



## NARRATIVE INFORMATION SHEET

R02-24-A-011

### 1. Applicant Identification

Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice, Inc.  
1384 Stratford Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10472-1604

### 2. Funding Requested

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

### 3. Location

- a. City: Bronx
- b. County: Bronx
- c. State: New York

### 4. Target Area and Priority Site Information

YMPJ proposes a Community-Wide Brownfield Assessment project within the geographical boundaries of New York City (Bronx County), and focused on a target area that comprises 55.6-acres along the Bronx River in the Soundview, Foxhurt, and Charlotte Gardens neighborhoods of Congressional District 15 in the South Bronx. The target area includes the west shore of the Bronx River between the waterfront and the Sheridan Expressway, extending from Starlight Park southward to Westchester Avenue; as well as the east shore of the Bronx river from the waterfront to Bronx River Avenue and extending from Westchester Avenue southward to the Bruckner Expressway, and below the Brucker from the waterfront to Colgate Avenue and southward to Lafayette Avenue and Soundview Park.

#### **Census Tract Numbers within the Target Area:**

002800, 005200, 005400, 015700, 012300

#### **Address of the priority site(s) proposed in the Narrative:**

The name and address of the priority site identified in the narrative is: NYW&B Westchester Avenue Station (also called the Cass Gilbert Train Station) at 1324 Westchester Avenue (Block 2759, Lot 100). In addition, the proposed project will prioritize 2 - 4 of 36 brownfield sites in the target area (originally inventoried in the 2015 EPA-funded Area Wide Plan), based on community input.



**5. Contacts**

**a. Project Director**

Madhur Bhadsavle  
 718-328-5622  
 madhur@ympj.org  
 1384 Stratford Avenue, Bronx, NY 10472-1604

**b. Chief Executive/Highest Ranking Elected Official**

David R. Shuffler, Jr.  
 718-328-5622  
 funddevelopment@ympj.org  
 1384 Stratford Avenue, Bronx, NY 10472-1604

**6. Population data**

Population in the Bronx (Census Bureau): 1.427 Million  
 Population of Soundview: 31,825  
 Population of Hunts Point (which includes Foxhurt and Charlotte Garden): 12,281

**7. Other Factors**

Other Factors	Page #
priority site(s) is adjacent to a body of water	1
the priority site(s) is in a federally designated flood plain	1
the applicant has considered climate adaptation and/or mitigation measures as part of the reuse strategy or projected reuse of the priority site(s)	1, 2
whether 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)	8, 9
geographic boundary(ies) is located within, or includes, a county experiencing “persistent poverty” where 20% or more of its population has lived in poverty over the past 30 years, as measured by the 1990 and 2000 decennial censuses and the most recent Small Area Income and Poverty Estimate	4
the applicant has not previously been awarded a Brownfields Assessment Grant	10
target area(s) is located within, or includes, a census tract in which 20% or more of the population lives below the national poverty level as measured by the 2021 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates from the United States Census Bureau	4



**8. Letter from State Environmental Authority**

See attached

**9. Releasing Copies of Applications**

Not applicable

# NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

Division of Environmental Remediation, Bureau of Program Management  
625 Broadway, 12th Floor, Albany, NY 12233-7012  
P: (518) 402-9764 | F: (518) 402-9722  
www.dec.ny.gov

November 18, 2022

David Shuffler, Executive Director  
Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice, Inc.  
1384 Stratford Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10472-1604

Dear Mr. Shuffler:

This is to acknowledge that the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) received a request from Lydia Sierra Consulting on behalf of Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice, Inc., dated November 18, 2022, for a state acknowledgement letter for a Federal Year 2023 United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) Brownfields grant.

I understand that Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice, Inc. plans to submit a Brownfield Community-Wide Assessment grant application for \$500,000. Focus of the funding will be to begin Phase I/II Environmental Site Assessments on sites in the Bronx, including the Cass Gilbert Train Station. The target area is located along the Bronx River in the South Bronx. Known contamination includes hazardous substances, lead, and heavy metals. Funding will also be allocated for inventory and assessment of brownfield sites and community involvement activities. Please note that the USEPA criteria for an assessment grant specifies that, if selected, Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice, Inc. may only expend up to \$200,000 of the grant on a specific site.

DEC encourages initiatives to redevelop brownfields with the goal of mitigating any environmental and health impacts that they might pose.

Sincerely,



Karen Diligent  
Director, Bureau of Program Management

ec: T. Wesley, USEPA Region 2  
Y. DeJesus, USEPA Region 2  
G. Burke, DEC Albany  
C. Maycock, DEC Region 2  
V. Brevdo, DEC Region 2  
R. Austin, DEC Region 2  
J. O'Connell, DEC Region 2  
J. Andersson, Lydia Sierra Consulting  
M. Rozzers, Lydia Sierra Consulting



Department of  
Environmental  
Conservation

**1. a: i:** The proposed project falls within the boundaries of NYC (Bronx County), focused on the Bronx River waterfront in the Soundview, Foxhurl, and Charlotte Gardens neighborhoods of Congressional Districts 14 and 15. The target area includes some of the most impoverished NYC neighborhoods, according to City sources: 29% of residents live below the poverty level, and 50% of children live in households below the poverty level. One in seven residents are unemployed, and 54% spend more than 30% of their income on rent. Our community is 59% Latino and 31% Black, with the largest general population (177,000) of all Bronx community districts. Decades of municipal disinvestment and planned shrinkage left these communities without adequate green space to support community health and resilience. Specifically, the study area comprises the west shore of the Bronx River between the waterfront and the Sheridan Expressway, extending from Starlight Park south to Westchester Avenue; as well as the east shore of the Bronx River from the waterfront to Bronx River Avenue and extending from Westchester Avenue south to the Bruckner Expressway, and below the Bruckner from the waterfront to Colgate Avenue and south to Lafayette Avenue and Soundview Park. This area is located between four major highways that form a “Toxic Triangle” where millions have been directly impacted by toxic pollutants from truck traffic for decades. These highways, the first of their kind in the US when they were built, transected thriving neighborhoods of color, erected physical barriers to community development, and facilitated polluting industrial operations. The result has been the economic, environmental, and social decline of these neighborhoods, characterized by redlining, poor health outcomes, and broad socio-economic exclusion.

The 55.6-acre target area is characterized by inactive, likely contaminated vacant lots and waterfront industrial parcels. At least 36 potential brownfields have been identified in the area, ranging from a rowhouse lot to the six acre site. Environmental concerns in the area align with a history of heavy industrial activity and a current landscape of small manufacturing and industry along the waterfront, and leave the area disproportionately vulnerable to the climate impacts, such as storms and floods escalating in frequency and intensity. The majority of the proposed target area is located within the FEMA-designated 100-year floodplain. Historically, floods in heavily industrialized, EJ areas like ours result in mobilization of harmful chemicals and toxins, depositing them in communities that already suffer from high levels of dangerous pollutants (Bautista et al., 2014). Currently known contaminants at identified brownfield sites within the area include lead, mercury, oil, heavy metals, creosote, coal ash, cinder, and fossil fuel combustion products. According to EJSCREEN, our target area has underground storage tanks and hazardous waste proximity at levels of 95% to 100%, and it is presumed that assessment within will illustrate that soil, soil vapor, and/or groundwater have been impacted.

The proposed project constitutes the next major step of a 2015 EPA-funded Area-Wide Plan for brownfield sites along the Bronx River-Sheridan Expressway corridor, which YMPJ co-developed with the South Bronx Overall Economic Development Corp. The Plan focused on three “clusters” of brownfield properties (which overlap with our proposed target area), and proposed redevelopment scenarios, including improved pedestrian routes to the Bronx River Greenway, connections to the Bronx River, and a range of uses along the waterfront.

**ii:** A priority site within the target area is 1324 Westchester Avenue (Block 2759, Lot 100), approx. 27,000 sq ft and host to a dilapidated building that was once the New York Westchester & Boston (NYW&B) Train Station, designed by renowned architect Cass Gilbert in 1908. The station includes a tower and a waiting area, and hasn’t been utilized in approximately 90 years. While the train continues to run along the original line, the station has been slowly decaying for most of the last century (McIntyre, 2007). In effect, pollution of the site continues

with no community benefit. Pollution suspected at the site includes hazardous materials including creosote, coal ash and cinder (containing lead and creosote), oil and gasoline, fossil fuel combustion products, and heavy metals. These materials are all known to be associated with railways and railway stops (Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, n.d.). Redevelopment of this site offers the possibility of reconnecting residents to greenspace along the waterfront, which is currently blocked by I-95, expanded green transportation routes for South Bronx residents and commuters, increased community programming, and reverberating economic stimulation in both the Southern Boulevard Business Improvement District and the Westchester Avenue Commercial Corridor, both located adjacent to the target area, with the train station connecting the two. A Phase I Site Assessment will be completed on this priority site in the coming year, with funding and technical support from the NYC Mayor's Office of Environmental Remediation.

**iii:** This project will create a Brownfield Redevelopment Action Plan that prioritizes 2 - 4 of 36 brownfield sites in the target area. Through expansive public participation activities, YMPJ will keep community members informed of data and analysis relevant to brownfield sites, including suspected/confirmed pollutants and associated health impacts, processes for cleanup, and possible redevelopment scenarios, with the goal of remediating of the most harmful sites first and identifying opportunities to address social/economic/health challenges through redevelopment. Community feedback will be documented through activities described in the "Incorporating Community Input" section of this proposal, and utilized to drive the selection process. Prioritized sites will have a high potential to create quality affordable housing and livable wage jobs; and connect to green space for recreation, community cohesion, mental health, and physical health. In the event grant funds remain from any task category, additional priority sites will be identified, using the same process described here.

**b: i:** Our strategy prioritizes community-led redevelopment of waterfront areas along the Bronx River. Goals are based on 15+ years of resident and stakeholder input, and include the following: expansion of/connections to the Bronx River Greenway (a planned 23 miles of interconnected parks and trails along the Bronx River, 19 miles of which have already been built); enhancing the natural waterfront with a continuous pedestrian path; activating recreation sites along the waterfront; creating better pedestrian/shopper experience; and improving pedestrian safety. The project will create a Brownfield Redevelopment Action Plan that facilitates the assessment of the Cass Gilbert Train Station site, prioritizes 2 - 4 additional brownfields in the target area based on community input, and specifies steps to facilitate their successful reuse. The assessment of the additional 2-4 sites would occur if adequate support is attained. The key site, Cass Gilbert Train Station, has been the focus of a deep community visioning process for more than 10 years. The station is planned as a grand gateway to Concrete Plant Park, the Bronx River Foodway, and the Bronx River Greenway. The community expressed interest in restoring the tower and waiting area, adding restrooms for park goers, and activating the site with EJ education for youth. They also expressed desire for a pedestrian bridge from the station to Concrete Plant Park and a path connecting to planned recreation areas.

YMPJ's strategy for redevelopment is in line with a US EPA-funded Area-Wide Plan (AWP) and Redevelopment Strategy for brownfield sites along the Bronx River/Sheridan Expressway corridor, which proposed a set of development scenarios that include development of multiple 100% affordable mixed-use multifamily apartment buildings totalling over 1,110 new units and about 30,000 sq. ft. of ground-floor retail. The AWP plan builds on the 2013 "Sheridan-Hunts Point Land Use and Transportation Study," funded by the U.S. Dept. of Transportation, and proposes a framework for revitalizing two brownfield site clusters on either

side of the Bronx River. YMPJ is also developing a Brownfield Opportunity Area Nomination Study that has support from the NYS Dept. of State. If approved, it will make our community eligible for significant resources and other support to redevelop key local brownfield sites. Our project also reflects regional priorities set forth in the 2021 Strategic Plan Update by the NYC Regional Economic Development Council, and the OneNYC 2050 Strategic Plan. The project will meet the goal of improving quality of life for those in NYC by increasing connected open space in which to recreate/commute (by walking or bicycle), decreasing flooding by expanding green infrastructure in the catchment, improving local air quality, and fostering communities that have safe and affordable housing and are well served by parks, cultural resources, and shared spaces. Finally, the proposed redevelopment strategy also aligns with the Building the Knowledge Base for Climate Resiliency Report released by the NYC Panel on Climate Change (NPCC) in 2016, which predicted that by the 2050s, NYC will experience an increased average temperature of 4.1 to 5.7°; increased precipitation of 4 to 11%, and rising sea levels of 11 to 21”.

**ii:** In the recent NYC Small Business Services’ Commercial District Needs Assessment (CDNA) for the Southern Boulevard Commercial District (which YMPJ co-led), residents and merchants identified economic challenges and opportunities in the area that would be addressed by the strategy proposed here. The area has 491 storefronts, 12% of which are currently vacant, 5% higher than the median of all 75 Business Improvement Districts in the city. YMPJ estimates that filling at least 59 of the currently vacant storefronts, an ultimate expected result of the project, will result in a \$2.7 million annual increase in local sales as a result of the increased retail activity in the area. We estimate that increased investment and redevelopment in the area would result in at least double the number of full-service restaurants to 14. An annual retail leakage of \$306 million exists in the area and increasing retail establishments and full-service restaurants would not only meaningfully stem that leakage, but potentially increase local employment with approx. 188 new full-time and 59 new part-time jobs. Additionally, redevelopment could lead to the preservation of 8,000 affordable housing units and approx. 250 new units situated near green infrastructure, retail stores, markets, and other amenities. Our proposed strategy would support activation of another culturally significant space along the Bronx River Greenway (Cass Gilbert Train Station), and it would physically connect the waterfront parks to the adjacent commercial corridors. We anticipate a roster of public programs at the Cass Gilbert Train Station, in the Bronx River Greenway parks, and along Westchester Ave. will draw in approximately 3,000 new visitors via pedestrian access yearly, doubling foot traffic. Weekend events will draw crowds who will patronize businesses along the corridor. Moreover, there will be opportunities for food and retail vendors to set up stalls, food trucks, and other pop-up locations at public events which will lead to increased retail patronage and revenue. In addition, the re-greening of sites within the target area will increase habitat connectivity, mitigate stormwater runoff, and become an integral part of the ecological system.

**c. i:** YMPJ has raised over \$1 million from USDA, NY Dept. of Environmental Conservation, NYC Small Business Services, and a variety of private foundations to support work related to the proposed project. This year we secured \$500,000 from the NYS Dept. of State to complete a Brownfields Opportunity Area Nomination, including an in-depth analysis of existing conditions for potential brownfield sites within the study area that overlaps with the target area in this proposal. YMPJ has also received two rounds of EPA TA support in recent years to create a roadmap for redeveloping the Cass Gilbert Train Station, ideally positioning us to conduct further assessment activities. We are working with the NYC Mayor’s Office of

Environmental Remediation for Phase 1 Assessment of the train station in the coming year. We will also pursue EPA TA and Targeted Brownfield Assessment support to enhance this project.

Towards the broader project, YMPJ recently submitted an application to the CDC and was awarded an EPA EJ Collaborative Problem-Solving Grant, both of which support aspects of a planned community-driven Health Impact Assessment (HIA), a powerful resource for community decision-making as we identify priority sites in the study area. YMPJ also received the aforementioned NY DEC funding to study the design, operations, and health impacts of a key polluting concrete plant located within the study area. Finally, YMPJ can leverage current activities supported by the USDA, which include a bottom-up, community-centered analysis of the governance of public space in NYC, to identify and address barriers to accessing, assessing, remediating, and redeveloping underutilized spaces—including brownfields—in the target area. An EPA Brownfield grant would further allow us to solicit matching funds from our dedicated private and corporate funders. As a Justice 40 Accelerator Cohort member, we are connected to new potential matching funders interested in revitalization in frontline EJ communities, as well.

**ii:** A review of existing infrastructure will inform selection of priority sites for the Brownfield Redevelopment Action Plan. All are located within the city street grid, with connections or potential connections to roads, transportation networks, electric, and sewer infrastructure. For the Cass Gilbert Train Station, existing infrastructure includes the original station, extant active railway lines, and the landscape surrounding the building. The building will need complete renovation to meet current building code standards and community needs, a pedestrian bridge to connect the building with the waterfront, and connection to electricity and access to water. These will be acquired later through other resources. Capital funding will be sought from US DOT, New York City Council, and the Change Capital Fund, among others.

**2. a: i:** This project impacts South Bronx neighborhoods along the Bronx River, including Soundview, Foxhurst, and Charlotte Gardens. These neighborhoods are definitively classified as environmental justice waterfront communities, part of a persistent poverty county, Bronx County (Congressional Research Service, April 2022), with a large proportion of the population living near polluting infrastructure and industry. Residents in these neighborhoods face a multitude of economic hardships and barriers: there is a 13% unemployment rate, and 60% of workers are employed in low wage occupations. 55.3% of residents are unemployed, 33.9% of residents live in poverty, and the median household income is \$37,600, far below the median household income in Bronx County of \$45,517. After a long history of structurally racist development policies and practices, a recent uptick in local rezoning and upzoning efforts in the South Bronx have increased development driven by outside forces, threatening community displacement. The local municipality and community boards struggle to allocate adequate funding to support the immediate needs of residents, including public safety, substance use treatment, and substandard housing conditions. During COVID our already vulnerable residents were hardest hit by the impacts, not only facing some of the highest infection and death rates in NYC, but also exacerbated rates of unemployment, housing evictions, and business closures.

**ii: (1)** A majority of residents within the target area are members of one or more sensitive population(s): 94% are minorities; 26.7% are living below the federal poverty line and 34% of children under 18 are members of households substituting below the poverty line; 25% of the population is children and 23% are 60 years age and older (2020 US Census Data 5 year estimates). The Bronx faces the highest eviction rate in NYC and during COVID-19, a housing crisis quickly emerged in the Bronx causing eviction cases to escalate at a rapid pace, outnumbering any city in the State of NY, and exceeding many large cities in the US. In addition,



housing stock overall is dilapidated, with peeling paint, mold, leaky faucets, faulty hot water, and bad heating. These conditions are associated with poor health outcomes and worsen asthma and other respiratory illnesses. These neighborhoods also lack access to fresh, healthy food. Corner stores outnumber supermarkets 13 to 1 (Hinterland et. al., 2018), and high concentrations of fast food restaurants make calorically dense, nutrient-poor food options quick and convenient to obtain. The result of this foodscape is that large portions of the community have chronic illnesses; the diabetes rate in Soundview is 16%, while the obesity rate in CD9 is 32% (Hinterland et. al., 2018). In addition, a large percentage of the population in the target area tends to be linguistically isolated, with 63.1% of residents speaking a language other than English at home. Populations may also suffer from a lack of societal support including health insurance with 8% of the population living without health insurance. Additionally, 16.7% of the population over the age of 5 are living with a disability and therefore more vulnerable. The redevelopment strategy presented here will maximize opportunities for job growth and economic development; improvement of resident health and access to recreation; providing resources/assistance to homeless populations who may be using abandoned buildings on brownfield sites for shelter; preservation/expansion of affordable housing; increasing urban agriculture/food sovereignty; beautification and placemaking activities to revitalize the area; and increased connectivity and mobility in communities that have been disconnected and deeply impacted by inequitable development and pollution.

(2) Our community's EJ Index for PM<sub>2.5</sub> is in the 87th percentile nationwide, and residents suffer from some of the highest respiratory hazards in the nation, ranking in the 95th-100th percentile in the National Air Toxics Assessment (NATA). The contaminants our residents are exposed to that are produced as a result of the nearby highway infrastructure are shown to cause premature birth, birth defects, infant mortality, respiratory illnesses, heart disease, and some cancers. The contaminants our residents are exposed to that are linked to the Cass Gilbert brownfield site including the abandoned building present on-site include railway-related pollutants such as lead, mercury, and creosote that are known to have disproportionate impacts on youth including decreased kidney function, anemia, learning disabilities, and hearing loss. Toxins associated with abandoned buildings are also of grave concern. These include asbestos, lead paint, and black mold, all known to cause severe respiratory distress. Pesticides and rodenticides are also utilized in abandoned buildings to minimize pest infestation and disease occurrence. Children and adults who suffer from asthma and respiratory conditions are sensitive to pesticides and rodenticides; exposure to these chemicals can result in difficulty breathing and emergency hospitalization.

(3) For over 28 years, YMPJ has worked to address environmental injustices caused by a deep history of systemic racism, marginalization, and disinvestment that left people of color, immigrants, and low-income populations in the South Bronx disproportionately impacted by toxic pollution. According to the CEJST 27 tool, the targeted areas are identified as disadvantaged communities, over 90% are located near a hazardous waste site, and 99% experience diesel matter exposure. Major roadways in our area were developed to connect the Hunts Point Food Distribution Center (the 2nd largest food distribution center in the world) to the interstate network. However, these roadways and other transportation arteries, such as the railway, cut through four diverse, vibrant South Bronx communities and contributed to significant population decline, increased pollution, facilitated the establishment of polluting industries next to residential neighborhoods, and completely disconnected residents from the Bronx River and local parks. According to the NYC Dept. of Planning, 4.5% of total land within

the communities we serve comprises open space, significantly below the Bronx average of 31.8%, and the majority of that land is inaccessible, unpleasant, and dangerous. These factors hinder the activation of open space for community benefit and public health. The redevelopment strategies presented here promote community engagement in EJ priorities and empower this underserved, disproportionately impacted community to control revitalization efforts.

**b: i:** Local residents know YMPJ as a vital support hub, providing a full roster of culturally and linguistically competent programs and services focused on economic stability, health and nutrition, immigration assistance, youth development, and more. As a “trusted messenger,” YMPJ is uniquely positioned to reach highly vulnerable populations that outside entities simply cannot. For this project, we will inform and engage our South Bronx community members through the following channels: YMPJ’s social media and Newsletter, reaching approx. 20,000 individuals/year; weekly Open Community Meetings, reaching approx. 500 individuals/year; in conjunction with direct immigration services, touching approx. 800 individuals/year; through tabling and public programming at local parks and open spaces (including a weekly “Open Street” at Morrison Plaza/Harrod Place- where YMPJ serves as the NYC DOT programming partner), touching approx. 10,000 individuals/year; via presentations and tabling at local houses of worship, local schools, and local public housing developments, touching approx. 10,000 individuals/year; and via outreach through YMPJ’s new Soundview/Parkchester Family Enrichment Center, serving more than 2,000 individuals/year. YMPJ will hold space for presentations and question and answer sessions at our Open Community Meetings where the community will be invited to engage meaningfully in the project by providing feedback on the information learned during site assessments and how this information informs redevelopment and reuse of the brownfield site(s). In addition, YMPJ has created an advisory board that governs our open space activation work. This advisory board will be integrally involved in sharing information about the project with community members.

To date, YMPJ has brought more than \$2B in investments to the Bronx waterfront through an urban renewal process that addresses the socio-economic and environmental conditions that are critical to the health and stability of our community. This has only been possible through deep resident participation in redevelopment planning efforts. Residents participate by attending and providing feedback during visioning sessions and charrettes as well as by creating community maps that highlight key locations that are important to community members. Our extensive Coalition work with partnering organizations, businesses, and government agencies allows us to bring residents’ lived experiences to the table. YMPJ is a lead member of the Southern Boulevard Coalition, an alliance of residents, merchants, and community organizations advocating for a community-led process to benefit our neighborhoods; we serve as our catchment’s Neighborhood Coordinator for the Mayor’s Taskforce on Racial Inclusion and Equity (TRIE); and we are the lead partnering organization for our Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA Planning Committee (the group developing the Nomination for the NYS DOS). Our Coalition work keeps us deeply connected with representatives from NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development, NYC Dept. of Planning, Bronx Borough President’s Office, NYC Office of Environmental Remediation, NYC Department of City Planning, NYC Department of Transportation, NYC Housing Authority, local Community Boards, private and non-profit developers, and various private sector and community based partners. We will continue to leverage our Coalition work to expand our reach.

**ii:** Key partners include the following: NYC Department of Planning: Alvaro Munoz Hansen, [Amunoz@planning.nyc.gov](mailto:Amunoz@planning.nyc.gov), 917-231-7757; Specific involvement: Support regulatory

requirements, participate in select steering committee meetings, review draft and final plans; South Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation (SoBro): Lourdes Zapata, [lzapata@sobro.org](mailto:lzapata@sobro.org), (718) 292-3113; Specific involvement: help establish and participate in steering committee; support selection of consultant(s); support activities around Community Engagement, including outreach to sensitive populations; review draft and final plans; and The Bronx River Alliance: Siddharth Motwani, [siddharth.motwani@bronxriver.org](mailto:siddharth.motwani@bronxriver.org), 718-542-4124; Specific involvement: Participate in steering committee; support activities around Community Engagement, including outreach to sensitive populations; review draft and final plans

*iii.* YMPJ will ensure meaningful community input through (at-minimum) monthly on-going activities. In addition, we will hold dedicated listening sessions with key constituent groups (for example: local business owners, youth, residents of local NYCHA housing development), providing a forum for them to explore various implications of the project, voice concerns, ask questions, etc. Of particular note, YMPJ will engage our Community Leaders (developed from our base of 600 local residents) for this project, we will develop materials that our Community Leaders can use to inform residents about the project, and easy survey tools that will allow us to document feedback received via community interactions. All project material will be offered in a variety of formats such as large print and languages other than English. YMPJ will also seek out ADA-approved facilities for community engagement activities.

3. a: Task One: Conduct Project Management, Establish Project Steering Committee: *i. Project Implementation, EPA-funded tasks:* Project management, i.e. budget tracking, tracking of performance measures, quarterly reporting, coordination with subcontractors, YMPJ team and steering committee meetings, assurance of compliance with the cooperative agreement, development of steering committee and coordination with committee members. *ii. Project Schedule:* Activities will begin as soon as the cooperative agreement is signed and continue through month 48. Steering committee will meet bi-monthly. *iii. Task/Activity Lead:* Project Director and Project Manager *iv. Outputs:* (16) Quarterly reports, (16) budget documentation forms including expense reports, minutes from (1) meeting, (1) committee member list

Task Two: Solicitation of Consulting Services: *i. Project Implementation, EPA-funded tasks:* Solicitation of consulting services. An RFP process fully compliant with EPA solicitation clauses shall be used to select one or more consultants. *ii. Project Schedule:* Activities will begin as soon as the cooperative agreement is signed and will continue through month 4 when consultant agreement(s) will be signed. *iii. Task/Activity Lead:* YMPJ Project Director with assistance from YMPJ Project Manager *iv. Outputs:* Monthly calls (4), monthly meetings (4), and documentation (including signed scope(s) and services agreement(s)) between YMPJ and the consultant(s).

Task Three: Community and Stakeholder Planning and Participation: *i. Project Implementation, EPA-funded tasks:* YMPJ will work with consultant(s) to prepare a Community and Stakeholder Participation Plan that ensures meaningful public participation in the planning process. This will include an anticipated schedule of ongoing public meetings and planned activities that result in the community-led selection of 2-4 prioritized key sites. *ii. Project Schedule:* Activities will begin in Month 5 and continue through Month 48. *iii. Task/Activity Lead:* YMPJ Project Director with assistance from YMPJ Project Manager, consultant(s), Steering Committee Leadership *iv. Outputs:* (1) Community and Stakeholder Participation Plan, (1) anticipated schedule of monthly events, (3-4) informational materials for those events, selection of 2 - 4 priority sites to be included in the Brownfield Redevelopment Action Plan.

Task Four: Site Analysis and Development of Brownfield Redevelopment Action Plan: *i. Project Implementation, EPA-funded tasks:* YMPJ will work with consultant(s) to begin Phase I

Environmental Site Assessment and Characterization and develop a Brownfield Redevelopment Action Plan focused on 2-4 identified key sites. Actions steps will be informed by site ownership and location; current use or status and zoning; existing infrastructure, utilities, and site access points; proximity to existing transportation networks; natural and cultural resources or features; flood zone and type (A,AE); adjacent uses; environmental and land use history, including previous owners and operators; and known or suspected contaminants. *ii. Project Schedule:* Activities will begin in Month 13 and continue through Month 48. *iii. Task/Activity Lead:* YMPJ Project Director and Project Manager, consultant(s), Steering Committee Leadership *iv. Outputs:* (1) Brownfield Redevelopment Action Plan, notes from at least three (3) public proceedings, notes from at least three (3) public engagement activities, notes from one (1) community meeting

Task Five: Cass Gilbert Phase II Environmental Site Assessment and Characterization; Planning towards Site Clean-up and Redevelopment: *i. Project Implementation, EPA-funded tasks/activities:* YMPJ and consultant(s) undertake a Phase II Environmental Site Assessment and Characterization for Cass Gilbert and develop a remediation plan for the Gass Gilbert site *ii. Project Schedule:* Activities will begin in Month 5 and continue through Month 48. *iii. Task/Activity Lead:* YMPJ Project Director with assistance from YMPJ Project Manager, consultant(s), Steering Committee Leadership *iv. Outputs:* summaries from five (5) interviews, (1) complete inventory map of the site, (1) summary report on the Phase II Environmental Site Assessment and Characterization to inform eventual Cleanup and Redevelopment Plan

BUDGET	Task 1	Task 2	Task 3	Task 4	Task 5	TOTAL
Personnel	\$85,000	\$15,000				\$88,800
Fringe Benefits	\$12,750	\$2,250				\$22,200
Travel			\$4,800			\$4,800
Supplies			\$5,000			\$5,000
Contractual			\$25,000	\$100,000	\$200,000	\$325,000
Other	\$14,200		\$24,000			\$38,200
TOTAL DIRECT	\$111,950	\$17,250	\$58,800	\$100,000	\$200,000	\$484,000
TOTAL INDIRECT (5%)	\$5,597.50	\$862.50				\$16,000
TOTAL BUDGET	\$117,548	\$22,200	\$58,800	\$100,000	\$200,000	\$500,000

Personnel for Tasks 1 and 2 include salary and fringe allocations for the Project Director (\$110k/year @ 20% x 4 years = \$88,000) and Project Manager (\$75k/year @ 4%with 4 years = \$12,000). The Fringe Rate is equivalent to 15% of the salary total and includes payroll tax, health insurance, unemployment, and worker's comp. Other expenses in Task 1 include stipends for Steering Committee Members (3 Members x 4 years at approximately 39.5 hours per Member per year at \$30 per hour for a total of approximately \$4,740 per member over the project period). Task 3 includes Travel expenses for Metrocards to be provided to participants in community engagement sessions (approx. \$9 per Metrocard x 533 residents); supplies include production of community engagement session materials, as well as other event supplies; \$25k in contractual for 150-165 hours of urban planning consulting services at approximately \$150 per hour; and other expenses include \$25 stipends for residents who attend engagement sessions (ie. 20 attendees per session for approx. 960 hours of total attendance at \$25 per hour). Task 4

includes \$100k in contractual for 500 hours of professional consulting services at \$200 per hour, to include technical services and activities from urban planning and Geographic Information System professionals in the assessment and mapping processes. Task 5 includes \$200k in contractual for 1,000 hours of consulting services (including an evaluation consultant) at approximately \$200 per hour. Note these cost estimates are based on surveys of market rates.

**c:** YMPJ will track, measure, and evaluate the outputs associated with the project as well as complete any and all EPA-required reporting such as quarterly and financial reporting. Project outputs and required reports will be directly uploaded into EPA's ACRES system. The outputs YMPJ will measure regarding community engagement include: completion of the Community and Stakeholder Participation Plan, a comparative analysis of the number of public proceedings and community engagement sessions planned versus the number of public proceedings held, and the number of participants at community engagement sessions. YMPJ will measure and track the following outputs related to identified key brownfield site Phase I Assessment: number of brownfield sites analyzed, number of historical records and reports reviewed by staff, number of field observations made, number of data sourced/data obtained about the environmental conditions of the properties (e.g. flood zone data, environmental history, known or suspected contaminants). YMPJ will measure and track the following outputs with regard to next steps leading to site redevelopment: number of actions steps for key sites and completion status of the Redevelopment Action Plan. YMPJ will measure and track outputs with regard to Phase II Environmental Assessment for Cass Gilbert Train Station, including results of all testing and sampling determined to be necessary during Phase I. YMPJ will use long-term monitoring to track measurable health improvement impacts (e.g. reduced blood pressure, reduced resting heart rate, increased consumption of fruits/vegetables, reduction of toxin-related health conditions such as asthma, reductions in blood-lead levels etc.) and measurable social impacts (e.g. increased self-efficacy and optimism among the community, number of additional jobs created, increase in retail sales, reduction in evictions as a result of increased access to information and community programming provided at the site etc.). YMPJ will also use long-term monitoring to track environmental benefits including reduced mobilization of on-site toxins, increased healthy plant growth, increased filtration and uptake of stormwater, and reduced flooding. Additionally, YMPJ will contract with an evaluation consultant who will complete two process assessments at critical points during the project process and who will complete an outcome assessment at the completion of the project. These process assessments will assist YMPJ leadership and staff in monitoring the project overall and the evaluation consultant will be a key resource for YMPJ staff who will monitor progress on a quarterly basis to ensure milestones are being met. If goals are not being met or are delayed, YMPJ will meet with consultants and the steering committee to determine what additional steps are needed to maintain the project schedule and project outputs.

**4. a: i:** YMPJ has deep capacity to partner with residents, community-based partners, corporate sponsors, elected officials, and government agencies towards advancing the cleanup and restoration of the riverfront in our catchment. YMPJ has led the development of several large green community sites along the River, including the remediation of Starlight Park and the creation of Concrete Plant Park. In 2016, YMPJ launched the Bronx River Foodway at Concrete Plant Park, an edible food corridor on a remediated brownfield site, the first of its kind in NYC. That same year we led the equitable redevelopment of Morrison Public Plaza and Open Market, which launched in 2022. Of particular relevance, YMPJ was a lead partner of The Sheridan Alliance, which was instrumental in influencing NYS Governor Andrew Cuomo to allocate \$1.8 billion to the redevelopment of the Sheridan Expressway. Through this deep history of work,

YMPJ has developed the capacity to manage the administrative and financial requirements for local, state, and federal funding. We have established methods for financial management and planning, which include bi-weekly timesheets for all staff, monthly bank reconciliations, quarterly budget updates and projections that are reviewed by the Board.

**ii:** YMPJ is governed by a 5-member Board of Directors with diverse backgrounds in the areas of law, business, community development, non-profit management, and community organizing. The Board provides financial oversight, evaluates the performance of the Executive Director; reviews and continually contributes to strategic planning initiatives; and sets fundraising goals. Key staff for this project will include YMPJ’s Brownfields Opportunity Area Program Manager, Development Associate, Executive Director, Communications Coordinator, and Director of Community Organizing. The Executive Director and Program Manager will be responsible for all required activities and outputs as well as regular monitoring against milestones to ensure success. The Communications Coordinator and Director of Community Organizing will facilitate communication and events regarding the project to key stakeholders to generate interest in the project. The Development Associate and Executive Director will complete and oversee key admin. activities required for the community-wide assessment grant.

**iii:** David Shuffer, the Project Director has served for 10 years as the organization’s Executive Director. David has experience managing state and federal grants; building partnerships with government agencies and local organizations; and overseeing staff while tracking deliverables and expenditures under large government contracts.

**iv:** In 2024, YMPJ will procure consultants from a qualified firm or firms to carry out specific tasks. This procurement process will be fully consistent with federal procurement requirements, 2 C.F.R. 200 and EPA’s rule at 2 C.F.R. 1500. The Project Director and Manager will be primarily responsible for initiating a qualifications-based selection for consultants to support execution of the Community and Stakeholder Participation Plan, Brownfield Redevelopment Action Plan and technical Phase I and II Assessment activities.

Purpose and Accomplishments	Compliance
In October of 2023, YMPJ received a Brownfield Opportunity Area grant from the New York State Department of State’s Brownfield Program to fund a study designed to result in nomination of the study area as a Brownfield Opportunity Area with the State of New York.	This project began in 1/2023. YMPJ has thus far met all reporting requirements and is in compliance with the timeline set out as a part of this funding.
In 2021, YMPJ received \$230,000 from the USDA to develop a weekly Open Market at Morrison Public Plaza that features fresh, healthy food from local entrepreneurs and Tri-State Area farmers. YMPJ has made significant progress and is working with City vendors to select the semi-permanent Kiosk for the Plaza.	YMPJ has complied with the work plan and schedule of the assistance agreement. We recently submitted our annual report in August of 2023. We have also secured 100% of the matching funds requirement.
In 2021, YMPJ received \$45,000 from Salazar Center at Colorado State University’s Thriving Cities Challenge and has since launched a NYC-based coalition of CBO’s activating underutilized public spaces. We accomplished all of the tasks outlined in the assistance agreement, including leveraging the initial funding to secure larger grants.	Throughout the project period, YMPJ met all reporting standards set out by the Salazar Center. We have created and submitted narrative and financial progress reports as required.

### **III.B. Threshold Criteria for Assessment Grants**

**1. A statement of applicant eligibility if a city, county, state, or tribe (see Section III.B.1.)**

Not Applicable

**2. Documentation of applicant eligibility if other than a city, county, state, or tribe**

See attached documentation demonstrating tax-exempt status under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

**3. Description of community involvement**

Using a collective impact model, YMPJ has brought more than \$2B in investments to the Bronx waterfront, cultivating an urban renewal process that addresses the socio-economic and environmental conditions that are critical to the health and stability of our community. This is only possible through deep resident participation within vulnerable, hard to reach populations. At all levels, YMPJ is a community-led, immigrant-driven organization, and our deep roots in the South Bronx allow us to take on the role of Trusted Messengers and effectively engage our neighbors in equitable land use planning processes. Residents know us as a vital support hub, providing a full roster of culturally and linguistically competent programs and services focused on economic stability, health and nutrition, immigration assistance, youth development, and more. Our active base of engaged residents perform phone banking, door-to-door canvassing, flier distribution on critical corridors, and tabling to organize residents. In addition, our public programming reaches 1000's of local residents per year at local parks, plazas, and community spaces, creating more entry points into our larger campaigns. We are uniquely positioned to reach and engage a highly sensitive population that outside entities simply cannot.

For this project, YMPJ will prepare a Community and Stakeholder Participation Plan, ensuring meaningful public participation in the planning process through (at-minimum) monthly activities and fully engaging our membership base in all planning activities. Additionally, YMPJ will work with Bronx Community Boards 3 and 9, and our local network of partners to ensure high attendance at public events. Should COVID-19 become a concern, YMPJ has experience conducting similar activities in a safe, socially distanced manner, over social media, and through online meeting platforms.

**4. Affirmative statement that the applicant does not have an open Assessment Grant or Multipurpose Grant**

Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice, Inc. (YMPJ) affirms that it does not have an open EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant or Multipurpose Grant.

**5. Affirmative statement that a contractor/subrecipient has not been procured/named**

Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice, Inc. (YMPJ) affirms that it has not procured a contractor or named a subrecipient.