



**Narrative Information Sheet – City of Sheffield, Alabama**

1. **Applicant Identification:** The City of Sheffield, Alabama as a local municipality, with an address of 600 North Montgomery Avenue, P.O. Box 380, Sheffield, Alabama 35660 requests consideration of the following EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant proposal.
2. **Funding Requested:**
  - a. **Assessment Grant Type:** Community-wide
  - b. **Federal Funds Requested:** \$500,000
3. **Location:** City of Sheffield, Alabama
4. **Target Area and Priority Site/Property Information:**
  - a. **Target Area(s):**
    - i. Montgomery Avenue (Census Tracts 01033020200 and 01033020300)
  - b. **Priority Site(s) Address(es):**
    - i. Aluminum Manufacturing Plant: Southwest corner of W 2<sup>nd</sup> St and Austin Ave, Sheffield, AL 35660
    - ii. Ashe Street Industrial Area: E. Ashe St and E. Blake St, Sheffield, AL 35660
    - iii. Montgomery Auto: 112 S. Montgomery Ave, Sheffield, AL 35660
    - iv. Route 66: 210 S. Montgomery Ave, Sheffield, AL 35660
    - v. Kroger Grocery Store: 600 S. Montgomery Ave, Sheffield, AL 35660
5. **Contacts**
  - a. **Project Director:** Ms. Lisa Elledge, the City Clerk and Treasurer, will serve as the Project Director for this proposal. Ms. Elledge’ contact information is as follows: Phone: (256) 383-0250, Email: lelledge@sheffieldalabama.net, mailing address: 600 North Montgomery Avenue, P.O. Box 380, Sheffield, AL 35660
  - b. **Highest Ranking Executive Official:** Mr. Steve Stanley, the City of Sheffield’s Mayor is the highest-ranking executive official. Mr. Stanley’s contact information is as follows: Phone: (256) 383-0250, Email: mayor@sheffieldalabama.org, mailing address: 600 North Montgomery Avenue, P.O. Box 380, Sheffield, AL 35660
6. **Population:**
  - a. City of Sheffield Population: 9,403 (2020 Decennial Census)
7. **Other Factors Checklist:**

Other Factors	Page #
Community population is 10,000 or less.	1
The applicant is, or will assist, a federally recognized Indian tribe or United States territory.	NA



The priority site(s) is impacted by mine-scarred land.	NA
The priority site(s) is adjacent to a body of water (i.e., the border of the priority site(s) is contiguous or partially contiguous to the body of water, or would be contiguous or partially contiguous with a body of water but for a street, road, or other public thoroughfare separating them).	NA
The priority site(s) is in a federally designated flood plain.	2
The reuse of the priority site(s) will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy.	NA
The reuse of the priority site(s) will incorporate energy efficiency measures.	3,4
The proposed project will improve local climate adaptation/mitigation capacity and resilience to protect residents and community investments.	3, 4
At least 30% of the overall project budget will be spent on eligible reuse/areawide planning activities, as described in Section I.B., for priority site(s) within the target area(s).	9
The target area(s) is located within a community in which a coal-fired power plant has recently closed (2013 or later) or is closing.	NA

**8. Letter from the State or Tribal Environmental Authority:**

See Attachment.

**9. Releasing Copies of Applications:**

Not applicable; no portions of the application are confidential.



**Alabama Department of Environmental Management**  
[adem.alabama.gov](http://adem.alabama.gov)

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Montgomery, Alabama 36130-1463  
(334) 271-7700 ■ FAX (334) 271-7950

November 7, 23

Mayor Steve Stanly  
City of Sheffield  
600 N Montgomery Avenue  
Sheffield, Alabama 35660

Re: Community Wide Assessment Grant

The Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) is pleased to support the City of Sheffield in your pursuit of a Brownfields Community-Wide Assessment Grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

We understand that the City of Sheffield is seeking to secure and utilize EPA assessment grant funds to attract tourism to the area by promoting the region's music history, redevelop two gas stations, an old Kroger, and an aluminum window manufacturer to alleviate health and safety hazards.

The ADEM Redevelopment Section routinely aids governments interested in brownfields redevelopment. Upon request, ADEM may participate in the various outreach activities needed to accomplish your brownfields project goals as well as entry of sites into the ADEM Voluntary Cleanup Program (VCP)

We wish you and the citizens of the City of Sheffield success in the pursuit of your grant. Please let us know if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Crystal Collins", written over a white background.

Crystal Collins, Chief  
Redevelopment Unit  
Land Division



## 1. PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION AND PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION

### a. Target Area and Brownfields

#### i. Background and Description of Target Area

The City of Sheffield (pop. 9,305) is in Northwestern Alabama, within the Shoals of the Tennessee River. The Shoals Region's namesake stems from the abundant mussel population, which thrived in the shallow shoals. Despite the shallow river posing extensive navigation obstacles, the Shoals was recognized early on for its commercial potential in conjunction with an abundance of natural resources. Consequently, railroads were constructed as a transportation solution for moving cotton, timber, and metal from the surrounding areas to be processed within Sheffield and beyond. Developed in 1830, the Tuscumbia Railway, was the first to be constructed west of the Appalachian Mountains. Other rail lines followed, which included major operations such as Norfolk Southern Corporation and the Tennessee Southern Railroad Company. Eventually, a series of dams eliminated the Tennessee River's hazards by submerging the jagged rocks and allowing for the practical and profitable transportation of goods. Today, over 28,000 barges carry 45 to 50 million tons of goods up and down the River annually. In addition to our extensive commercial and industrial history, during the late 1960s, the river town drew a wide variety of early soul, R&B, and Rock-N-Roll stars to its recording studios. This included big names such as Aretha Franklin, Bob Seger, Cher, The Rolling Stones, Lynyrd Skynyrd, and Simon & Garfunkel. Despite initial agricultural, manufacturing, transportation, and artistic successes, economic growth has slowed over the past several decades as these industries have been steadily outsourced both nationally and internationally. Between 1960 and 2020, we lost 30% of our population (Census), which can be attributed to a shift in traffic to an adjacent city causing decline in commerce and the corresponding loss of jobs. We have struggled to maintain economic vitality as we work to overcome our weak tax base. Fifty years of declining population has created a substantial surplus of housing stock and commercial buildings. These abandoned dilapidated properties have created blight that negatively impacts neighborhoods throughout the city. These conditions and the subsequent decreased tax bases, and unknown environmental risks hinder growth and prosperity. To counter these trends, we have invested an incredible amount of time, effort, and funds into creating a successful brownfield program. Local EPA brownfield successes include FY2013 and FY2018 Assessment Grants and a FY2017 Cleanup Grant, the latter of which was implemented by the City's Redevelopment Authority.

To maintain the momentum of our brownfield program, The **Montgomery Avenue Target Area** is now our focus.. The Target Area encompasses approximately three blocks on either side of a half mile stretch of Montgomery Avenue just south of our downtown, creating an area of approximately 115 acres. The Montgomery Avenue Corridor and the Target Area as a whole is characterized by automobile-centric growth felt around the County in the 1960s. Vacant and neglected gas stations, auto garages, car dealerships, parking lots, storage units, factories, restaurants, storefronts, and underutilized warehouses sparsely line the Corridor. Approximately 103 people live directly within the Target Area. Of this population, 92% are minorities, 35% are elderly (65+ years) and 54% are classified as low income (EPA's Environmental Justice Screen (EJ SCREEN)). Additionally, the Target Area is located within Census Tract 01033020300 which is identified as disadvantaged by the US Council of Environmental Quality's Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST). The number of likely contaminated brownfields within close proximity to underserved and disadvantaged sensitive populations makes this area a priority for reinvestment. Through building commercial vibrancy, adding to the job market, improving environmental conditions, and restoring much needed revenues for City operations, we are confident that the Montgomery Avenue corridor can be a place residents are proud of. A total of 45 brownfield sites have been inventoried within City limits through compiling data garnered from EPA databases, past assessment grants, and local input. The City of Sheffield is applying for a \$500,000 community-wide brownfield assessment grant to carry out the project described within this application. The City recently conducted a citywide inventory of blighted structures and blighted properties. The list includes over 200 properties with about one third found in census tract 203. Additional sites within City limits, held within a secondary inventory will also be assessed as part of this brownfield program. Abating the blighted conditions will assist us in efforts to develop more affordable housing for the low- income residents and employees of Helen Keller Hospital located in the census tract.

#### ii. Description of the Priority Brownfield Sites

Within the Montgomery Avenue Target Area (Disadvantaged Census Tract 01033020300), 17 vacant brownfields have been inventoried which consist of vacant gas stations, commercial, light industrial, and warehouse buildings. From this inventory, five brownfields have been identified as priority sites. These sites were carefully selected based on community input and environmental, economic, and human impacts. Demographics within the Target Area exhibit extremely high poverty rates (45.8%) and low median household incomes (\$20,296) (ACS). Moving from north to south, the first priority site consists of a former **Aluminum Manufacturing Plant**. The property is a 1.34-acre vacant parcel which formerly included factory space, warehousing, and shipping for aluminum manufacturing and extrusion. The building was demolished in 2017 and was acquired by the City of Sheffield to assist in returning it to productive use. Based on the long-term manufacturing uses, contaminants of concern include volatile organic compounds (VOCs), semi-volatile organic compounds (SVOCs), chlorinated solvents, metals, cyanide, and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). Collectively, these contaminants are documented to cause reproductive health complications, birth defects, low body weight, and lung, skin, and stomach cancer (EPA). The property is a priority site as it impacts underserved residents. The second priority site is the **Ashe Street Industrial Area** that consists of nearly two city blocks east of Montgomery Avenue. The Area is characterized by cracked concrete slabs and run-down industrial buildings located along the railyard. Consisting of five parcels and over four acres, former uses include lumber yards, storage, and woodworking/manufacturing for Southern Sash, a window and door manufacturer. Other former uses include auto sales, a creamery, and a paint shed. Four buildings remain,

consisting of approximately 50,000 square feet. All buildings are in poor condition, with structural failures, broken windows, and general disinvestment. Based on prior uses, contaminants of concern include VOCs, SVOCs, chlorinated solvents, metals, cyanide, and PCBs. It is likely the auto sales portion of the property contained in-ground hoists, which typically have underground reservoirs for hydraulic fluids and can also contain PCBs. The Area is in a federally designated flood plain and contaminants could easily migrate during a heavy rain event. The Ashe Street Industrial Area is a priority site because the sizeable and underutilized Area is located within close proximity to residents (only 75 feet separate the vacant property from the nearest residential home) and because the Area is a prime location for a larger redevelopment.

Located along the west side of Montgomery Avenue, just south of the railroad tracks that mark the end of downtown, are the third and fourth priority sites, **Montgomery Auto** and **Route 66** gas station. The neighboring properties span 0.5 and 0.3 acres, respectively and both feature a gasoline fueling station and automobile service garage. Montgomery Auto is characterized by unsightly peeling paint and broken and boarded windows, and foundation remnants from the former dispenser island and canopy. The now vacant building sports “New Look” gull wings, an architectural staple popularized in the 1960s. The triangular canopy portrays a futuristic sentiment, standard of the decade. However, environmental and health risks remain and include both petroleum and hazardous substances from former underground storage tanks (USTs), in-ground hoists, associated product lines, dispensers, and vehicle servicing operation components. Contaminants of concern include benzene, PCBs, toluene, ethylbenzene and xylene (BTEX), VOCs, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) and metals. VOCs and heavy metals can cause reproductive health complications, birth defects, low body weight, and lung, skin, and stomach cancer. Situated less than a mile northeast of a large residential district, these low-income residents are disproportionately exposed to contamination. Montgomery Auto and Route 66 are priority sites as both properties are within a federally designated flood plain which could easily cause surface contamination to migrate onto nearby residential properties during a heavy rain event. Located in a gateway area just south of the Entertainment District and railroad tracks, they are in a prime location for redevelopment and the properties currently place an additional strain on the City’s limited budget.

The fifth and final priority site is located at the southern boundary of the Target Area and was originally constructed as a **Kroger Grocery Store** in the 1960s. The building has been vacant since before the Great Recession, with more recent utilization for storage. Due to the age of construction and the length of vacancy, the assumed presence of asbestos containing building materials have been a deterrent to redevelopment. An asbestos containing materials (ACM) survey is needed to understand the risk, the scope of abatement needed for property reuse, and to reduce the risk of lung cancer derived from potential friable asbestos exposure in a building that has received little maintenance. In addition, the building is located on the edge of a retail strip center, adjacent to Sheffield’s only grocery store and blocking the view of Ollie Harris Youth Park from Montgomery Avenue. The property is also in a federally designated flood plain. Assessment and reuse of this property is a priority to maintain the viability of the adjacent retail center businesses that provide Sheffield citizens access to fresh foods and other affordable services.

### **iii. Identifying Additional Sites**

The City will develop a site nomination form and evaluation process to appropriately rank and select candidate sites to ensure the prioritization of underserved communities, and projects within our disadvantaged Census Tracts. The site nomination form will be used as a first step for the City to gather information about a project. At a minimum, the form will include the following information: A) site location and degree to which underserved communities are being served, B) proposed uses and ability to address specific community needs (i.e. affordable housing, grocery stores, health care, etc.), C) site history; perceived or actual degree of contamination, D) level of future/obtained investment, and E) future economic impact; potential to catalyze additional redevelopment projects and estimated job creation and tax base increase. Sites from the recent inventory of blighted property in the disadvantaged census tract will be included in consideration of additional projects. Site nomination forms will be publicly available (i.e., at public meetings and online) so that the community can nominate sites. A scoring system will be utilized to provide more weight to the projects that will support underserved communities. Nomination forms will be readily available online, in our offices, and at all public input meetings as described within section 2b. Each public meeting will begin with an opportunity to identify sites and discuss with the public. Our community partners will also maintain the form for distribution to the residents they represent.

### **b. Revitalization of the Target Area**

#### **i. Reuse Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans**

The Target Area and priority sites were chosen based on both regional and Target Area specific planning efforts. Northwest Alabama Council of Local Governments (NACOLG), a regional planning district that encompasses the county, published the 2022-2026 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) to guide regional planning and implementation. Goals from the CEDS include A) guiding the development and redevelopment of sustainable infrastructure and investments in community services to create attractive, safe communities that sustain and support local and regional economies, B) providing support for local and regional coordination, planning, and capacity building, and C) supporting new and existing businesses and industries. Additionally, Sheffield Redevelopment Authority’s Revitalization and Redevelopment Plan, paired with the City administration’s prioritized efforts guide local redevelopment. These goals include 1) designing and implementing streetscape enhancements, 2) encouraging the implementation of mixed-use development principles for living, working, and shopping, 3) enhancing the Montgomery Avenue gateway into Downtown, and 4) stimulating growth and development in economically distressed and physically marginalized neighborhoods.

While our administrative goals are updated routinely as market conditions and funding changes, we lack a recently adopted plan to guide redevelopment activities for our inventory of brownfield properties. The Revitalization Plan

mentioned above was adopted in 2006 and the latest Comprehensive Plan for the city was conducted in 1979. We are currently working with NACOLG and their consultant on a yearlong effort to develop a new Comprehensive Plan, which will guide redevelopment of the surplus properties within our commercial corridors. An Area-Wide Plan specific to the Target Area is included in this grant to assist in solidifying potential reuses for priority and secondary sites, meant to supplement the Comprehensive Plan that is in progress.

Following assessment and any necessary cleanup, a multi-story mixed-use development is planned for the **Aluminum Manufacturing Plant**. The lower levels will consist of commercial space with retail, restaurants, and office space. The upper levels will cater exclusively to residential living units, to incorporate apartment housing within downtown. The new building will incorporate energy efficient doors and windows, appliances, fixtures, HVAC systems, and installation. On the street level, sidewalks surrounding the building will be repaired and replaced and native landscaping implemented where feasible to reduce stormwater runoff. An adjacent parking lot with permeable pavement would provide parking for residents and patrons. This new development supports NACOLG's goals A and C as the Council provides resources to make the mixed-use development a long-term success. Furthermore, the new mixed-use construction also meets Sheffield's goals 1, 2, and 4 by improving the streetscape and overall stimulating growth in an economically distressed part of the City.

The **Ashe Street Industrial Area** has been identified as a location to construct a grade separated railroad overpass. The barrier created by the at-grade rail crossing currently exaggerates drive time, creating a frustrating and dangerous traffic barrier. In fact, the rail crossing delays response time for emergency responders to access the hospital at the City's southern border. Daily train-related traffic delays currently range from 45 to 75 minutes. According to North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality, an hour of automobile idling burns approximately one-fifth of a gallon of gas and releases nearly 4 pounds of CO<sub>2</sub> into the air. The long line of idling cars also releases nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>), volatile organic compounds (VOCs), particulate matter (PM), and carbon monoxide (CO), which currently pose a huge health and quality of life problem to pedestrians and residents along Montgomery Avenue. A 2022 RAISE grant awarded to NACOLG is funding engineering designs of the overpass. The four or five lane overpass will provide bike lanes and protected sidewalks, thus improving walkability between downtown's North Montgomery and the South Montgomery corridor. The overpass will also ease congestion and improve connectivity within Sheffield as the slow-moving and frequently stopping trains will no longer pose as an obstacle. Native plant species will be planted under the overpass in order to support biodiversity, absorb rainwater runoff, and filter polluted water flowing from the roadway. The project supports NACOLG's goal B and the overpass itself, once completed, will support goal A. The overpass also fulfills Sheffield's goal 4 of stimulating development in the physically marginalized Ashe Street Industrial Area.

The **Montgomery Auto** building will be demolished following ACM and LBP abatement. We hope to attract a retailer capable of catering to the dining and entertainment needs of the 799 residents living within walking distance (1/2 mile) of the property. By redeveloping the abandoned site, the newly constructed building will replace the current eyesore, thus improving the South Montgomery Gateway into Downtown (achieving goal 3). Once open and operating, the business will stimulate additional spin-off growth and development in the economically distressed neighborhood that is our Target Area, accomplishing goal 4. The **Route 66** fueling station and auto garage duo is envisioned as a coffee shop and live event venue. The building's distinctive 60s architecture will be incorporated as the business's theme, playing classic R&B, Rock-n-Roll, soul music over the speakers. Albums and music memorabilia will also be sold to connect with Sheffield's rich history and attract visitors. The original garage doors could be replaced with roll up glass doors that can be opened during the warmer months to create an integrated indoor-outdoor seating area, where live entertainment would take place on a weekly schedule. The newly renovated building will aid in creating an attractive corridor, fulfilling NACOLG's goal A. NACOLG's goals C will also be met by creating a new business venture. Furthermore, Sheffield's local goals 3 and 4 will be met by enhancing the South Montgomery gateway and stimulating growth and development in economically distressed neighborhoods. This reuse, and others as determined feasible will be incorporated into the planning market study for the corridor.

Finally, the former **Kroger Grocery Store** will be a focus of the area-wide plan to gather public input on what type of commercial offering would best suit our residents' needs. We continue to market Sheffield and this property to national retailers as the increase in retail and commercial uses along the corridor will play a major role in increasing local sales tax, which is our primary source of revenue.

## ii. Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategy

The resulting investments will improve walkability throughout the Target Area (thus addressing climate change concerns by reducing rainwater runoff, driving, and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions) and provide additional revenue through commercial spending, employment, and property taxes. Additionally, the investments will act as a catalyst for future redevelopment and the new housing stock will ease current housing strains within the City. These benefits will further guarantee the long-term success of the proposed projects. On the whole, the investments aim to improve quality of life for local residents while simultaneously strengthening the County's economic resiliency. Furthermore, policies within Sheffield's Storm Water Management Plan discuss a risk assessment for the City, which includes hazard identification, hazard profiles, and a vulnerability assessment. The risk assessment aims to protect local life, property, and public resources. Finally, the City will make concerted efforts to promote local job placement to ensure equitable employment opportunities by partnering with Community Action Agency of Northwest Alabama (see section 2bi/ii and 4aiv). Additional outcomes and benefits are outlined below.

Priority Site(s)	Building Reuse	Outcomes and Benefits
Aluminum Manufacturing Plant	NA; vacant lot	~35 jobs*; new build: ~56,000 SF retail; ~112,000 SF rentable living space; energy efficient construction (insulation, windows, doors, HVAC, fixtures, appliances, etc.); increase in sales tax revenue
Ashe Street Industrial Area	NO	Improved connectivity Downtown; construction jobs; reduced CO2 emissions and noxious fumes; improved emergency response times; reduced rainwater runoff; improved biodiversity and water quality through plant filtration
Montgomery Auto	NO	~6 new jobs*; new build: ~10,000 SF; energy efficient construction (insulation, windows, doors, HVAC, fixtures, appliances, etc.); increase in sales tax revenue
Route 66	YES: existing 1,920 SF building reused	~4 jobs*; coffee shop/venue; energy efficient upgrades (insulation, windows, doors, HVAC, fixtures, appliances, etc.); increase in sales tax revenue
Kroger Grocery Store	YES: existing 16,900 SF building reused	~10.6 jobs*; energy efficient upgrades (insulation, windows, doors, HVAC, fixtures, appliances, etc.); increase in sales tax revenue

\* U.S. Energy Information Administration

**c. Strategy for Leveraging Resources**

**i. Resources Needed for Site Reuse**

A readily available inventory of incentives and grants located below will allow us to maximize incentives and encourage business development within the Target Area.

Funding Source	Purpose /Role (Assessment/Remediation/Reuse)
Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Transportation Grant Program	<b>Reuse:</b> Formerly known as the TIGER/BUILD grant, in 2022, NACOLG was awarded a \$2 million RAISE grant to fund the design and engineering of a railroad overpass. A future RAISE grant, applied for by the City and/or NACOLG, could assist with funding for future construction.
Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) via Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA)	<b>Reuse:</b> NACOLG would be eligible to apply for a grant under the Area Development Program that meets the ARC objective of building critical infrastructure. Grant awards are typically 50% funding of project cost, up to \$200,000. Grant uses can range from transportation infrastructure as part of the overpass project, support for priority site development, or downtown revitalization projects.
National Association of Realtors: Placemaking Program	<b>Reuse:</b> This program allocates grant funds between \$1,500 and \$5,000 to create an outdoor public pocket park as part of the overpass project. The pocket park will provide an area for the public to gather, eat, and enjoy art; activities which will increase community livability. The local REALTOR association will be eligible to apply for the grant on behalf of or in partnership with another municipal entity or a developer. Eligible activities include street furniture, paint, signage, material, landscaping, mural, site preparation, etc.
ADEM: State Revolving Fund (SRF)	<b>Remediation:</b> In the event that soil and/or groundwater contamination is identified, the City can apply to ADEM’s SRF for remediation activities. The SRF is 10-year fixed rate loan with a below market interest rate (the rate is to be determined each year).
ADEM: Redevelopment and Voluntary Cleanup Program (VCP)	<b>Assessment/Remediation:</b> ADEM’s VCP was established with the goal of encouraging prospective purchasers to redevelop brownfield properties by limiting the liability for new owners and providing oversight in the investigation and clean-up process. In the case that this application is not funded, the VCP can assist with assessment, reuse planning, and remediation for priority site brownfields up to \$375,000.
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development: Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)	<b>Reuse:</b> CDBG program provides flexible funding (up to \$600,000) that we could apply for to carry out a wide range of community development activities directed toward neighborhood revitalization, economic development, and improved community facilities/services. Funding would be prioritized to install sidewalks and lighting throughout the Target Area to improve walkability.

**ii. Use of Existing Infrastructure**

We will utilize current municipal and building infrastructure wherever possible in order to prioritize funding and sustainability. All priority brownfield sites have direct access to municipal utilities that are readily available. These utilities include municipal water, sanitary sewer, natural gas, electrical, and high-speed telecommunications. However, sites will require updated connections that will be funded via the leverages sources outlined above and/or developer investment. Street and/or onsite parking is available for all priority sites. Sidewalks updates will utilize funding from the CDBG program.

## 2. COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### a. Community Need

#### i. The Community's Need for Funding

Our mass exodus of population has left a surplus of housing stock and commercial properties behind. These abandoned buildings have created a seemingly endless brownfield inventory to tackle. Complicated with low property values and property tax requirements, deficient commercial sales tax has plagued our operating budget. In 2022 sales tax revenue in the four neighboring Shoals cities averaged \$1,077 per capita. However, in Sheffield, the same revenue was only \$430 per capita, the lowest of all four cities and more than three times lower than the highest performer, Florence, our northern neighbor (ACS). Our ability to provide essential city services has been hindered as a result of these low revenues. We struggle to provide City employees with a competitive living wage. The resulting turnover is extremely high, and employees commonly hold additional jobs on evenings and weekends to make ends meet. We are unable to purchase critical equipment for sanitation, police, and fire services and, since 2018, have not been able to fund the street maintenance program.

Furthermore, unemployment rates, within the Target Area Census Tract is 8.5% (ACS). Residents living within the Montgomery Corridor Target Area have an average per capita income of only \$20,063 while the U.S. average is 60.9% higher at \$37,638 (ACS). This relationship suggests that a moderate portion of the working population is without employment, thus earning significantly less than local, state, and national averages. The Census Tract is in the 96<sup>th</sup> percentile for households that are considered low income, for households living in poverty (CEJST). Poverty rates for the Census Tract rocket to 53.8% and 81.2% for minorities and youth, respectively (ACS). Depressed wages, a small City population (9,305), high poverty rates, and brownfields' low property values impede tax revenues, forcing Sheffield to focus on providing only essential governmental services (i.e., police, fire, public utilities, etc.) and resulting in a lack of budget to assess potential brownfield sites. Redevelopment of the identified Target Area would provide new property, personal, and sales tax revenue for the community to invest in future and deferred economic development.

#### ii. Threats to Sensitive Populations

##### (1) Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations

Low-income (earning less than \$25,000 annually), minority, youth (ages 18-), and elderly (ages 65+) individuals have been identified as sensitive populations living within the Target Area. The entirety of the Target Area is defined by CEJST as disadvantaged. Specifically, within Census Tract 01033020300, **58.1% of the population is considered low income (ACS), which falls within the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile** according to CEJST. Additionally, **53.8% of the minority population within the Census Tract lives in poverty (ACS)**. Although youth populations within the Target Area Census Tract is only 13.6%, **81.2% of children here live in poverty (ACS)**. Youth populations are lacking access to nutritious foods across Colbert County, with 19.6% of youth experiencing food insecurity in 2020 (Kids Count). In other words, one in four children are regularly underfed. Poverty rates, compiled with a lack of medical care and a disproportionate exposure to environmental hazards has resulted in elevated levels of low birth weights (Colbert County: 9.9% vs U.S. average: 8.2%), obesity (Colbert County: 37% vs U.S. average: 32%), and a surplus of preventable hospital stays (Colbert County: 4,273 vs U.S. average: 2,809) (County Health Rankings (CHR)). Furthermore, CHR indicates that the premature death rate in Colbert County is 41.3% greater than the U.S. average. According to CHR, health factors which influence length of life include access to nutritious foods and quality medical care, good jobs, and a clean environment, factors which are directly related to the presence of the City's brownfield sites. Each of these issues are exacerbated by underemployment and unemployment (referenced in section 2.a.i, above). Redevelopment following a successful assessment will reduce environmental threats, strengthen the economy, and provide the community with financial resources to alleviate welfare hardships and care for sensitive populations. Within the Target Area, all proposed projects (except for the Ashe Street Industrial Area) will result in new jobs for our residents, providing access to health insurance to those that are currently uninsured. Furthermore, these developments will increase residential housing stock, thus easing the economic stress of finding housing. Finally, remediating environmental contamination throughout the Target Area will eliminate health risks to sensitive populations living nearby.

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

According to the CDC, "in addition to giving us key information about maternal and infant health, the infant mortality rate is an important marker of the overall health of a society". For example, of the five leading causes of infant death in 2018, three can be attributed to environmental conditions: birth defects, preterm birth and low birth weight, and maternal pregnancy complications. The March of Dimes reports the state of Alabama as having a preterm birth rate of 13.1% and a corresponding Report Card grade of an "F"; a rating based on preterm birth rates, infant death, social vulnerability, low-risk cesarean births, and state efforts on Medicaid expansion, doula, and midwives legislation/policies. Preterm birth rates have been linked to prolonged exposure to many suspected contaminants of concern associated with our priority brownfield sites, including VOCs, PNAs, PCBs, and metals (EPA), impacting approximately 4,440 people who live within a half mile radius of the Target Area. Furthermore, contamination stemming from the railroad adjacent to the Southern Sash priority site includes chemicals relating back to herbicidal defoliants. In particular, herbicidal defoliants used on railroad tracks vary in chemical composition and stand to include nontraditional products such as leaded gasoline, which has been labeled as a "probable human carcinogen" by the EPA and can cause central nervous system damage (ASTDR). Leaded gasoline may likely also be present at the Montgomery Auto and Route 66 Gas Station priority sites. Potential health consequences likely correspond to the County's elevated rate of Brain and Other Nervous System (ONS) Cancer. At a rate of 10.7 cases per 100,000 people, Colbert County has the highest incidence rate in the state of Alabama, which is 50.3% higher than the national average. Likewise, elevated ambient Particulate Matter (PM) 2.5 air pollution within the



County (8.1 PM) may also be to blame. A 2023 meta-analysis published in the National Institutes of Health’s (NIH) National Library of Medicine showed that exposure to air pollutants, such as O3 and PM2.5 absorbance, had the highest correlation with brain tumor incidence. Additionally, the **Target Area census tract is above thresholds for ALL health burdens** which includes asthma (94th percentile), diabetes (98<sup>th</sup> percentile), heart disease (97th percentile), and low life expectancy (99th percentile) (CEJST). Furthermore, the Area is ranked within the 92<sup>nd</sup> percentile for the EPA’s National Air Toxics Assessment cancer risk (EJSCREEN). The successful identification of contaminants through this assessment grant will contribute to identifying and mitigating causes of elevated diseases, cancers, and premature death, leading to long-term public health improvements within the Target Area and City.

**(3) Environmental Justice**

**(a) Identification of Environmental Justice Issues**

Environmental justice issues facing Sheffield citizens primarily stem from the legacy brownfields which were in part a result of industry outsourcing and the resulting severe population decrease. The failed commercial and industrial brownfields now line South Montgomery Avenue. Within the Target Area, underserved populations live and work in close proximity to brownfields; numerous homes are mere feet away from the priority sites. These populations also experience the most pressing economic impacts. Within Census Tract 203, the population experiences the lowest income (\$20,296) and highest poverty rates (45.8%) in the County (ACS). **With 53.8% of minorities living in poverty, the rate is three times that of the nation average** (ACS). The population’s demographics combined with proximity to sources of contamination places the Target Area in the upper 80<sup>th</sup> percentile or higher nationwide for 8 out of 12 Environmental Justice Indexes, including EPA's National Air Toxics Assessment Cancer Risk (91<sup>st</sup> percentile), NATA Respiratory (93<sup>rd</sup> percentile), toxic releases to air (83<sup>rd</sup> percentile), traffic proximity (89<sup>th</sup> percentile), lead paint exposure risk (86<sup>th</sup> percentile), underground storage tanks (96<sup>th</sup> percentile), and wastewater discharge (94<sup>th</sup> percentile) (EJSCREEN). Additionally, Census Tract 01033020300 is labeled as disadvantaged within multiple categories according to EJSCREEN’s Socioeconomic Indicators, including demographic index (84<sup>th</sup> percentile nationwide), supplemental demographic index (89<sup>th</sup> percentile), low income population (89<sup>th</sup> percentile), and less than high school education (87<sup>th</sup> percentile). This Census Tract is the most disadvantaged in the County, exceeding thresholds in categories including low median income (95<sup>th</sup>), unemployment (80<sup>th</sup>), and less than high school education (84<sup>th</sup>) (CEJST; EJSCREEN).

**(b) Advancing Environmental Justice**

This grant will assist the City in locating environmental hazards throughout the Target Area. Following assessment, additional financial resources as outlined within the leveraging section, will be utilized to eliminate exposures. All listed redevelopments (excluding the Ashe Street Industrial Area) will create long-term job opportunities for the Target Area and City as we fight to become competitive in the regional market. New job opportunities along with remediation of the contaminated priority sites will help to alleviate both environmental and economic stressors for our low-income, minority populations by providing adequate, equitable employment and livable wages in a clean, revitalized community. No businesses nor residents will be displaced by the planned assessment and future reuse plans for the priority sites, as they’re all currently vacant. To minimize the potential for unintended displacement, the City will work with our local governments and community-based organizations such as Sheffield Central to incorporate strategies through planning and visioning that preserve affordable housing and small business opportunities in the Target Area. Such efforts will include providing ample notice for any necessary relocation, providing relocation costs, and assisting businesses/residents in identifying alternative locations that are of similar or better circumstances.

**b. Community Engagement**

**i. and ii. Project Involvement and Project Roles**

A table with names and contact information for partners providing their commitment to the brownfield program is provided. The City will continue to build upon this list to ensure inclusion of all stakeholders.

<b>Organization &amp; Point of Contact</b>	<b>Role</b>
The Tennessee Valley Art Association Christi Britten, Exec. Director (256) 383-0533 christi.britten@tennesseevalleyarts.org	The Association’s mission is to provide cultural and educational performing and visual arts experiences for diverse communities in Northwest Alabama with the intention to further expression in and appreciation of the arts. Located, in part, in the Ritz Theatre, within the Target Area, the Association will aid with various aspects and phases of the project (for all priority sites) including, participating in the Brownfield Advisory Committee (BAC), promoting the brownfield program through their website, community engagement, public meetings, and providing input on upcoming decisions for future reuse.
Community Action Agency of Northwest Alabama Amanda Berry, Board President (256) 383-3832	Community Action Agency of Northwest Alabama is a private nonprofit with a mission “to reduce the causes and adverse consequences of poverty and to empower low-income individuals, families, and communities to achieve self-sufficiency through advocacy, resource utilization, and service delivery”. The Agency works to accomplish these goals through a variety of programs, which include utility, rent, and weatherization assistance, work force and parenting classes, and free meal delivery. The Agency will support will assist the City in coordinating locals with quality employment opportunities as a result of this grant through their Workforce Ready Program.

<p>Sheffield Central (256) 320-5117 centeroftheshoals@gmail.com</p>	<p>Sheffield Central is a non-profit organization of business owners, merchants, and invested individuals who share the common goal of promoting existing and new business and ensuring economic prosperity within Sheffield. The organization promotes local events on their Facebook page and will advertise community meetings for the brownfield program. Sheffield Central will act as a liaison for those affected by assessments and redevelopment, thereby aiding in site selection as well.</p>
<p>First Missionary Baptist Church Jeffrey Braxton, Sr., Pastor (256) 383-9442 fbgod@comcast.net</p>	<p>With a congregation of approximately 1,000 people, First Missionary Baptist Church Sheffield is located just east of the Target Area. The Church will aid with various aspects and phases of the project (for all priority sites), including community engagement, public meetings, and providing input on upcoming decisions for future reuse.</p>
<p>Farmer Morgan Ben Farmer, Principal (615) 761-9002 bfarmer@farmermorgan.com</p>	<p>Farmer Morgan is an architectural design firm that will assist in creating planning documents under this grant. As such, they will host the charrettes, leading the public engagement. During these events, Farmer Morgan will record and later publish public input. They will also create renderings and proformas for redevelopment.</p>

The EPA, Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM), and Colbert County Health Department are also established partners and/or will be involved throughout the grant cycle, each contributing in their own capacity. Specifically, ADEM will be responsible for assisting in community engagement and education, the technical review and approval of documents, including the Generic Quality Assurance Project Plan (GQAPP), as well as assisting the City and grant partners with applicable cleanup incentives.

**iii. Incorporating Community Input**

Following this grant’s award, a project kick-off meeting will be held. This meeting will provide opportunity to establish a Brownfields Advisory Committee (BAC) consisting of representatives from throughout the City. The Committee will review projects and make decisions to prioritize site assessments based upon the hierarchy described within section 1.a.iii. The kick-off meeting will also outline the goals of the grant, how to provide public input, and what the funds would mean to the City, ensuring an educated public and allowing for additional community involvement. Ongoing communication throughout the life of the grant will be conducted in a variety of methods, including regularly held public meetings. The meetings will be held at hours agreeable to most schedules to ensure a high level of attendance and involvement. Additionally, those that cannot be present during live meetings, can access recorded meetings online, at the City of Sheffield’s and Colbert County’s websites. Meetings will provide a platform for public comment to identify additional brownfield sites, reprioritize known brownfield sites based on established criteria, and voice potential concerns. Commentary will be collected through comment cards, email, and word of mouth to the project manager so that affected parties’ input can be captured and documented for use in decision making when selecting and prioritizing sites. When applicable, the grant manager will respond to those providing input to ensure an open dialog surrounding decisions made for the grant and future associated projects. These meetings will also be utilized to present potential redevelopment opportunities to interested developers by showcasing available brownfield sites and providing developers technical assistance in obtaining additional financial incentives for planned redevelopment. Additional communication regarding grant updates and opportunities will include press releases with local newspapers which include the Times Daily (online and in print). Brownfield related announcements will also be featured on local news stations, flier distribution via local businesses and community organizations, and online, on local stakeholder websites. The following Facebook pages will be used as well: “Colbert County Reporter,” “Sheffield, Alabama,” “Sheffield Central,” and “City of Sheffield, Alabama – Government” reaching over 11,000 followers.

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

**a. Description of Tasks/Activities and Outputs**

Task 1: Cooperative Agreement Oversight

- i. Project Implementation: General grant management; develop BAC; Qualified Environmental Consultant (QEC) selection based on a competitive bid process (per 40 CFR 30); meeting facilitation with the BAC, ADEM, and EPA; required reporting; budget reconciliation.
- ii. Anticipated Project Schedule: Quarters 1-16: The BAC will be developed within 1 month of funding and meetings will be held at regular intervals throughout the project. A QEC will be selected within 1-2 months of funding. Quarterly reports will be submitted on a quarterly basis and MBE/WBE reports will be submitted annually. ACRES will be updated throughout the grant period.
- iii. Task/Activity Lead: The City of Sheffield will oversee this task, with assistance from the BAC, and selected QEC
- iv. Outputs: BAC development, 1 Work Plan, 1 Community Involvement Plan, 12 Quarterly Reports, 1 Close-Out Report, regular ACRES reporting, EPA Form 5700-52A for Minority and Women Business Entity Utilization, and Federal Financial Reports SF-425

Task 2: Inventory and Community Outreach

- i. Project Implementation: Develop marketing materials which will be available online and in hard copy; notify the community of site-specific public information meetings and assessment schedules; advertise for public meeting through online and in-person methods; hold public meetings to solicit input, inform, educate, and update the community regarding assessment and redevelopment activities; provide updates as necessary at local development council meetings. The City will also attend various brownfield conferences.

- ii. Anticipated Project Schedule: Quarters 1-16: Community outreach will be performed for the duration of the grant period; the first public meeting will be held within 3 months; the 2nd public meeting will be held after the first round of assessments have been completed; and the 3rd public meeting will be held when assessments are nearing completion and reuse planning begins. Additional community involvement will occur throughout the grant.
- iii. Task/Activity Lead: The City of Sheffield will oversee this task, with assistance from the BAC, ADEM, QEC, and community partners.
- iv. Outputs: Public meeting advertisements; press releases and project update reports; educational materials to support public meetings (PowerPoint presentations and handouts); kick-off meeting; 3-6 public meetings; one-on-one meetings with property owners as needed; updated brownfield inventory; attend various brownfield conferences, including two EPA Region 4 Conferences and two National Brownfield Conferences.

Task 3: Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs)

- i. Project Implementation: ASTM-compliant Phase I ESAs; Phase II ESAs; MDEQ and EPA reviewed Generic Quality Assurance Project Plan (GQAPP) and Site-Specific Quality Assurance Project Plans (SSQAPPs); Hazardous Material (Haz Mat) Surveys. Costs for these activities include contractual consulting and reporting expenses and printing.
- ii. Anticipated Project Schedule: Quarters 1-14: A QAPP will be completed within 1 month of selection. Once approved by ADEM/EPA, site-specific assessment activities will begin within 1 month. Assessment and reporting will occur throughout the grant period, with the goal of completing assessment activities by quarter 14.
- iii. Task/Activity Lead: The QEC will oversee this task, with assistance from the BAC.
- iv. Outputs: Priority Sites: 5 Phase I ESAs (3 Haz; 2 Petro), 5 Phase II ESAs (3 Haz; 2 Petro), 1 Haz Mat Surveys; Additional Sites: 9 Phase I ESAs (7 Haz and 2 Petro), 3 Phase II ESAs (2 Haz and 1 Petro), 3 Haz Mat Surveys

Task 4: Cleanup Planning and Planning Activities

- i. Project Implementation: Creation of cleanup plans and implementation strategies for developing and utilizing resources; development of Analysis of Brownfield Cleanup Alternatives (ABCAs) for priority sites that require remediation based on Phase II ESA data. The ABCAs will include remedial actions for each identified regulated contaminant that exceeds applicable guidelines. Remedial actions will be compared based on metrics such as cost, feasibility, and effectiveness in protecting human health and the environment. ABCAs will be developed through considering the potential reuse scenario(s) for each site. In addition, an Area-Wide Plan will be developed to focus revitalization plans on the community's vision, marketing conditions, environmental and economic challenges and opportunities, available infrastructure, and opportunities for future financing for the target area. The Area-Wide Plan will help prioritize our commercial sites for redevelopment, identify key uses, and direct where to utilize scarce resources to implement the community vision. The total estimated budget for this task includes staff time to attend meetings with stakeholders related to the public design charrettes and stakeholder meetings, as well as a contract cost for an experienced planner. Public meetings will be held during this reuse planning period to solicit input from the public and community partners; we envision this setup as design charrettes to encourage public participation. The Plans will provide financial projections/estimates, potential leveraging opportunities, incorporate input from project partners, stakeholders, and community members, and respond to the surrounding market and environmental conditions and challenges.
- ii. Anticipated Project Schedule: Quarters 5-14: ABCAs will be completed within 3-6 months of finalizing the Phase II ESA reports. The public meeting/design charette will be held after the draft ABCAs are complete, but before they are finalized.
- iii. Task/Activity Lead: The QEC will oversee the completion of ABCAs. The City will oversee the public meeting/design charrettes with assistance from the QEC and BAC.
- iv. Outputs: 5 ABCA reports; 1-3 public meeting/design charrettes (and associated outreach/presentation materials); and 1 Area-Wide Plan

**b. Cost Estimates**

All task costs were determined appropriate through input from a qualified consultant and other applicable grant management experience, applicable cost per units is included below.

Task 1: Cooperative Agreement Oversight

- Personnel: 65 hours at an average rate of \$80/hour\* = \$5,200 for programmatic costs such as financial and performance reporting. \* Personnel costs have been developed based upon prior experience of similar scope.
- Supplies: Office supplies will include copies, maps, and handouts. Estimated cost: \$620
- Contractual: 100 hours at an average rate of \$100/hour = \$10,000 to assist in reporting needs throughout the grant's lifecycle.

Task 2: Inventory and Community Outreach

- Personnel: 65 hours at an average rate of \$80/hour\* = \$5,200 for outreach coordination and meeting attendance.
- Travel: Estimating one staff member traveling for two national conferences averaging three days each; \$400 registration, \$900/round trip flight, \$200/hotel room per night (assuming 3 nights each), and \$60/day per diem (totaling \$4,160). Additionally, one staff member traveling for two local conferences averaging three days each; \$400 registration, \$100 in gas for travel, \$200/hotel room per night (assuming 3 nights each), and \$60/day per diem (totaling \$2,560) = \$6,720
- Supplies: Office supplies will include a projector, copies, maps, and handouts. Estimated cost: \$620

- Contractual: 100 hours at an average rate of \$100/hour = \$10,000 to assist in both information gathering for growth of the inventory and community engagement presentations.

**Task 3: Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs)**

- Personnel: 65 hours at an average rate of \$80/hour\* = \$5,200 for report reviews and securing site access.
- Supplies: Office supplies will include copies, maps, and handouts. Estimated cost: \$620
- Contractual: \$280,000 (56% of budget)
  - Priority Sites: \$145,000
    - 5 Phase I ESAs: estimated cost of \$4,000 per ESA = \$20,000
    - 5 Phase II ESAs: estimated cost of \$23,000 per ESA = \$115,000
    - 1 Hazardous Materials Surveys: estimated cost \$10,000 per survey = \$10,000
  - Secondary Sites: \$135,000
    - 9 Phase I ESAs: average estimated cost of \$4,000 per ESA = \$36,000
    - 3 Phase II ESAs: average estimated cost of \$23,000 per ESA = \$69,000
    - 3 Hazardous Materials Surveys: estimated cost \$10,000 per survey = \$30,000

**Task 4: Site Specific Cleanup Planning and Planning Activities**

- Personnel: 65 hours at an average rate of \$80/hour\* = \$5,200 for programmatic expenses associated with cleanup planning, review of reports, and meetings.
- Supplies: Office supplies will include copies, maps, and handouts. Estimated cost: \$620
- Contractual: \$170,000
  - 5 ABCAs: average estimated cost of \$4,000/ABCA = \$20,000
  - 1 Area-Wide Plan: \$150,000 (30% of budget) (EPA estimates a total cost of \$50,000-\$175,000)

Budget Categories		Project Tasks				
		Task 1: Cooperative Agreement Oversight	Task 2: Inventory and Community Outreach	Task 3: Environmental Site Assessments	Task 4: Cleanup Planning and Planning Activities	TOTAL
<b>Direct Costs</b>	Personnel	\$ 5,200	\$ 5,200	\$ 5,200	\$ 5,200	\$ 20,800
	Fringe Benefits					\$ -
	Travel		\$ 6,720			\$ 6,720
	Equipment					\$ -
	Supplies	\$ 620	\$ 620	\$ 620	\$ 620	\$ 2,480
	Contractual	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 280,000	\$ 170,000	\$ 470,000
	Construction					\$ -
<b>Total Direct Costs</b>		\$ 15,820	\$ 22,540	\$ 285,820	\$ 175,820	\$ 500,000
<b>Indirect Costs</b>						
<b>Total Budget (Direct + Indirect)</b>		\$ 15,820	\$ 22,540	\$ 285,820	\$ 175,820	\$ 500,000

**c. Plan to Measure and Evaluate Environmental Progress and Results**

Per the requirements of the EPA Assessment Grant, we will submit quarterly reports to the EPA Project Officer. These reports will cover work progress and current status, as well as any difficulties that were encountered, a record of financial expenditures, data results, and anticipated further action. Quarterly reports will also document information regarding a plan to resolve progress if we ever find ourselves off track financially or schedule-wise. We will also complete reporting in the ACRES database for each assessment site, noting specific accomplishments, contaminants found, materials impacted, if clean-up activities are required and the progress of said activities, and other resources that have been leveraged to complete the redevelopment of the site. The ACRES database will also be utilized to track job creation and acres of land assessed as part of this grant, as well as the total number of assessments completed and the type of assessment, the amount of funds expended by project, and the total project cost, essentially acting as a tool for both the EPA and the City to track and measure the grant’s progress in achieving the outputs and eventual outcomes. At the end of the four-year grant period, a final report similar to quarterly reports will be produced.

**4. PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE**

**a. Programmatic Capability**

**i., ii., iii. Organizational Capacity, Structure, and Key Staff**

The project team will be led by City Clerk and Treasurer of Sheffield, Lisa Elledge, who will be responsible for all grant operations (i.e., community relations/outreach, marketing, reporting, and financial), management of the environmental consultant, and will serve as the point of contact for the EPA Project Officer. Ms. Elledge has lived in and served the City of Sheffield for over 15 years and during her time in our community, she has built and maintained exceptional relationships with community members and community organizations. Throughout her career, Ms. Elledge routinely manages over \$9 million in City funds, including liabilities and assets. Ms. Meghan Childers, who holds a Master of Accountancy and is the City’s staff Accountant, will provide added review and support of all financial related items for

the grant. Her 12-year history as a bank auditor and her time spent with the City will ensure accurate accounting and reporting of grant activities. The team will also be assisted by Sheffield's Mayor, Steve Stanley, who will serve as the secondary point of contact and assist with grant management items as needed. Mayor Stanley successfully managed the previous FY2018 Assessment and the FY2016 Cleanup Grants. Additionally, Mayor Stanley served as a chairman of the Sheffield Redevelopment Authority and as a board member of the Alabama Brownfields Association. As the backup manager, Mayor Stanley will assist in site prioritization, property access and community involvement. These key project team members have performed in similar roles for the previous US EPA grants. This experienced team has the depth of knowledge to ensure timely and successful expenditure of assessment grant funds.

**iv. Acquiring Additional Resources**

We have extensive experience managing grant funds and thus will begin the contractor procurement process immediately following work plan and cooperative agreement approval with the EPA. The desired consultant will be experienced in brownfield programs including the following services: assisting with Community Brownfield Inventories and Outreach, Phase I and II Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs), Analysis of Brownfield Cleanup Alternatives (ABCAs), and working with state regulators regarding solid waste and brownfield assessment redevelopment planning and remediation. Additionally, the consultant will be expected to prepare the Generic Quality Assurance Project Plan (GQAPP) within the first 60 days of the grant so that proposed assessments and activities are not delayed. These services will be secured in accordance with the EPA's selection protocol and Sheffield's established purchasing policies. Standard procedure includes a Request for Qualifications be published for response by qualified firms. Firms will be allotted guidelines with a deadline for submissions and all submissions will be available as public record. Following receipt of proposals, each application will be reviewed by an internal committee composed of Sheffield City staff. The selected consultant will be recommended to the City's grant managers for approval via resolution. The City will also partner with Community Action Agency of Northwest Alabama, utilizing their Workforce Ready Program for additional assistance in promoting the hiring of local community members so that they may participate in employment opportunities in brownfields assessment, cleanup, or redevelopment related to the proposed projects within this application.

**b. Past Performance and Accomplishments**

**i. Currently Has or Previously Received an EPA Brownfields Grant**

**(1) Accomplishments**

**FY2013 Community-Wide Assessment Grant:** Accomplishments included the completion of 1 Generic QAPP, 14 Phase I ESAs, 8 Site Specific QAPPs, 8 Phase II ESAs, 5 ABCAs, and 1 Haz materials surveys. As a result of the assessment outputs described above additional outcomes have already been seen including grant catalyzed demolition of blighted buildings totaling 6 blocks within the City adjacent to the downtown area, removal of the former tanks on the tank farm, the sale of a former bottling plant for a mixed use residential retail development, development of a vacant coast guard station into a County run emergency management training center and planned development of raised-bed community gardens for a low-income housing development. Additionally, the reuse of the 60-acre brownfield site that is a piece of the Inspiration Landing project, will result in \$160 Million anticipated private investment, over 1000 temporary construction jobs and over 600 permanent jobs. This project has already leveraged a \$200,000 EPA Cleanup grant and \$300,000 ADEM revolving loan awarded to the Sheffield Redevelopment Authority. All outputs have been recorded and are up to date in ACRES. Each of the items above have also assisted us in the start of cleaning up environmental exposures for our waterways and as a result our residents.

**FY2018 Community-Wide Assessment Grant:** Due to COVID-19 conditions, the assessment grant was approved for an extension and closed out in December 2022. Outputs included the completion of 1 Generic QAPP, 19 Phase I ESAs, 6 Site Specific QAPPs, 4 Phase II ESAs, and 1 ABCA. Outcomes include the assessment and reuse of a 60,000 square foot warehouse and transmission rebuilding shop as a showroom for David Christopher's, an interior design company that sells internationally. Additionally, a former Ramada Inn (83,000 square feet in size) underwent a \$4.7 Million renovation from its blighted state into 120 studio apartments, housing young professionals and college students at the University of Northern Alabama. The community offers a pool with gazebo and grills, a gym, workstations, common area kitchenette, pet park, and controlled access entry. The new residents stimulate commerce in the surrounding area. Additionally, a new Dollar General was constructed at the location of a former lumber yard. Along with two others in the city, these stores are consistently among the top sales tax producers for our city revenue. The new store is the largest and provides fresh dairy and produce to the adjacent minority low-income census tract community. All outputs and outcomes have been recorded and are up to date in ACRES.

**(2) Compliance with Grant Requirements**

As shown through our record of no audit findings, benchmark compliance goals on each grant have been met. Required reporting as well as terms and conditions were met and conducted on time, serving as an integral part of maintaining the grants' timely implementation. Required reporting included the completion of the Work Plan, General Quality Assurance Project Plan, ACRES updates, Minority-Owned Business Enterprises/Women-Owned Business Enterprises, regularly held meetings with EPA personnel to discuss project progress, quarterly reports, and a final closeout report. Because of previous successful grant management, the City of Sheffield is better positioned to continue to pursue leveraging opportunities that support the community. Overall, grant work plans, schedules, and terms and conditions have been completed in accordance with awarding party requirements.

## Threshold Criteria – City of Sheffield, Alabama

**1. Applicant Eligibility:**

The City of Sheffield, Alabama (“the City”) is a General-Purpose Unit of Local Government as defined under 2 CFR 200.64

**2. Community Involvement:**

Following this grant’s award, a project kick-off meeting will be held. This meeting will provide opportunity to establish a Brownfields Advisory Committee (BAC) consisting of representatives from throughout the City. The Committee will review projects and make decisions to prioritize site assessments based upon the hierarchy described in section 1.a.iii. The kick-off meeting will also outline the goals of the grant, how to provide public input, and what the funds would mean to the City, ensuring an educated public and allowing for additional community involvement. Ongoing communication throughout the life of the grant will be conducted in a variety of methods, including regularly held public meetings. The meetings will be held at hours agreeable to most schedules to ensure a high level of attendance and involvement. Additionally, those that cannot be present during live meetings, can access recorded meetings online, at the City of Sheffield’s and Colbert County’s websites. Meetings will provide a platform for public comment to identify additional brownfield sites, reprioritize known brownfield sites based on established criteria, and voice potential concerns. Commentary will be collected through comment cards, email, and word of mouth to the project manager so that affected parties’ input can be captured and documented for use in decision making when selecting and prioritizing sites. When applicable, the grant manager will respond to those providing input to ensure an open dialog surrounding decisions made for the grant and future associated projects. These meetings will also be utilized to present potential redevelopment opportunities to interested developers by showcasing available brownfield sites and providing developers technical assistance in obtaining additional financial incentives for planned redevelopment. Additional communication regarding grant updates and opportunities will include press releases with local newspapers which include the Times Daily (online and in print). Brownfield related announcements will also be featured on local news stations, flier distribution via local businesses and community organizations, and online, on local stakeholder websites. The following Facebook pages will be used as well: “Colbert County Reporter,” “Sheffield, Alabama,” “Sheffield Central,” and “City of Sheffield, Alabama – Government” reaching over 11,000 followers.

**3. Expenditure of Existing Grant Funds:**

Not applicable; the City of Sheffield does not have an active EPA Brownfield Grant.

**4. Contractors and Named Subrecipients:**

Not applicable; the City of Sheffield has not selected a contractor.