .

iii. Incorporating Community Input: Over the past several years, the City has worked tirelessly to improve its town using local funding and other grants. In doing so, it recognized a need for community outreach and engagement. In early 2021, the City held intercity administrative meetings and work sessions to discuss brownfield initiatives and created its Brownfield Program. The City understands informing and gathering public input is essential to furthering redevelopment initiatives within its **underserved communities**. A Community Involvement Plan (CIP) will be created to explain planned community engagement activities, project schedule, background, and key players and will be made available for review at the City’s Municipal Building. Planned community meetings and engagement activities will be held within the city limits with assistance from project partners and the Brownfield Project Team. During these planned activities, the City will record through meeting minutes all target-area residents’ input and suggestions given on the Brownfield Assessment Project and will discuss the information during quarterly project team meetings. It will respond to all community input and suggestions within two weeks or on an as-needed basis. If residents provide additional sites for assessment, the City will add them to the inventory and prioritize the sites based on need, eligibility, and its Brownfield Program goals.

The City realizes using multiple forms of media will ensure a wide reach throughout the community. It was awarded the 2021 Louisiana Municipal Association Community Achievement Award for Technology and Connectivity in midsize cities with populations between 10,000 and 25,000 for its outstanding community engagement. It established a Communications Department and formalized all social media accounts to represent official City communication. A platform for email and text messaging was selected (GovDelivery), and the Mayor’s television show shifted to an information-driven platform reporting actions the City was undertaking related to community investment. The City adopted public service announcements that cross-promoted programs it was undertaking, provided health and safety information, and promoted proactive citizen engagement by having them sign up for the email/texting service. The City will reach citizens and solicit engagement regarding the project via social media (Facebook/Instagram), radio, local news, and its website. City staff will provide project information during the bimonthly City Council meetings. The City will create informational handouts and engage with community partners to ensure all residents have the opportunity to learn about the project.

3. TASK DESCRIPTIONS, COST ESTIMATES, AND MEASURING PROGRESS

a. Description of Tasks/Activities and Outputs:

Task 1: Community Engagement	
i.	<i>Project Implementation</i> : The City’s Brownfield (BF) Project Director will develop a Community Involvement Plan (CIP), outreach materials, BF Project website, and social media posts with the assistance of the environmental contractor (EC). City staff will lead the community meetings to keep the public informed about project plans and updates. Supplies are budgeted for the printing of outreach materials, office supplies, and software.
ii.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule</i> : CIP created within 3 months of award (upon completion a more concrete schedule will follow). Community meetings held 1 st and 3 rd quarters (Years 1–3) & 1 st quarter (Year 4). Website and outreach materials created in the 1 st quarter and posted monthly throughout the grant project.
iii.	<i>Task/Activity Lead</i> : City: Angela Machen, Administrative Officer/BF Project Director.



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iv.	<i>Outputs:</i> CIP, BF Website, 7 Community Meetings, Brochures/Handouts, Social Media Posts, Summary of Community Meetings in EPA required Quarterly Reports.
Task 2: Site Inventory	
i.	<i>Project Implementation:</i> The City’s BF Project Director will work with target-area residents during community meetings to create a thorough site inventory for assessment. Abandoned and underused properties identified by target-area residents will be researched further by City staff using the property assessor's website. Once a list is compiled, the EC will work with City staff to create an evaluation ranking tool to determine the order in which the sites will be addressed, with the help of residents.
ii.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> Community meeting held in 1 st quarter will continue the preliminary inventory process that began with this application, with the evaluation ranking process taking place in the 3 rd quarter and continuing throughout the grant project.
iii.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> Angela Machen, Administrative Officer/BF Project Director.
iv.	<i>Outputs:</i> Evaluation Ranking Tool, Site Inventory List
Task 3: Assessment	
i.	<i>Project Implementation:</i> The EC will conduct Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) activities at sites selected and ranked through the Site Inventory Task, starting first with the two priority sites listed in this application. ASTM-AAI compliant Phase Is; Generic Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP); Phase IIs which will include the SS-QAPP. Prior to assessment, site access agreements and property eligibility determinations approval will be obtained.
ii.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> Assessment activities to begin the 2 nd quarter and continue throughout the grant.
iii.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> The EC will implement the technical aspects of the project with oversight from the City: Angela Machen, Administrative Officer/BF Project Director.
iv.	<i>Outputs:</i> 15 Phase I ESAs, 1 Generic QAPP, 10 Phase II ESAs including SS-QAPP, Site Access Agreements and Property Eligibility Determinations.
Task 4: Remediation/Reuse Planning	
i.	<i>Project Implementation:</i> For projects identified for cleanup, the EC will prepare the Analysis for BF Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA) and/or Cleanup Plans. Cleanup planning will include evaluating cleanup alternatives, calculating cleanup costs, and determining site appropriate remediation and/or reuse planning to reduce health/environmental risks. The EC will assist the City in hosting charrettes/visioning sessions to be held for key properties. A planner will create a Site Reuse Assessment, Market Study, and a Brownfield Revitalization Plan.
ii.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> Plans & Charrettes to begin the 6 th quarter and will continue throughout the grant project. BF Revitalization Plan to begin in 3 rd quarter.
iii.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> The EC will implement the technical aspects of the project with oversight from the City: Angela Machen, Administrative Officer/BF Project Director.
iv.	<i>Outputs:</i> 4 ABCAs, 2 Vision Sessions/Charrettes, 2 Site Reuse Assessments, 1 BF Rev Plan, 1 Market Study
Task 5: Programmatic Support	
i.	<i>Project Implementation:</i> The City’s BF Project Director will procure an EC to assist with the BF Grant Project. The City’s BF Project Director oversees grant implementation and administration to ensure compliance with the EPA Cooperative Agreement Work Plan, schedule, and terms and conditions. The consultant will assist the City in completing ACRES Database Reporting, Yearly Financial Reporting, Quarterly Reporting, MBE/WBE Forms, and all additional Programmatic Support for the four-year term of the grant. The City staff travel budget allows for two staff to attend three national/regional/grantee brownfield training conferences.
ii.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> ACRES Reporting begins in the 1 st quarter & Quarterly Reporting begins in the 2 nd quarter and continues throughout the grant project. Annual Reporting and Forms created in the 5 th , 9 th , and 13 th quarters and during final closeout.
iii.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> City: Angela Machen, Administrative Officer/BF Project Director.
iv.	<i>Outputs:</i> ACRES Database Reporting, 4 Annual Financial Reports, 16 Quarterly Reports, 3 MBE/WBE Forms, Programmatic Support for the four-year grant period. Two staff to attend three conferences.

b. Cost Estimates: Below are the anticipated cost estimates for this project *based on past brownfield projects as determined by local market standards discussed with local environmental consultants with contractual hourly rates based on the skills needed for the specific tasks.* The budget for this project includes personnel, travel, supplies, and contractual costs only. **Fifty-four**



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percent (54%) of the budget will be spent on site-specific activities through the Assessment Task and 31% of the budget will be spent on area-wide planning activities through the Cleanup/Reuse Planning Task. **Task 1 Community Engagement:** Personnel: City staff support of grant activities \$2,000 (\$50 x 40hrs). Contractual: CIP \$4,000 (32hrs x \$125); BF Website, Outreach Brochure/Handouts, Social Media Posts \$3,000 (24hrs x \$125); 7 Community Meetings \$10,500 (84hrs x \$125) (\$1,500/meeting). Supplies: Outreach Supplies \$1,000 (printed brochures \$500 [500 x \$1.00]; printed display boards \$300 [5 x \$60]; notebooks, paper, pens, other miscellaneous office supplies \$200). **Task 2 Site Inventory:** Personnel: City staff support of grant activities \$2,000 (\$50 x 40hrs). Contractual: Brownfield Site Inventory and Evaluation Ranking Tool Creation \$10,000 (80hrs x \$125). **Task 3 Assessment:** Personnel: City staff support of grant activities \$1,000 (\$50 x 20hrs). Contractual: 15 Phase I ESAs \$3,000 each for a total of \$45,000; 1 Generic QAPP \$5,500; 10 Phase II ESAs including SS-QAPP at \$22,000 each for a total of \$220,000. **Task 4 Cleanup/Reuse Planning:** Personnel: City staff support of grant activities \$1,000 (\$50 x 20hrs). Contractual: 4 ABCAs \$6,000 for a total of \$24,000; 2 Vision Sessions/Charrettes \$6,000 (\$3,000/meeting); 1 BF Rev. Plan at \$60,000 (Planner: 200hrs x \$150; Market Analysts: 90hrs x \$125; Environmental Professional: 150hrs x \$125); 2 Site Reuse Plans \$40,000 (Planner: 80hrs x \$150; Market Analysts: 40hrs x \$125; Environmental Professional: 24hrs x \$125) (\$20,000/plan); 1 Market Study \$25,000 (Planner: 100hrs x \$150; Market Analyst: 50hrs x \$125; Environmental Professional: 30hrs x 125). **Task 5 Programmatic Support:** Personnel: City staff support of grant activities \$4,000 (\$50 x 80hrs). Contractual: ACRES Database Reporting, Yearly Financial Reporting, Quarterly Reporting, MBE/WBE Forms, Programmatic Support for the four-year grant period \$24,000 (192hrs x \$125). Travel: Two staff to attend three training events/conferences \$12,000 (flights at \$800, 3 nights in hotel at \$300/night, incidentals and per diem at \$75 per day [4 days] x 2 attendees x 3 events).

Category	Tasks					Totals
	<i>Community Engagement</i>	<i>Site Inventory</i>	<i>Assessment</i>	<i>Cleanup/Reuse Planning</i>	<i>Programmatic Support</i>	
Personnel	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$4,000	\$10,000
Travel					\$12,000	\$12,000
Supplies	\$1,000					\$1,000
Contractual	\$17,500	\$10,000	\$270,500	\$155,000	\$24,000	\$477,000
Total Budget	\$20,500	\$12,000	\$271,500	\$156,000	\$40,000	\$500,000

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

4. PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE



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

Description of Key Staff: The City has demonstrated through current and previous grants and the development of community plans its dedication and capability to properly manage this Grant. The City has formed its internal Brownfield Project Team with the support of long-term city staff and community members. The internal team responsible for this Grant project has decades of public service experience. The City's Administrative Officer and **Brownfield Project Director, Angela Machen, PhD**, will be responsible for the timely and successful expenditure of funds and the completion of the administrative and financial requirements of the project. Dr. Machen has a doctorate from Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine. Although she has been employed with the City for four years, she has contributed to a lifetime of community outreach. During her time as City Administrative Officer, she has assisted with many grant-funded programs, such as the LA Commission on Law Enforcement, FEMA, and Local Government Assistance Program (LGAP) grants. **Mr. Chris Davezac will serve as the Brownfield Project Manager** for this grant as he is the City's Public Works Project Consultant. He has held this position with the City for three years and previously served as Public Works/Utility Director for the City of Zachary, a neighboring town, for 28 years. **Ms. Mary Sue Stages, Director of Finance**, will manage the use of the ASAP.gov drawdown system. She has over 15 years of experience working in local government and is proficient in the city's accounting software, online banking service, accounting, payroll, accounts payable, reporting, and learning new processes. An environmental contractor will assist with the technical and reporting portions of the project.

iv. Acquiring Additional Resources: Using local contracting requirements and procurement processes, the City will procure a qualified EC to assist with the technical and reporting portions of the Assessment, in addition to any other contractors needed to complete the project. The City will ensure compliance with the EPA's "Professional Service" procurement process. Throughout the life of the project, the City will acquire additional resources as needed to complete the project successfully, with a priority placed on hiring or procuring resources locally. In addition, the City's plans to gather community input will allow it to act as a bridge between members of the community and potential employment opportunities related to the brownfield redevelopment.

b. Past Performance and Accomplishments ii. Has Not Received an EPA Brownfields Grant but Has Received Other Federal or Non-Federal Assistance Agreements:

(1) Purpose and Accomplishments: In 2020, the City was awarded a \$50,000 LGAP grant to assist in building renovations from the Great Flood of 2016 for the community of Buffwood Clubhouse. This project was completed and the grant was closed out in 2023. In 2021, the City was awarded several grants from FEMA in the combined total amount of \$2,690,200 for the City's residential rehabilitation after the Great Flood of 2016. Of the City's 5,601 housing units, FEMA identified 3,601 homes (64%) that had experienced flooding. Of the homes that flooded, 1,422 (40%) experienced more than two feet of flooding. The FEMA grant assisted in the rehabilitation and rebuilding of homes throughout the community. The City complied with the agreed upon work plans, schedule, timely reporting, and terms and conditions of the grant award.

(2) Compliance with Grant Requirements: The City's past grant awards were submitted in a timely manner with no delays in executing the project as it held to the schedule established by the granting agency. It has a good history of compliance with grant schedules, terms and conditions, and all reporting with award agencies. The City completed all grant reporting via the required state forms and sent via email to the granting agency. Angela Machen is highly qualified and will track all project results individually via Excel spreadsheets and will be able to manage the requirements for tracking projects in ACRES if awarded a grant from the EPA.



**FY24 Brownfield Assessment Grant
Threshold Criteria**



City of Baker, Louisiana
FY2024 US EPA Brownfields Assessment Threshold Criteria

Threshold Criteria

1. Applicant Eligibility

- a. The City of Baker, Louisiana, is eligible to apply for the EPA Brownfields Community-wide Assessment Grant as a general-purpose unit of local government as defined under 2 CFR § 200.64.
- b. The City of Baker, Louisiana, is not exempt from Federal taxation under section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code.

2. Community Involvement

Over the past several years, the City has worked tirelessly to improve its town using local funding and other grants. In doing so, it recognized a need for community outreach and engagement. In early 2021, the City held intercity administrative meetings and work sessions to discuss brownfield initiatives and created its Brownfield Program. The City understands informing and gathering public input is essential to furthering redevelopment initiatives within its **underserved communities**. A Community Involvement Plan (CIP) will be created to explain planned community engagement activities, project schedule, background, and key players and will be made available for review at the City's Municipal Building. Planned community meetings and engagement activities will be held within the city limits with assistance from project partners and the Brownfield Project Team. During these planned activities, the City will record through meeting minutes all target-area residents' input and suggestions given on the Brownfield Assessment Project and will discuss the information during quarterly project team meetings. It will respond to all community input and suggestions within two weeks or on an as-needed basis. If residents provide additional sites for assessment, the City will add them to the inventory and prioritize the sites based on need, eligibility, and its Brownfield Program goals.

The City realizes using multiple forms of media will ensure a wide reach throughout the community. It was awarded the 2021 Louisiana Municipal Association Community Achievement Award for Technology and Connectivity in midsize cities with populations between 10,000 and 25,000 for its outstanding community engagement. It established a Communications Department and formalized all social media accounts to represent official City communication. A platform for email and text messaging was selected (GovDelivery), and the Mayor's television show shifted to an information-driven platform reporting actions the City was undertaking related to community investment. The City adopted public service announcements that cross-promoted programs it was undertaking, provided health and safety information, and promoted proactive citizen engagement by having them sign up for the email/texting service. The City will reach citizens and solicit engagement regarding the project via social media (Facebook/Instagram), radio, local news, and its website. City staff will provide project information during the bimonthly City Council meetings. The City will create informational handouts and engage with community partners to ensure all residents have the opportunity to learn about the project.

3. Expenditure of Existing Grant Funds

The City of Baker, Louisiana, affirms that the City does not have an active EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant or Multipurpose Grant.

4. Named Contractors and Subrecipients

Not Applicable.