



Region I

Planning & Development Council

1439 E. Main St., Suite #5
Princeton, WV 24740

(304) 431-7225
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www.regiononepdc.org

1. Applicant Identification: Region 1 Planning & Development Council
1439 East Main Street, Suite 5
Princeton, West Virginia 24740

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

3. Location:
The Region 1 Planning & Development Council service area includes the following six West Virginia counties: McDowell, Mercer, Monroe, Raleigh, Summers, Wyoming and their 25 municipalities.

4. Target Area and Priority Site/Property Information:
Community-wide Assessment Grant

Target Areas: McDowell, Mercer, and Wyoming Counties

Priority Site Address: City Warehouse and Bluefield Lubricants
1500 and 1516 Bluefield Avenue
Bluefield, WV 24701
Census Tract 54055002000

Priority Site Address: Wyoming Hotel
185-187 1st Street
Mullens, WV 25882
Census Tract 54109003200

Priority Site Address: Big Four Motel
25925 Coal Heritage Road
Kimball, WV 24853
Census Tract 54047954503

5. Contacts:

Project Director:
 Jason Roberts
 Executive Director
 Region 1 PDC
 1439 East Main Street, Suite 5
 Princeton, West Virginia 24740
 (304) 431-7225
jasonroberts@regiononepdc.org

Chief Executive/Highest Ranking Official:
 David Tolliver
 Chairman of the Board
 Region 1 PDC
 1439 East Main Street, Suite 5
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6. Population:

Target Areas:
 City of Bluefield: 9,699
 Town of Mullens: 2,255
 Town of Kimball: 159
 (2021 Census 5-year ACS)

7. Other Factors Checklist:

Other Factors	Page #
Community population is 10,000 or less.	4
The applicant is, or will assist, a federally recognized Indian tribe or United States territory.	
The priority site(s) is impacted by mine-scarred land.	
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).	2
The priority site(s) is in a federally designated floodplain.	2
The reuse of the priority site(s) will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy.	
The reuse of the priority site(s) will incorporate energy efficiency measures.	
The proposed project will improve local climate adaptation/mitigation capacity and resilience to protect residents and community investments.	4
At least 30% of the overall project budget will be spent on eligible reuse/area-wide planning activities for priority site(s) within the target area.	
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.	

8. Letter from the State or Tribal Environmental Authority: A letter of acknowledgement from the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection is attached.

9. Releasing Copies of Applications: N/A – This application does not have confidential, privileged, or sensitive information.



west virginia department of environmental protection

Office of Environmental Remediation
601 57th Street SE
Charleston, WV 25304
Phone: 304-926-0499

Harold D. Ward, Cabinet Secretary
dep.wv.gov

November 2, 2023

Mr. Jason Roberts, Executive Director
Region 1 Planning and Development Council
1439 East Main Street, Suite 5
Princeton, WV 24740

RE: State Environmental Authority Acknowledgement Letter
FY24 U.S. EPA Brownfields Community-Wide Assessment Grant Application
EPA-OLEM-OBLR-23-12

Dear Mr. Roberts,

Thank you for your continued efforts to further enhance the state's environment, economy, and quality of life by applying for an FY24 U.S. EPA Brownfields Community-Wide Assessment Grant.

As the counties in Region 1 find their footing after the decline of the coal industry, revitalization of abandoned and underutilized sites will be critical in this area of the state. The revitalization of the U.S. 19 and U.S. 52 corridor on which visitors travel to and from the Hatfield-McCoy Trail System will help McDowell, Mercer, and Wyoming Counties better capitalize on the popularity of this tourist attraction. Due to the clear need and obvious benefit of these assessment activities, the WVDEP Office of Environmental Remediation fully supports your grant application.

We are committed to assist you throughout the assessment and eventual remediation of your target areas, and we look forward to future redevelopment. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or needs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jackson Porter". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jackson Porter
Brownfields Specialist

1. PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION AND PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION

a. Target Area and Brownfields

i. Background and Description of Target Area:

Located in the southeast corner of West Virginia, surrounded by the rugged Appalachian Mountains, are the counties of McDowell, Mercer, Monroe, Raleigh, Summers, and Wyoming. These six counties and their 25 municipalities comprise the Region I Planning & Development Council (PDC). The PDC was created to provide comprehensive assistance and planning for the counties and municipalities located within its service area.

In the 1800's, small rural communities developed to harvest vast timber resources located throughout the region. Timber was harvested and transported to growing eastern seaboard cities for new building construction. By the mid 1800's, the region had become a major producer of bituminous coal, which was essential to fuel steel mills and factories. As timber and coal demands increased, more workers and their families came to the region to find employment. In the late 1800s new cities and towns sprang up along the area's rivers and rail lines, their populations tripling within a single year in some cases (Bluefield 1887-1888). The Norfolk and Western Railroad completed rail lines through the area in the late-1800's, connecting this region to population centers and new markets. By the early 1900's, the region had grown to become one of the largest producers of both coal and timber in the world. Employment in the timber and coal industries peaked in the mid-1900s, then began sharply declining. In the 1950s, competition from other timber resources, combined with more efficient methods to mine coal, decreased job demand. Jobs continued to decrease during the last half of the 20th Century, as timber resources were depleted, and coal use significantly declined. U.S. Department of Labor data indicates the number of timber and coal mining jobs are now over 85% less than their peak during the mid-1900s. As timber and coal shipments by rail decreased, railroad operation decreased dramatically. The loss of jobs, population, and corresponding tax revenues has had devastating effects on PDC communities. An April 2014, New York Times article notes about McDowell County, "The economy is declining along with the coal industry, towns are hollowed out as people flee, and communities are scarred by family dissolution, prescription drug abuse and a high rate of imprisonment." The 2016 closure of a Walmart Supercenter in Kimball, a McDowell County community, illustrates how fragile local economies are. At its peak, this Walmart employed 300 people, but the declining population and low incomes in the area made the store unsustainable. The next closest full-service grocery to purchase produce is approximately 1 hour away. The loss of \$145,000 in annual tax revenue after Walmart's closure caused the town of Kimball to cut town staff and move to a four-day work week. The \$68,000 loss of taxes to the county forced public school employees to accept a 10% pay cut.

The loss of coal jobs led to dramatic population loss between 1950 and 2020 in PDC communities. Kimball suffered a population loss of 88.4%, Mullens saw a population loss of 63.3%, and Bluefield, the financial hub of the region's coal industry, lost 56.2%, or 12,083 people (U.S. Census Bureau). As the timber, coal, and railroad industries declined, every local business and service also suffered. In addition to the loss of jobs and population, the PDC region was hard hit by two massive flood events in 2001 and 2002. Approximately 10,000 homes were damaged or destroyed, as were nearly a thousand businesses, and twelve people died. The near complete economic collapse of the PDC region and the turmoil caused by back-to-back major floods have devastated communities. Today, **all but four census tracts in the entire six-county region are considered disadvantaged under the Justice40 initiative.** In addition to ongoing outmigration and widespread socioeconomic problems, thousands of dilapidated vacant homes and businesses have been left behind as people have left the region. In the counties of McDowell and Wyoming a recent GIS project performed by the PDC identified 1,162 properties that are either collapsed, need to be demolished, or are in poor condition. Many of these properties, which include numerous brownfield sites, are located on and near the primary corridors of US Hwy 19 (US-19) and US Hwy 52 (US-52). These highways are the main access routes for the Hatfield-McCoy Trail System in the region. Outdoor recreation-based tourism is a fast-growing economic sector – one of the few positive economic trends for the region. The PDC region abounds with recreational opportunities, including water sports, hiking, mountain biking, rock climbing, and in particular All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) exploration. With over 700 miles of ATV trails, the trail system attracts over 56,000 ATV riders to southern West Virginia every year, making it one of the largest, most visited trail systems in the world. However, the dilapidated buildings and vacant brownfield sites along US-19 and US-52 in McDowell, Mercer, and Wyoming Counties discourage visitors from staying in or visiting the communities. The lack of tourist amenities, such as lodging, shops, and restaurants, detract from the experience of the tens of thousands of visitors to the trails each year. Also, the vacant sites pose environmental risks to adjacent properties and nearby residents. Therefore, the PDC will first prioritize brownfield sites in a Target Areas in the Town of Kimball, City of Mullens, and City of Bluefield that are along routes taken by recreational tourists. The generational burdens of daunting economic, health, and environmental conditions on the sensitive/disadvantaged populations in the Target Areas emphasizes the need for EPA grant funds to advance

brownfield assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment efforts to create jobs and address public health concerns.

ii. Description of the Priority Brownfield Sites:

The PDC region's past prosperity has left behind vacant gas stations, dry cleaners, auto repair shops, machine shops, coal tipples, rail yards, industrial sites, as well as vacant downtown buildings, hotels, and storefronts in the towns along major corridors with access to the Hatfield-McCoy trail system. Working with stakeholders, the PDC has identified and prioritized the following sites, based upon their impact to the surrounding community, their potential for a reuse, and the positive impacts redevelopment will have on local economies:

City Warehouse and Bluefield Lubricants, Bluefield, Mercer County – The City Warehouse is a historic brick warehouse structure, which has been used for many purposes over the years and is currently underutilized as storage for a roofing company. Located on US-19, the two-story building includes over 18,000-square feet (sf) of space and sits on one acre. Adjacent to the warehouse, Bluefield Lubricant is a vacant, former oil depot with several aboveground storage tanks (ASTs) and a 6,000-sf office and warehouse building remaining on the 0.82-acre site. Vegetation is overtaking the secondary containments around the ASTs and growing through the cracks in the parking lot. A creek is piped underneath both properties, and the railroad is located to the rear of the sites. In addition to solvents, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), petroleum, pesticides, and herbicides from past uses, asbestos-containing materials (ACM) and lead-based paint (LBP) are concerns.

Wyoming Hotel, Mullens, Wyoming County – The Wyoming Hotel, a six-story hotel with over 36,000-sf of space and constructed in 1918, remains a symbol of the county's former grand and prosperous industrial age. Legends, such as baseball giant Babe Ruth, President John F. Kennedy, and even Mark Twain, stayed in the once-elegant hotel. In 1978, the collapse of the region's economy led to the closure of the historic hotel. Now, the boarded-up first floor windows and doors, the broken windows on upper floors, and the peeling paint of the historic hotel's façade looms over the rest of the mostly one or two-story structures in the once vibrant Mullens downtown. Tourists driving through town on the way to the Trail System are greeted by the broken neon lettering of the Hotel Wyoming sign, hanging over WV Route 16. Located on 0.2-acres with the Slab Fork River on the east boundary as it meets the Guyandotte River on the south boundary (in a federally designated flood plain), the building was badly damaged by a flood in 2001. Due to the age and deteriorating condition of the structure, ACM, LBP, and mold are concerns. Located at a downgradient position from most of downtown, offsite contamination from nearby gas stations, drycleaners, and industrial operations also need to be investigated.

Big Four Motel, Kimball, McDowell County – Incorporated in 1911, Kimball is representative of the many coal company towns that developed along the Norfolk Southern Railway in the 1890s and early 1900s. The native population was not large enough to support the new coal industry, so coal companies recruited immigrants from Europe and African Americans from the South. McDowell became one of the most diverse counties in the state, and African Americans have historically comprised the majority of Kimball's population. In 2021, Kimball had a population of 159, of which 75.5% identified as Black or African American. Across from the former Walmart, the Big Four Motel and Big Four Exxon gas station sit vacant and overgrown with vegetation. Once serving the coal and rail workers traveling through town, the Big Four motel was built in 1957 and includes a one-story building on 0.69 acres with 4,000 sf of building space and 14 rooms. A local woman has purchased the motel, but potential environmental issues with the septic system and concerns with ACM and LBP are hindering her reuse plans.

iii. Identifying Additional Sites:

Our initial inventory has identified 25 brownfield sites with redevelopment potential. As funding allows, the PDC will continue to work with community stakeholders to identify and prioritize additional sites for assessment and cleanup and reuse planning throughout the grant period. Community engagement is crucial for the PDC to serve the six counties and their 25 municipalities, and as discussed in Sec. 2b, the PDC plans to form a Community Steering Committee (CSC) for the EPA Brownfield Grant project. The CSC will be comprised of local organizations, county economic development entities, non-profit groups, and state-affiliated groups providing project input and expertise. Within these groups are local business owners, local government, and non-profit representatives, all with the goal of bringing sustainable economic development into the region. The PDC team and community partners will solicit additional community input throughout the four-year grant period.

Prioritization criteria for additional sites will include the following: 1) severity of potential contamination and threat to human and/or environmental health; 2) community need and location within a disadvantaged census tract; and 3) redevelopment potential and local support/interest in redevelopment of the site. A running inventory of potential sites will be maintained and prioritized by the PDC and CSC.

b. Revitalization of the Target Area

i. Redevelopment Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans

The projected redevelopment of priority brownfield sites, and others throughout the PDC, aligns with the

current Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). Specifically, this project is in direct alignment with the CEDS Economic Development Goal and Objective, “To encourage industrial/commercial development, economic resiliency, and tourism and travel growth, which enhance employment opportunities and diversity, resulting in a large tax base needed to support the existing and future community.” The 2020 CEDS Annual Update explains the goal is to focus on clusters of economic growth within certain industries, noting the desire to develop a “Travel Tourism” cluster in the region (“7. Travel Tourism - White water rafting, skiing, resort parks, Hatfield-McCoy Trail System.”). The Hatfield-McCoy Trail System and related developments are noted as part of the redevelopment strategy for almost every community and county in the PDC. Development of additional lodging, restaurants, off-road vehicle support businesses, and complimentary activities creates a tremendous opportunity for the Target Area. Specifically, the large parking areas at the *City Warehouse and Bluefield Lubricants* sites in Bluefield can easily accommodate the trucks and RVs with ATV-loaded trailers, and the amount of square footage in the buildings at the two adjacent sites make them an attractive location for a short-stay lodging development with an onsite restaurant, brewpub, and/or outfitter. In Mullens, local and regional redevelopment officials are developing preliminary plans to renovate and reuse the *Wyoming Hotel* for a commercial-residential mix, catering to outdoor recreation tourist. Similarly, the new owner of the *Big Four Motel* plans to update and convert the motel to a short-stay lodge for ATV tourists. In accordance with the CEDS, county comprehensive plans, and local revitalization strategies, the reuse plans seek to leverage the growing recreational tourism to grow local economies, create jobs, and improve communities.

ii. Outcomes and Benefits of Redevelopment Strategy

In March 2020, Marshall University conducted an economic analysis of the impact of the Hatfield McCoy Trail System. This analysis concluded that the estimated economic impact of the Hatfield-McCoy Trails is more than \$38 million in southeast WV. In addition to the dollar value of economic activity, the Hatfield-McCoy Trails support significant employment. The trail system directly sustains 24 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs year-to-year and can be credited with supporting a total of 430 FTE positions. The report concludes that the continued development and enhancement of the Hatfield-McCoy Trail system will stimulate even greater activity. An August 2021 article in the *Mountain State Spotlight* notes that a 1996 Army Corp of Engineers’ report concluded that the first 300 miles of the trail system would result in up to \$50 million of new revenue and 1,500 new jobs added to local economies. The report noted that the completed 2,000-mile trail system would result in 3,245 new jobs. Early studies speculated that 80% of users would come from nearby counties as day trips. In reality 85% of trail riders live outside of WV. **Experts are confident if there were more lodging options and support businesses near trail system trailheads the total number of visitors and related jobs would increase significantly.** Some communities along the trail system, such as Gilbert, WV, located in Mingo County (immediately NW of the PDC region) embraced the opportunities associated with the trail system early on. Gilbert with a permanent population of only 398 people has 17 different lodging options for visitors ranging from luxury suites to primitive campgrounds. There is also a variety of restaurants and businesses focused on the trail riding community. WV economic development and recreation officials are confident there is a huge demand for additional lodging and amenities. Locating lodging and trail riding centers at locations different from established areas will serve to maximize trail use, attract new users, and reinvigorate a larger area versus concentrating resources in established areas. Beyond ATV trail riding, the region is rich with other outdoor recreation activities.

The Hatfield-McCoy Trail System, broader recreation opportunities, and the region’s scenic beauty will attract visitors and help economically bolster the region, if financial resources can be attracted to invest in the area, but lending institutions are unwilling to loan money on sites with environmental concerns. The Target Area needs EPA grant funds to clear environmental hurdles to attract private investors. The physical topography, low populations, high poverty, poor health, and low educational attainment leaves few economic development options for the highly disadvantaged communities in the Target Area. Leaning into the unique outdoor recreation opportunity provided by the Hatfield-McCoy Trail System can provide an economic base for communities to build resources to address dire physical and social infrastructure needs. Many of the brownfield sites in the Target Area are ideal locations for the much need lodging options, amenities, and service businesses, but the lack of local financial resources make their redevelopment unlikely without EPA funding for essential environmental assessments. The PDC will coordinate closely with local officials and property owners to ensure that residents are not displaced by new developments and that proposed projects serve to enhance and strengthen underserved disadvantaged neighborhoods. In addition, considering these communities have already been impacted by significant flood events, the PDC plans to develop area-wide revitalization plans for each of the communities, which will include a climate change vulnerability assessment and resiliency recommendations.

c. **Strategy for Leveraging Resources**

i. Resources Needed for Site Reuse

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As a multi-purpose regional entity recognized by the State of WV, the PDC is eligible for all major categories of federal, state, and private funding sources. These resources rarely include funding specifically for environmental assessments, which are often required prior to receiving funds from many other grant programs. This EPA grant will support the PDC’s efforts by funding assessments and reuse plans needed to leverage additional funding from public and private sources. One federal example is the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), a congressionally designated commission specifically for the purpose of retaining and expanding the economy of the Appalachian Region. ARC grant opportunities include funding for planning, technical assistance, and construction projects. All of PDC’s service area is eligible for ARC funding. In August 2022, the West Virginia Tourism Department announced the availability of \$5.1 million in grants to promote tourism. Specific grant guidelines are scheduled for release in early 2023. Also, through its Tourism Development Act West Virginia offers a generous tax incentive program of up to 35% in tax credits for new tourism projects with capital investments greater than \$1,000,000. The PDC and local economic development officials will inform and educate real estate developers about these programs to leverage new investment within the Target Area. Private foundation resources available to PDC communities include the Claude Worthington Benedum and Hugh I. Shott Jr. Foundations. Benedum is a foundation supporting local community-based projects throughout WV. This foundation provides funding for capacity building, economic development planning and feasibility studies, education and community development projects. McDowell and Wyoming counties received funding from Benedum for a mobile health clinic in 2018. Shott is a Bluefield-based foundation that provides funding to improve the social and economic quality of life of the region. Shott recently committed funds to complete the abatement of asbestos to transform a downtown Bluefield brownfield building into a health clinic and an additional \$100,000 dollars for use as the required match for a FY2021 EPA Brownfield Cleanup Grant in Bluefield. Both foundations are a valuable resource for the cleanup and redevelopment of brownfield sites in the Target Area. The City of Mullens recently received a \$6,000 preservation and redevelopment grant from Preservation Alliance, a nonprofit focused on saving historic structures, to advance the Town’s redevelopment efforts for the *Wyoming Hotel*. By funding the needed environmental assessments and cleanup and reuse planning for the priority sites, Region I PDC and our partners can pursue these and other resources to facilitate reuse.

ii. Use of Existing Infrastructure

Given former uses of brownfield sites, existing water, sewer, and electricity services provide ample capacity for the planned reuses within the Target Areas. Broadband and high-speed internet is not available in all of the Target Areas. However, the State of WV is currently engaged in a multi-million-dollar project to increase broadband and high-speed internet service to rural parts of the state, including the Target Areas. US-52, US-19, and the WV state highway network provide access throughout the region. There are also significant rail operations in the region. The proposed redevelopments will leverage their proximity to the Hatfield-McCoy Trail System infrastructure. No significant additional infrastructure is required for this project to be successful.

2. COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

a. Community Need

i. The Community’s Need for Funding

Indicator ¹	Town of Kimball	McDowell County	City of Bluefield	Mercer County	City of Mullens	Wyoming County	West Virginia
Total Population	159	19,334	9,699	59,892	2,255	21,581	1,801,049
% Elderly (>65)	17.0	21.9	20.4	21.8	21.5	21.8	19.9
% Black or African American	75.5	8.2	24.3	5.9	1.0	1.4	3.4
% Hispanic or Latino	0.0	1.4	3.7	1.2	0.8	0.6	1.7
% High School Diploma (25 and older)	85.7	74.6	31.5	85.4	33.4	77.4	88.1
Per Capita Income	\$15,362	\$15,474	\$24,735	\$25,061	\$29,718	\$22,234	\$28,761
% Families w/ Children in Poverty <18	100	24.1	31.4	22.7	12.6	18.2	12.0
Median Home Value	N/A	\$43,700	\$78,100	\$104,100	\$71,700	\$75,500	\$128,800
% Vacant Homes	57.3	32.9	15.8	16.3	25.4	22.5	17.2

The Target Area has experienced significant population decline since the mid-1900s, losing between 50 and 90% of its population. Throughout the entire PDC, the population has reduced by approximately 40.2% (340,000 in 1950; 203,320 in 2021; U.S. Census Bureau). The loss of good paying timber and coal jobs has decimated the economy of Target Area communities. This trend continues today, coal production in the region decreased by 85% from 2011 to 2021, and timber sales have declined by 60% over the last decade. Decades of decreasing employment opportunities have resulted in increased **poverty rates** to 12.6% in Mullens, 31.4% in Bluefield, and **100% in Kimball**, compared to 12.0% in WV (ACS, 2021 estimate). As noted in the table, the Per Capita

¹ All data from American Community Survey (ACS) 2021 5-year estimates.

Incomes, Poverty Rate, and Median Home Values in the Target Areas rank well behind state averages. McDowell and Wyoming counties are designated as **Distressed** (economically worst 10% of all U.S. counties) by the Appalachian Regional Commission, and Mercer meets the **At-Risk** criteria (economically worst 10% to 25% of all U.S. counties). All three census tracts in the Target Areas are considered disadvantaged under the Justice40 criteria. With these difficult economic conditions, a decreasing population base, declining tax base, and regional infrastructure needs, these **disadvantaged, low-income** PDC communities with **small populations** have an inability to draw on other sources of funding to carry out environmental assessments and spur the redevelopment of brownfields. EPA grant funds will help attract new investments to the region by identifying and assessing environmental issues at sites with high reuse potential.

ii. Threats to Sensitive Populations

(1) Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations

In 2016 McDowell County had the lowest life expectancy for men of any county in the U.S. The average age of death for men in the county was 63.9 years, well below the 72.1 years for WV and 76.3 for the U.S. Only one county in the country ranked lower for women. The average age of death for women in McDowell County in 2016 was 72.7 years, compared to 78.03 for WV and 81.3 for the U.S (CDC 2016). McDowell County consistently ranks in the lowest counties in the country for life expectancy. The entire PDC service area, including the Target Areas have a progressively aging and elderly population. In Mullens, 21.5% of the population is above 65 years of age (Wyoming 21.8%), in Bluefield 20.4% (Mercer 21.8%), in Kimball 17.0% (McDowell 21.9%), compared to WV’s average of 19.9%. The elderly sensitive population has unique health concerns that can be exacerbated by environmental contaminants. The EPA’s Science Inventory notes “older adults are indeed susceptible to some of the effects of environmental hazards.” According to Health Resources & Services Administration, “an elderly population combined with the area having restricted access to health care, the region has been designated as a Medically Underserved Rural Area.” EPA funds will aid in reducing exposure of older “at-risk”, low income, and minority populations in the target areas to environmental hazards.

The Target Area counties also have overall low educational attainment with only 31.5% of Bluefield residents and 33.4% of Mullens residents achieving a High School Diploma, compared to 88.1% for WV. The County Health Rankings & Roadmaps program measures vital welfare factors to rank counties throughout the U.S. Their 2021 rankings report indicates two of the three Target Area counties and four of the six counties in the PDC, all with high elderly populations, are classified as the unhealthiest counties in the entire U.S. According to a 2018 CDC report West Virginia has the highest overall rate of residents with poor health in the country. The region has also been ravaged by the effects of substance abuse. A report published by the Appalachian Regional Commission, titled “*Opioids in Appalachia - The Role of Counties in Reversing a Regional Epidemic*,” Section 5. *Mitigate Local Economic Impacts and Consider Development Strategies*, indicates counties should leverage their local strengths, such as recreational tourism, to reverse the opioid epidemic. Since brownfield sites often are a location for illegal drug-use, counties can make an impact by encouraging the redevelopment of brownfields and creating sustainable, good-paying jobs for area residents. In addition, the assessment and eventual cleanup and reuse of the sites will lead to better health and welfare outcomes in the target area communities.

(2) Greater Than Normal Incidence of Disease and Adverse Health Conditions

	<i>McDowell</i>	<i>Mercer</i>	<i>Wyoming</i>	<i>WV</i>	<i>US</i>
<i>Asthma</i> ²	16.1	8.9	9.2	9.3	7.8
<i>Cardiovascular Disease</i> ¹	19.5	13.4	19.0	13.3	39
<i>Depression</i> ¹	25.6	26.0	29.0	21.6	7.1
<i>Diabetes</i> ¹	20.5	15.6	15.8	12.8	11.3
<i>Obesity</i> ¹	44.8	35.3	38.0	34.0	27.1
<i>Birth Defects</i> ³	30.0	20.9	47.9	37.7	n/a

The Region I PDC includes some of the unhealthiest counties in the entire country. The six counties within the PDC are consistently among the state’s higher-ranking counties in multiple health risk categories, including cardiovascular disease, prevalence of cancer and cancer death rates, asthma, and birth defects. Town-level data is unavailable, so County data is presented. A December 2016, report prepared by the WV Department of Health and Human Resources Bureau for Behavioral Health and Health Facilities examined the incidence of various diseases and ranked each county based on its prevalence versus all other WV counties. The higher the ranking the more prevalent the disease. As illustrated in the following table Target Area counties have high incidences of a range of health problems. Percentage values in bold indicate ranking in the top 10 highest incidence rates versus all WV counties.

² WV data is based on reported information from 2010 to 2014. - All values noted as percentage of population.

³ Birth Defect rate per 1,000 live births from WV Health Statistics Center

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Data from the State Cancer Profiles in the following table indicates the Target Area counties have higher incidence rates of Lung Cancers, which have been linked to PAH exposure, compared to the state and US. Higher incidences of Bladder Cancer, which has also been linked to PAH exposure, are observed in Wyoming and Mercer counties. Wyoming County has increased rates of Leukemia, which is linked to benzene found in petroleum. PAHs and petroleum may be present at the four priority brownfield sites. Even more concerning, all three Target Area counties have higher mortality rates compared to state and US rates. In particular, McDowell County has the 2nd highest death rate from cancer in WV at 223.3 deaths per 100,000, which is significantly higher than the 177.5 WV rate and the US rate of only 149.4 (33% less).

National Cancer Institute State Cancer Profiles ⁴	McDowell County	Mercer County	Wyoming County	West Virginia	U.S.
Incidence Rate of Lung Cancers	102.8	78.5	100.4	75.7	54.0
Incidence Rate of Bladder Cancer	14.1	22.4	26.2	21.5	18.9
Incidence Rate of Leukemia	14.6	15.1	15.6	15.3	13.9
Incidence Rate of All Cancer Sites	488.1	474.9	503.6	482.4	442.3
Age-Adjusted Mortality Rate (All Cancers)	223.3	195.2	198.4	177.5	149.4

Exposure to environmental contaminants from brownfield sites may cause or exacerbate many of the cancers and diseases with high incidence rates observed in the Target Area counties. By assessing the sites, the PDC can assist communities with developing mitigation strategies to prevent exposure to the contaminants of concern and facilitate the cleanup and redevelopment of the sites.

(3) Environmental Justice

(3a) Identification of Environmental Justice Issues

The Target Area counties have poverty levels as high as 28.9%, a rate more than 2 times higher than the national average of 12.6% (ACS, 2021). Median household income levels are as low as \$30,127, 40% below the national average of \$50,884 (ACS, 2021) and per capita incomes as low as \$15,474, nearly 58% lower than the US rate of \$37,638. Massive job losses, combined with fixed incomes associated with the elderly, and low educational attainment have contributed to high poverty rates and low-income levels. These factors have led to extremely poor physical and mental health for Target Area residents. The problems are exacerbated by a lack of healthcare options. There are no options for healthy food options in many communities and housing stocks are in extremely poor condition. As businesses have closed potentially hazardous brownfields remain. Residents near brownfields in the Target Area have no knowledge of the risks they are being exposed to. The environmental injustice of some of the country’s most disadvantaged communities being exposed to contaminants from brownfields will begin to be addressed through this project.

According to the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST), all Priority Sites are located within disadvantaged census tracts. The *City Warehouse and Bluefield Lubricants* priority site is located within tract 54055002000 in Mercer County. This tract exceeds thresholds for energy costs, low income, low life expectancy, poverty, unemployment, and high school education. The tract demographics show 32% Black or African American and 4% Hispanic or Latino. The *Wyoming Hotel* priority site is located within tract 54109003200 in Wyoming County. This tract exceeds thresholds for projected flood risks, low income, and transportation barriers. The *Big Four Motel* priority site is located within tract 54047954503 in McDowell County. This tract exceeds thresholds for expected building loss rate, expected population loss rate, projected flood risk, low income, energy cost, wastewater discharge. The tract demographics indicate 22% Black or African American and 5% Hispanic or Latino; however, the US Census shows in the town of Kimball 75.5% are Black or African American. Only 3.4% of the statewide population is Black or African American and 1.7% Hispanic or Latino, showing the brownfield sites are disproportionately located near higher minority populations. In addition, health related burdens are also prevalent within the Target Area. Based on a 2017 study by the University of Virginia, rural Appalachia, including all of the Target Area, is “disproportionately impacted by environmental health issues and the resulting health outcomes”. The study states cancer incidence has declined in much of the country since 1969, but in rural Appalachia, the cancer mortality rate is 19% higher than urban, non-Appalachian populations in the US. The study also states economic, social, and environmental factors including historic coal mining and rail operations as some of the reasons for these observations.

(3b) Advancing Environmental Justice

This EPA grant is critically important to the disadvantaged communities in the Target Area, because they have no other sources of funds to start the redevelopment process. Redevelopment of brownfields into lodging, restaurants, and services tailored to the outdoor recreation industry will act as a catalyst to attract additional businesses. Most state, federal, and private grants, and nearly all lending institutions, require clear environmental

⁴ National Cancer Institute. <https://statecancerprofiles.cancer.gov/index.html>. Accessed November 2023.

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information about a site before investing in planning, demolition, renovation, or new construction. By supplying much-needed funds for environmental assessments, an EPA grant will provide communities the resource to capture inaccessible funds from an array of public and private sources. The leveraged capital unlocked by clarifying the environmental status of brownfields will lead to new businesses, quality jobs, and an increased tax base for these disadvantaged communities. Redevelopment of the identified Priority Sites and the Target Area will advance environmental justice by creating space for new commercial development that will provide much needed jobs to the community, and revenue generated from new economic activity will allow local governments to begin to address the significant physical and social challenges facing the Target Area communities. Additionally, the assessment, remediation, and redevelopment of brownfields will reduce the risk of exposure to environmental contaminants and help lower the incidence of cancers and asthma throughout the Target Area.

b. Community Engagement

i. Project Involvement and ii. Project Roles:

The PDC plans to form a CSC that will help identify and prioritize additional sites for assessment and cleanup and reuse planning throughout the grant period. Project partners in the CSC will include community stakeholders from the counties and municipalities located within the PDC’s service area. Information and project responsibilities of CSC partners are provided in the following table:

Project Partner	Contact Information	Project Responsibility
Bluefield WV Economic Development Authority (BEDA)	Jim Spencer, Executive Director (304) 327-2401 Ext. 2405 jspencer@bluewv.org	The BEDA and the Town of Kimball Mayor will each serve on the CSC as representatives of the target areas. They will provide support and input for site inventory, prioritization, and site re-use activities, as well as help facilitate community engagement in the target areas. CSC members will also facilitate public outreach and host meetings with site owners and community stakeholders within their respective communities.
City of Mullens	Alan Mills, Mayor [REDACTED]	
Town of Kimball	Adam Gianato, Mayor (304) 585-7913 mayor@kimballwv.gov	
Kimball Rotary Club	Jay Chatham, President (304) 585-7959	The Kimball Rotary Club is the only active Rotary Club in McDowell County. The Club will serve as a public meeting host and assist with public outreach within Kimball and McDowell County.
City of Mullens Foundation	Barry Smith, Foundation President (304) 890-3149	The City of Mullens Foundation is a nonprofit, volunteer organization that has completed park improvements and other beautification projects in Mullens. They will serve as a public meeting host and assist with public outreach within Mullens.
Bluefield Arts & Revitalization Corporation	Julie Hurley [REDACTED]	Local community-based organization that will participate in site identification and redevelopment planning efforts.
McDowell County Economic Development Authority	Francis Hale, Executive Director (304) 436-3833	The Target Areas’ respective Economic Development Authorities will provide input regarding site inventory and prioritization, as well as local support/interest in redevelopment of potential sites. They will support business recruitment efforts for site reuse strategies. The Economic Development Authorities may also serve as a meeting host in the target areas.
Mercer County Economic Development Authority	John O’Neill, Executive Director mercereda@mercercountywv.org	
Wyoming County Economic Development Authority	Christy Laxton, Executive Director christylaxton@wyomingcounty.com	
Hatfield-McCoy Regional Recreation Authority	Jeffrey Lusk, Director (304) 752-3255	The Hatfield-McCoy Regional Recreation Authority will provide redevelopment plan input in relationship to the region’s focus on outdoor recreation-based tourism. The Hatfield-McCoy Regional Recreation Authority will assist with site prioritization and public outreach in key areas.
WV Brownfields Assistance Center	George Carico, Director carico@marshall.edu (304) 696-5456	The WV Brownfields Assistance Center will provide technical support for the program as well as input for community engagement and site inventory updates.

iii. Incorporating Community Input

The PDC will utilize a multifaceted approach to ensure that a broad cross-section of residents are engaged in the inventory, assessment, and redevelopment planning process. The CSC will help guide the project and identify priority sites. Once sites are identified, the PDC will conduct outreach in the surrounding community to invite public participation in project decisions for assessments, cleanup planning, and reuse planning. The PDC will host informational workshops, meet with municipal officials, attend/host public meetings in the target communities and produce fliers and technical guides to be distributed to local residents. Meetings will be held during the inventory process and after Phase II results are received in convenient locations for the affected communities and at a time when they can be attended by working residents. The PDC will provide stakeholders

with updates on the Brownfields Program through a combination of press releases, postings on its partners' websites, placement of fliers at area businesses and organizations, e-newsletter articles. In addition to print media described above to be distributed through partner and area organizations, a dedicated Brownfields webpage will be developed on the PDC website to highlight educational resources, engagement opportunities, and ongoing work. Partner organizations have committed to help with the outreach and communication process. These established communication mechanisms will be used to announce events, meetings, and workshops, distribute technical guides, fliers, and other literature and web-based information. Input from the community will be solicited directly at each public meeting. In addition, contact information including phone and email will be placed prominently on all notices, presentations, reports, and web sites to directly solicit community input. Lastly, a community feedback form will be placed on the PDC Brownfields website that can serve to directly provide input by the community. All comments and feedback received from the community will be formally responded to in writing and on our website. Project correspondence will be prepared in English, but translation services will be provided upon request or if non-English speakers are impacted by concerns from brownfield sites.

3. TASK DESCRIPTIONS, COST ESTIMATES, AND MEASURING PROGRESS

3.a. Description of Tasks/Activities and Outputs

The following defines the tasks required to implement the proposed 4-year brownfields project.

Task 1: Project Management & Reporting
i. The PDC Executive Director (Jason Roberts) will serve as the Project Manager (PM) for the grant and will oversee the grant management and compliance with EPA grant terms and conditions. The PM will ensure tasks are completed efficiently and will be responsible for oversight of the QEP, which has already been procured. The PM will hold monthly project team meetings to review the project and make corrections, as needed, to stay on schedule and meet the project's goals. Quarterly meetings with the CSC will also serve to provide project updates and receive guidance. With assistance from the QEP, the PM will complete EPA quarterly reports, Federal Financial Report (FFR) and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) utilization forms, and ACRES database entries/updates. PDC staff and representatives from the Target Areas will also attend national and regional training workshops relevant to brownfields redevelopment. At the end of the project, with assistance from the QEP, the PM will draft a Final Performance Report to document accomplishments and lessons learned.
ii. Schedule: October 1, 2024 – September 30, 2028; Quarterly Reports 30 days after end of quarter, annual reports in each October, ACRES updates at least quarterly, final report 60 days after project end.
iii. Task/Activity Lead: PDC PM with support from QEP
iv. Outputs: 16 Quarterly Reports; 4 FFR and DBE Forms; regular ACRES updates; 1 Final Report
Task 2: Community Outreach
i. The PDC PM will lead the community outreach efforts with support from the QEP and project team. Quarterly CSC meetings will facilitate discussion amongst the PDC, project partners, and community stakeholders. Based on findings and input from the CSC meetings, community meetings will be held as necessary to engage with communities in underserved, disadvantaged areas to identify sites, needs, and redevelopment opportunities within the PDC service area. The PDC will develop and publish outreach materials, including press releases, fact sheets, brochures and social media posts. The PDC also plans to develop a dedicated Brownfields webpage on the PDC website to highlight educational resources, engagement opportunities, and ongoing work. We anticipate community outreach (workshops, meetings) will occur an average of two times annually. A running inventory of potential sites identified during CSC meetings and community outreach will be maintained and prioritized throughout the grant period.
ii. Schedule: Oct 2024 – Sep 2028; CSC meetings every quarter, followed by community outreach meetings twice annually; release of project outreach materials begins in the 2 nd quarter and will continue through the end of the project.
iii. Task/Activity Lead: PDC PM with support from QEP
iv. Outputs: 16 CSC Meetings; 8 success stories and press releases; 8 meetings public/community meetings; print and digital outreach materials, meeting minutes and sign-in sheets; site inventory
Task 3: Site Assessments and Cleanup Planning
i. The QEP will complete site assessments on sites identified as priorities for the community. Site Eligibility Forms will be completed for EPA approval, and petroleum determinations will be requested from WVDEP. Phase I ESAs will be performed by the QEP in accordance with ASTM E1527-21 and the EPA All Appropriate Inquiry Final Rule. Phase II ESAs will be conducted by the consultant in accordance with ASTM E1903-19, after the approval of a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) and site-specific Field Sampling Plans (FSPs). The QEP will also develop Health and Safety Plans (HASPs) prior to field work. ACM and LBP surveys will be completed for the older buildings on priority sites. Health Monitoring activities will not be conducted.
ii. Schedule: QAPP in the 1 st quarter; Phase I ESAs start the 2 nd quarter and continue as funding allows until the 13 th quarter. ACM & LBP Surveys and Phase II ESAs start in the 3 rd quarter after approval of the QAPP and site specific FSPs and will continue as funding allows until the 14 th quarter. ABCAs will be completed after

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Phase IIs, anticipated to begin in the 5 th quarter and continue through the 15 th quarter.
iii. Task/Activity Lead: QEP with oversight from PDC PM
iv. Outputs: 1 QAPP; 12 Site Eligibility Forms; 12 Ph I ESAs; 7 FSPs; 7 Ph II ESAs; 7 HASPs
Task 4: Redevelopment Planning
i. For sites with contamination, the QEP will develop Analysis of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives (ABCAs) to identify applicable remediation alternatives for the site based on potential reuse scenarios. The PDC PM will work with the CSC and community partners to develop a brownfields strategy for each target area by identifying prioritized brownfield sites, opportunities for redevelopment, and resources needed to achieve specific community goals. With assistance from the QEP, the PDC and CSC will also lead community visioning sessions for site-specific reuse plans for priority sites and will develop market studies to understand local market demands and trends to help facilitate redevelopment of priority sites. We also anticipate four communities will need an Area-Wide Revitalization Plans, which will include climate vulnerability assessments and recommended resiliency strategies.
ii. Schedule: Reuse plans and market studies start in 5 th quarter and continue through the 15 th quarter. Area-wide plans will start in the 8 th quarter and continue through the 15 th quarter.
iii. Task/Activity Lead: PDC Executive Director with support from QEP
iv. Outputs: 6 ABCAs, 6 Site Reuse/Marketing Plans; 4 Area-Wide Plans

b. Cost Estimates

The following costs and anticipated outputs were estimated based on information from other communities that have recently received EPA brownfield grants:

Task 1 – Project Management:

Personnel and Fringe: Average of 16 hours of staff time/quarter (16x16x\$75/hr) = **\$19,200**
Travel: 2 staff attend 4 regional workshops (2x4x\$500/person = \$4,000), 4 staff attend 2 national conferences (4x\$1,500/personx2 conf.= \$12,000) = **\$16,000**
Contractual: 48 project team meetings (48x\$325 = \$15,600); 1 final summary report (\$3,300); quarterly ACRES updates (16x\$250 = \$4,000) = **\$22,900**

Task 2 – Community Outreach:

Personnel and Fringe: Average of 8 hours of staff time/quarter (8x16x\$75/hr) = **\$9,600**
Supplies: Materials (posters, flyers, etc.) for meetings (16x\$250 = \$4,000) = **\$4,000**
Contractual: 16 CSC meetings (16x\$750=\$12,000); success stories and press releases (8x\$500=\$4,000); 8 public/community meetings (8x\$500=\$4,000) = **\$22,000**

Task 3 – Site Assessments:

Contractual: 12 Phase I ESAs (12x\$3,000 = \$36,000); 8 ACM & LBP Surveys (8x\$4,000 = \$32,000); 1 QAPP (\$3,000); 7 FSPs (7x\$3,500 = \$24,500); 7 HSPs (7x\$500 = \$3,500); 7 Phase II ESAs (7x\$26,842.86 = \$187,900) = **\$286,900**

Task 4 – Cleanup & Redevelopment Planning:

Personnel and Fringe: Average of 12 hours of staff time/quarter (12x16x\$75/hr) = **\$14,400**
Contractual: 6 ABCAs (6x\$3,500 = \$21,000); 6 Site Reuse/Marketing Plans (6x\$6,000 = \$36,000); 4 Area-wide Plans (4x12,000) = **\$105,000**

Budget Categories	Project Tasks				Total \$
	PM	Comm. Out	Site Assess.	C&R Plan.	
Personnel and Fringe	\$19,200	\$9,600		\$14,400	\$43,200
Travel	\$16,000				\$16,000
Supplies		\$4,000			\$4,000
Contractual	\$22,900	\$22,000	\$286,900	\$105,000	\$436,800
Total Direct Costs	\$58,100	\$35,600	\$286,900	\$119,400	\$500,000
Total	\$58,100	\$35,600	\$286,900	\$119,400	\$500,000

c. Plan to Measure and Evaluate Environmental Progress and Results

The PDC will hold monthly conference calls with the selected contractor to review progress and take corrective actions, when necessary, to ensure funds are expended in an efficient manner. The project team will invite the EPA and WVDEP staff to participate in the monthly calls. The PDC and the CSC will meet quarterly to review community priorities, address any community concerns, and guide the project. The PDC will submit Quarterly Reports in a timely manner, detailing the outputs and outcomes of the project, and enter and track site-specific information in the online ACRES database. At a minimum, outputs to be tracked include the number of meetings held, environmental assessments completed, ABCAs and/or redevelopment plans completed. Outcomes to be tracked include number of community participants, acres assessed for environmental assessment, acres ready for

reuse, redevelopment funding leveraged, and jobs created. Some projected outcomes will occur after the conclusion of the project period and will continue to be tracked.

4. PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE

a. Programmatic Capability

i. Organizational Capacity, ii. Organizational Structure, and iii. Description of Key Staff

The PDC is a multi-purpose regional economic development entity established by WV State legislative action in 1971, which is dedicated to strategically and effectively planning for the comprehensive development of its 6-county area. The PDC is governed by an appointed Council. The Council will be kept up to date on project advancements throughout the project period, with updates provided at each Council meeting. PDC Executive Director Jason Roberts and his staff will provide programmatic oversight in management of the grant to ensure timely and successful expenditure of funds. Mr. Roberts has over 20 years of experience with the PDC and grants management, has served as Executive Director since 2014, and will serve as the Project Manager for this grant project. He holds an MS in Geography and is a Certified GIS Professional. He will be supported by Jeff Johnson, Community Development Director. Mr. Johnson over 24 years of experience working with communities, managing and implementing grants, and providing support for development project. Prior to joining the PDC, he worked in banking and finance for 15 years. Kimberly Odle is the PDC Administrative Assistant and has worked with the PDC since 2001. Ms. Odle will assist with public outreach efforts and provide administrative support for the project. The PDC Financial Manager is Lori Shrewsbury. Ms. Shrewsbury has more than 25 years of experience in the financial industry and will provide financial administration for the grant project. This project team has the skills and experience needed to successfully administer and complete the EPA grant project.

Acquiring Additional Resources

The PDC used a competitive procurement process, adhering to the procedures detailed in 2 CFR Part 200 and EPA Rule 2 CFR Part 1500 on “Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards”, to hire a qualified environmental professional (QEP). On September 21, 2022, the PDC released a competitive Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for multi-year, multi-project brownfield services that was published in the *Register Herald* on 9/21/2022 and 9/28/2022. The PDC received 5 responses by the October 21st deadline, and a committee appointed by the PDC board evaluated and scored the proposals and selected the top three for interviews. The committee selected the firm deemed most qualified based on the evaluation criteria. The selected contractor will assist the PDC in implementing the programmatic and technical activities under the brownfields project. In the event additional resources are identified that are required to complete this project, the PDC will follow the same procedures, using a competitive procurement process to hire the appropriately experienced consultant or contractor. Requests for proposals and subcontracting opportunities will be sent to our list of local contractors, who will be encouraged to apply.

b. Past Performance and Accomplishments

i. Currently Has or Previously Received an EPA Brownfields Grant

(1) Accomplishments: The PDC received a \$200,000 EPA Brownfields Community-wide Assessment Grant in 2006 to address sites in McDowell County. PDC staff and the project consultants discussed the grant and purpose of the project at County Commission, County EDA, and municipal council meetings throughout the period of performance. The Project Team also met with property owners and other stakeholders regarding site access and redevelopment options. After developing an inventory and prioritizing brownfield sites, the PDC focused on seven sites, ultimately performing environmental evaluations on multiple sites, including a Phase I and large Phase II at a former coal mining site. The PDC also completed comprehensive Area-Wide Redevelopment Plans for two communities.

(2) Compliance with Grant Requirements: The PDC complied with the workplan, schedule, and terms and conditions of the cooperative agreement. The results of the projects were reported in a timely manner. The PDC submitted all required technical and administrative reports. The 2006 EPA Assessment Grant was properly closed with \$182,378.01 of the \$200,000 expended. The prior grant was limited by the small geographic focus. Thus, applying for the PDCs entire 6-county region will allow for a broader area with more opportunities and sites to be included for assessment. The remaining balance went unspent due to a lack of sites available for assessment. At the time, there was a general reluctance from property owners in this coal-dependent region to participate in an EPA program, due to perceived EPA bias against coal production. These perceptions have changed over time as many in the region see the EPA as a partner in revitalization efforts. If awarded, the PDC plans to actively engage the community and property owners to identify additional sites throughout the grant period. A running inventory of potential sites will be maintained and prioritized by the PDC and CSC to ensure all grant funds are expended efficiently.

THRESHOLD CRITERIA

1. Applicant Eligibility

Established as a public agency, Region 1 Planning & Development Council (PDC), is one of eleven Regional Planning & Development Councils created by West Virginia Code to provide comprehensive planning and of all types for its service area. The PDC is defined by EPA as a General Purpose Unit of Local Government under 2 CFR 200.1. The PDC serves the counties of McDowell, Mercer, Monroe, Raleigh, Summers, Wyoming and their 25 municipalities.

2. Community Involvement

The PDC plans to form a Community Steering Committee (CSC) for the EPA Brownfield Grant project. The CSC will be comprised of local organizations, county economic development entities, non-profit groups, and state-affiliated groups providing project input and expertise. Within these groups are local business owners, local government, and non-profit representatives, all with the goal of bringing sustainable economic development into the region. The PDC project team and community partners will solicit additional community input throughout the four-year grant period.

The PDC will utilize a multifaceted approach to ensure that a broad cross-section of residents are engaged in the inventory, assessment, and redevelopment planning process. The PDC will host informational workshops, meet with municipal officials, attend/host public meetings and produce fliers and technical guides. Meetings will be held during the inventory process and after Phase II results are received in convenient locations to the affected communities, accessible by public transit, and at a time when they can be attended by working residents. PDC will provide stakeholders with updates on the Brownfields Program through a combination of press releases, postings on its partners' websites, placement of fliers at area businesses and organizations, e-newsletter articles. In addition to print media described above to be distributed through partner and area organizations, a dedicated Brownfields webpage will be developed on the PDC website to highlight educational resources, engagement opportunities, and ongoing work. Partner organizations have committed to help with the outreach and communication process. These established communication mechanisms will be used to announce events, meetings, and workshops, distribute technical guides, fliers, and other literature and web-based information. Input from the community will be solicited directly at each public meeting. In addition, contact information including phone and email will be placed prominently on all notices, presentations, reports, and web sites to directly solicit community input. Lastly, a community feedback form will be placed on the PDC Brownfields website that can serve to directly provide input by the community. All comments and feedback received from the community will be formally responded to in writing on our website. Project correspondence will be prepared in English, but translation services will be provided upon request or if non-English speakers are impacted by concerns from brownfield sites.

3. Named Contractors and Subrecipients

- To assist with various aspects of the brownfield project, the PDC procured an experienced consultant (QEP – Qualified Environmental Professional) in brownfields assessment and redevelopment. On September 21, 2022, the PDC released a competitive Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for multi-year, multi-project brownfield services in accordance with 2 CFR Part 200 and 1500. The RFQ was published in the *Register Herald* on 9/21/2022 and 9/28/2022. The RFQ was also emailed directly to approximately 65 environmental consulting

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and engineering firms. The PDC received 5 responses by the October 21st deadline, and a selection committee appointed by the PDC board evaluated the proposals. The selection committee selected 3 firms and conducted interviews over Zoom. The selection committee selected Stantec Consulting Services Inc., as the firm deemed most qualified based on the evaluation criteria to assist the PDC. The PDC will negotiate a contract and fee with the firm upon grant award. If a reasonable contract and fee cannot be negotiated, the PDC will initiate negotiations with the next highest ranked firm. A copy of the RFQ is attached.

- The grant application does not name any grant Subrecipients.

4. Expenditure of Existing Grant Funds

N/A. The PDC does not have an open EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant or Multipurpose Grant.