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Regular meeting 2nd and 4th Thursdays each month at 6:00 p.m.

JONATHAN C. GRIFFITH
INTERIM CITY MANAGER

JANE WEST, ESQ.
CITY ATTORNEY

SUNNI L. KRANTZ, CMC
CITY CLERK

MARCIA G. CARTY, CPA
FINANCE DIRECTOR

JASON L. SHAW, SR
CHIEF, POLICE DEPT.

CHRIS TAYLOR
CHIEF, FIRE DEPT.

Narrative Information Sheet

1. Applicant Identification: City of Palatka
201 N 2nd Street
Palatka, FL 52177

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

3. Location: City of Palatka, Putnam County, Florida

4. Target Area and Priority Site/Property Information

Target Area	Census Tract	Priority Site Address
Madison and 11 th Street Corridor	12107950800	1301 Madison Street
	12107950800	1819 Madison Street
	12107950800	1122 Bronson Street
Downtown CRA	12107950800	722 River Street
	12107950800	102 Reid Street
	12107950800	715 Reid Street
Northern Industrial Riverfront	12107950700	234 Comfort Road

5. Contacts
a. Project Director: Jonathan Griffith; Interim City Manager; 201 N 2nd Street, Palatka, FL 32177; Phone: 386-329-0100; Email: JCGriffith@Palatka-FL.gov

b. Chief Executive/Highest Ranking Elected Official: Robbi Correa; Mayor; 201 N 2nd Street, Palatka, FL 32177; Phone: 386-329-0100; Email: rcorrea@palatka-fl.gov

6. Population: 10,574 (US Census Bureau July 1, 2022 Population Estimates)

7. Other Factors:

Other Factors	Page #
Community population is 10,000 or less.	--
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.	1
The priority site(s) is in a federally designated flood plain.	4
The reuse of the priority site(s) will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy.	4
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
30%+ of the overall project budget will be spent on eligible reuse/area-wide planning activities.	9
The target area(s) is located within a community in which a coal-fired power plant has recently closed or is closing.	--

8. Letter from the State or Tribal Environmental Authority: See attached.

9. Releasing Copies of Applications: Not applicable.



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF Environmental Protection

Bob Martinez Center
2600 Blair Stone Road
Tallahassee, FL 32399-2400

Ron DeSantis
Governor

Jeanette Nuñez
Lt. Governor

Shawn Hamilton
Secretary

October 31, 2023

Esmeralda Vargas
Brownfields Program
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
61 Forsyth Street, S.W. 10th Floor
Atlanta, GA 30303-8960
Vargas.Esmeralda@epa.gov

Dear Ms. Vargas:

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (Department) acknowledges and supports the City of Palatka's Brownfields grant application for a Community-Wide Hazardous Substance and Petroleum or Petroleum Products Assessment Grant. The Department understands that this application has been prepared in accordance with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) guidance document EPA-OLEM-OBLR-23-12, titled "Guidelines for Brownfields Assessment Grants." This letter of acknowledgement addresses the requirement for a "Letter from the State or Tribal Environmental Authority," described in SECTION IV.D.8. EPA Brownfields grant funding will strengthen the City's cleanup and redevelopment efforts. This federal grant effort also supports Florida's Brownfields Redevelopment Act and the Department's role in administration of site rehabilitation of contaminated sites.

The Department encourages EPA grant recipients to use the incentives and resources available through Florida's Brownfields Redevelopment Program with EPA grant funding to enhance the success of their Brownfields project. The Department recommends that the City consider including Brownfields sites or areas that could potentially receive federal funding in a state-designated Brownfield area. The City is also encouraged to contact Darrin McKeehen, P.G., the Northeast District Brownfields Coordinator, at (904) 256-1545 to learn more about the Florida Brownfields Redevelopment Program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Billy Hessman".

Billy Hessman, P.G., Environmental Manager
Brownfields and CERCLA Site Screening Section

BH/jc

cc:

Jonathan Griffith, City of Palatka – jcgriffith@palatka-fl.gov

Jayde Baggs, City of Palatka – jbaggs@palatka-fl.gov

Darrin McKeehen, P.G., DEP Northeast District – darrin.mckeehen@floridadep.gov

1. PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION AND PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION

a. Target Area and Brownfields

i. Overview of Brownfield Challenges and Description of Target Area – Located along the St. Johns River in northeast Florida, Palatka's development historically gravitated toward the riverfront and was primarily industrial in nature. Incorporated in 1853, Palatka was key to Florida's beginnings as a tourist destination during a time when trade and transportation were centered around water and rail. In the late 1800's and early 1900's, Palatka prospered as a resource for timber and citrus and had a reputation for natural beauty that attracted many visitors. The "Great Freezes" of 1894-1895 devastated Palatka's citrus industry, and the City turned to other industries, primarily those dependent on wood and wood by-products. Palatka experienced moderate commercial and industrial development in the 1900s when the Wilson Cypress Company built a large mill along the St. Johns River. At its peak, this mill was the second largest cypress mill in the world, but closed in 1944, which resulted in the closure of industries and businesses dependent on this resource. Today, the industrial and heavy commercial properties of Palatka's riverfront and downtown areas are largely abandoned and underutilized, and the city's downtown core has many opportunities for reuse and expansion of vacant and unused properties. However, redevelopment is complicated by the potential presence of hazardous substances, pollutants and contaminants, and their associated health risks continue to impact our most sensitive local populations.

Palatka is the Putnam County seat and largest city in the county with 10,574 residents (US Census 2022 Estimates). Approximately 45% of residents are non-white minorities (40% are black) and 33% of all residents are below the poverty line, compared to a national average of 11.5% (source: datausa.io, Census.gov).

One brownfield area targeted by this application is the **Madison and 11th Street Corridor**, between 19th and 8th Streets and **11th Street** from Oak Street to Washington St. This area encompasses the former center of black commerce and culture at 11th Street. The area hosted jazz bands like the Belton Society Syncopators, who played up and down the east coast with jazz greats like Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, and Ella Fitzgerald. Today, the area is a light industrial corridor, blighted and lined with brownfields in close proximity to low-income neighborhoods.

The second area we will target is our Downtown, specifically in the areas of our **Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) North and South Historic Districts and Central Business District**. Brownfield revitalization fits seamlessly with our plans for these Community Redevelopment Areas, which include continuing infrastructure improvements, establishing and reinforcing connections, activating opportunity sites, and encouraging private sector investment. Palatka has completed some environmental assessment work in this area during previous grants, but additional sites remain in need of assessment, remediation and redevelopment planning. The central section of the downtown area along St. Johns Avenue includes multiple large historic buildings that have been vacant for 30+ years. Many of the buildings have been exposed to the elements, resulting in the degradation of potentially hazardous building materials. Additional environmental impacts of concern given the historical commercial uses of these properties.

Additionally, we will target brownfields **north of Downtown** within Census Tract 9507 and Qualified Opportunity Zone Census Tract 9508 that are also along the St. Johns River. This area includes a large number of industrial brownfields with prime potential for higher and better use such as a precast concrete facility, a recycling facility, and a shipyard in foreclosure.

Palatka previously received two EPA Assessment Grant (FY2015, FY2019 Grants) that collectively assessed 120 acres and leveraged significant other funds to catalyze and complete local revitalization efforts. We propose to use this requested EPA grant to continue the process of supporting redevelopment and reuse of local brownfields, thus reinvigorating Palatka and facilitating the transition of our target areas into economically sustainable and vibrant cores.

ii. Description of Priority Brownfield Site(s) – Despite two previous grants and momentum forward, Palatka continues to see impacts from uninvestigated brownfields, or those in need of further assessment, planning, or remediation. We have identified three target areas and seven priority sites with high reuse or redevelopment potential to focus on with this funding. Priority sites are listed below.

Site/Location	Site Information and Uses	Proximity to areas of concern	Nature and Extent of Brownfield	Real or Perceived Negative Environmental Impacts
Madison and 11th Street Corridor Target Area				
1301 Madison St	3.53 Acres Palatka Welding Shop, formerly Barnett Boiler and	Adjacent to homes, along walking routes to shopping or downtown,	Unpaved site, metal and debris piles scattered throughout property, empty drums present,	Heavy metals, PAHs, petroleum, VOCs

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	Machine Repair, multiple buildings in disrepair	adjacent to small grocery store	abandoned junked vehicles leaking fluids throughout site; former coal/fuel boiler repair	
1819 Madison St	1.48 Acres, metals recycler, multiple buildings in disrepair	Across street to homes, church, sidewalk on routes to shopping and downtown	Cars in various states of disrepair or dismantling, unpaved. Four tanks registered to site of 500-1000 gallons with noted unknown contents	Heavy metals, petroleum products, VOCs, PAHs
1122 Bronson St	2.87 Acres, meat packing facility	Across the street from residential	Former industrial uses and site degradation. Environmental impacts associated with meat production include fossil fuel usage, animal methane, and effluent waste.	Chlorine, nitrogen, ammonia compounds, and VOCs
Downtown CRA Target Area				
722 River St	70.34 Acre abandoned furniture and cypress mill	Riverfront property adjacent to residential	Adhesives, finishes, paints, solvents, degreasing and solvent recovery sludges, lacquers, and sealants related to furniture production.	Metals, VOCs, PAHs
102 Reid St	0.63 Acre fueling facility	Prime downtown location with nearby community amenities	Historic fueling operations, including storage tanks.	Petroleum hydrocarbons and auto-related hazardous substances
715 Reid St	0.42 Acre Automotive shop and storage facility	Prime downtown location adjacent to community amenities	Historic automotive repair use.	Petroleum hydrocarbons and auto-related hazardous substances
Northern Industrial Riverfront Target Area				
234 Comfort Road	15.84 acres, former Georgia Pacific site	1,000 feet from the St. Johns River; 500 feet to tributary; in Industrial Park ~1.75 miles from housing	Pressure treated lumber and industrial site with chip n' saw, chemical treatments. Mix of unpaved and paved areas, few buildings remain.	Various carcinogens and chemicals, chromated arsenicals, creosote, pentachlorophenol, metals, VOCs; 2 diesel and gas tanks (3-4, k gal) registered to site;

iii. Identifying Additional Sites - Palatka is well-practiced in identifying sites for eligible grant activities, and has a head start on an inventory. After addressing the target areas and priority sites above, if funding remains, we will regroup our advisory committee, project team, and the public (including residents, business owners, and developers) to identify additional brownfield sites located within the target areas. Additionally, we have a large list of sites from the previous brownfield grant: historical environmental contamination or release incidents include 84 petroleum-related, two dry cleaning-solvent related, and 9 solid waste facility/dump sites (FDEP – database). In short, we don't anticipate any concerns with finding additional sites. We will also focus on areas where we can provide a wide diversity of redevelopment opportunities and equitable opportunities to all business types and disadvantaged/small businesses. Those with the highest potential for community benefit and economic impact resulting from assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment will be prioritized. After initial identification, each of the potential sites will be compared against USEPA criteria to determine funding eligibility status. Identifying sites for new affordable housing will be top of mind.

1.b. Revitalization of Target Area

i. Reuse Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans - Our approach is tailored to tap local resources and create recommended action steps that use plain language to describe tactics used in implementing a strategic vision. We will first use the assessment aspects of the grant to understand the risks raised during property transactions for sites that have the potential for higher and better

uses. Assessment data will be used to determine the extent of contamination, exposure pathways, and develop remediation strategies in coordination with developer partners. Like with the FY2015 and FY2019 Grants, funds will also be used on eligible planning activities to reimagine these sites. For example, informed by local long-range plans and community input, our project team can develop site reuse concepts that get people excited about moving projects forward. We will then use that information to leverage additional resources to address environmental conditions and improve aging infrastructure systems in conjunction with property redevelopment.

Site/Location	Projected Reuse
Madison and 11th Street Corridor Target Area	
1301 Madison St	Mixed use, commercial development corridor with affordable infill housing options; including possible music venues highlighting the heritage of the area, or restaurants and grocery uses; estimated space for 153 housing units (1 unit for every 1k sqft)
1819 Madison St	Mixed use, commercial development corridor with affordable infill housing options; estimated space for 65 housing units (1 unit for every 1k sqft)
1122 Bronson St	Mixed use, commercial development corridor with affordable infill housing options; estimated space for 125 housing units (1 unit for every 1k sqft)
Downtown CRA Target Area	
715 Reid St	Prime commercial corridor property with AADT over 30,000 vehicles per day
102 Reid St	Commercial business opportunity or medium-density housing
722 River St	Mixed use residential, commercial and recreation riverfront opportunities
Northern Industrial Riverfront Target Area	
234 Comfort Rd	Prime industrial reuse; large site with close proximity to rail, port, and supply chain providers

We've chosen target areas and priority sites with prime redevelopment potential, and those near sensitive populations. These pursuits are in alignment with the city's following revitalization plans:

- The Palatka Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) has three priority districts (Central Business, North Historic, and South Historic Districts), which are collectively one of our target areas. Each district is a separate Tax Increment Finance District. The CRA has created an overall plan (October 2021) that covers infrastructure improvements, connections, opportunity sites, and private sector investment. Our brownfield efforts will be coordinated with the CRA's efforts.
- In 2016, Palatka implemented its Comprehensive Brownfields Redevelopment Strategy to coincide with our CRA initiatives to properly guide the prioritization, assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment of contaminated sites, and to monitor the impacts of these brownfields on our community's overall health. The plan calls for the city to provide residents more – and better – transportation choices which are severely lacking in the target areas. The goals of the proposed program are to protect public health and the environment, remove blight, and cleanup sites so they can be reused for economic and community purposes.
- Portions of our target areas are identified for infill and redevelopment in the City's Comprehensive Plan. In addition to our noted northern industrial area, we have a downtown vision of safe, reliable and economical transportation choices to our residents that also improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and promote public health. This vision is in alignment with our brownfield objectives and will be carried forward through revitalization efforts.
- The eastern portion of Madison Street is in two different TIF districts and commercial or industrial reuse will be incentivized using that mechanism.

ii. Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategy - Many of the sites within the target area are strongly positioned for redevelopment based upon their accessible, visible locations, yet have not moved forward due to the significant challenges posed by the presence of aging and deteriorating structures and potential or perceived environmental concerns. This EPA grant has the potential to benefit the community in a number of different ways that trickle down and/or directly impact the local economy. Remediating and redeveloping blighted and contaminated properties would raise the property value of the adjacent and neighboring properties, and relocating industrial properties to more appropriate locations near the fringes of Palatka will allow remediation and promote infill development. Efforts in the riverfront target area will focus on public spaces overlooking the river corridor, evening riverside activities, specialty shopping, restaurants with open air dining, and other functions that center the St. Johns River. Adding green and recreational space along the St. Johns River would result in rising land values and, consequently, an increased tax base. Local and state governments would also benefit from increased sales taxes due to increased tourism. In the downtown area, Palatka wishes to preserve the original character of our historic downtown through the preservation and showcasing of historic buildings while allowing additional uses that will strengthen and expand the core of the community. These include retail, offices, restaurants, affordable housing, and civic uses, which will provide opportunities for jobs, businesses, public amenities (such as a music venue drawing from the cultural heritage of the area), and a place to live, work, and play for our disadvantaged residents.

On the industrial side, further supply chain additions to the industrial corridor with large-scale transportation options (rail, barge) could greatly impact local revenues. A November 2015 study by the Fiscal and Economic Research Center noted the following impacts from brownfields funds at a state level: a \$27 leveraged to \$1 ratio in grant funds awarded; business investment of 14-fold investment return on brownfield sites; governments generated \$88.5 million in new tax revenue on redeveloped brownfield sites; had 3.5 times higher property value compared to pre-development condition; 66% of sites redeveloped were in low-income areas; and 12,400 jobs have been created. We expect to see this impact from future projects with the Grant as leverage for corridor reinvestment.

Areas redeveloped for uses such as parks and open space create mental and physical health benefits to community and regional users. The future redevelopment of brownfield sites will allow for the creation of new jobs, decreasing the high unemployment and poverty rates currently prevalent in our target areas. Additionally, the City plans to work with the CareerSource NEFL Career Center and other workforce development organizations to promote local hiring for potential employment opportunities related to the brownfield assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment. Equitability is an important concern as demonstrated by the diversity of housing options contemplated in our community's comprehensive plans, ranging from preserving and reusing historic buildings to building apartments that will provide alternatives to large-lot single-family development.

Palatka will explore energy efficiency measures as part of our brownfield revitalization efforts, which may be achieved through passive design principles, energy-efficient building materials, renewable energy sources like solar panels, and efficient HVAC systems, as well as smart grid integration. Additionally, focusing on water efficiency, promoting sustainable transportation options, and adhering to regulations that support energy-efficient development are feasible steps in our climate and regulatory context. These measures will help create environmentally responsible and energy-efficient developments.

1.c. Strategy for Leveraging Resources

i. Resources Needed for Site Reuse – Palatka City staff have been immensely successful in leveraging other funds for our projects, with dedicated Grant Administrators preparing grant funding applications year-round. To support environmental assessment, remediation and redevelopment under this initiative, the City is continuing to expand our list of potential funding sources. Successful grants awarded to our City in the last two years alone have totaled over \$4.7 million and led to the implementation of the Booker Park Regional Pond (a site investigated in previous grants, the project reduced nitrogen and phosphorus loading to the St. Johns river) and other infrastructure improvements that directly correlate to the needs in our target area. A new TIF district is in the process of creation on over the 70+ acres assessed in previous grants to provide gap financing and offset public improvements for the direct purpose of redevelopment. We will align TIF infrastructure projects with brownfield strategy to ensure tactical allocation of funds for catalytic infrastructure. State-funded voluntary cleanup tax credit program will be used to off-set costs for private development and will be used to further entice partnerships in redevelopment. Additionally, the City is signing a resolution for a FDEP Brownfield Designated Area covering the City that provides voluntary cleanup tax credits (VCTC), job bonus tax refunds (\$2,500 for each job created on a brownfield site), and a refund on building materials for affordable housing projects on brownfield sites which provide additional tools to help our priority sites to provide the mix of public and private elements to set the table for rehabilitation, remediation, and redevelopment.

ii. Use of Existing Infrastructure - Our community has an aged water system and insufficient stormwater control contributing to flooding in our target area. These projects are slowly being upgraded using a variety of funding sources totaling over \$4.7 million in the last 3 years, including CDBG, FEMA, SRF Loan, St. Johns River Water Management District funds. The selected priority sites and target areas have existing infrastructure in place to support sustainable development patterns but select infrastructure improvements to accommodate new uses and capacity will be necessary. For example, the easternmost portions of the industrial and CRA target areas are within FEMA's 100-year flood plain, and existing infrastructure contributes to and is impacted by flooding from the St. Johns River. Sustainable infrastructure upgrades are necessary to catalyze and maintain momentum for redevelopment efforts.

Palatka has improved various transportation corridors in the area that will support continued redevelopment efforts. This includes improved roadways/utilities and other support infrastructure along the Riverfront and St. Johns Avenue, which runs through our core downtown and historic district area and parallels US 17. We continue to improve infrastructure westward through recent CDBG funding. Leveraging CDBG and other infrastructure funding and state and federal brownfield funding is a key opportunity to improve overall quality of life in Palatka, especially in the areas that have experienced the most disinvestment and deterioration.

2. COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

a. Community Need

i. The Community's Need for Funding - Palatka has a high population of impoverished and minority residents, many of whom live near vacant and environmentally impacted properties within the target areas. Palatka performs significantly below the national, state, and county averages on all economic indicators. According to the US Government's Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool, the entirety of our City is identified as disadvantaged because it meets more than one burden threshold and the associated socioeconomic threshold. For example, the median household income in Palatka is \$28,082 compared to the national figure of \$69,021, and 33% of our total population is in poverty (compared to 11.5% nationwide). This includes 49% of our black population, 36% of our Hispanic population, 20% of our Asian population, and 29% of our White population. At the local scale, our community is very in need of additional resources to help address barriers imposed on our residents with limited means.

Barriers to redevelopment in our target areas include real and perceived environmental impacts and blight that reinforce a negative perception of Palatka. Some property owners have stopped caring for their properties, leaving them to become overgrown, run down, and unattractive. Owners of vacant and abandoned sites are interested in selling or improving the land, but do not understand the environmental regulations associated with redevelopment and are fearful of fees or fines. This fear is mirrored by potential investors/developers.

The City has limited access to funds for assessment, remediation planning, and revitalization planning, and has committed what little resources we have to replacing infrastructure between 80 and 131 years old. Brownfields are directly limiting the availability of property taxes to build our local fund base, and indirectly impacting sales tax by discouraging tourism. Additionally, Palatka has a disproportionate amount of public housing versus surrounding areas, a high percentage of low-income housing, and multiple buildings owned by non-profit organizations and county government, which also generate lower taxes for the City. Unable to grow our local funding for eligible activities, we are in need of an EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant to help move redevelopment and reuse efforts forward through assessment and planning.

ii. Threats to Sensitive Populations

(1) Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations - Environmental conditions at brownfields in our target areas pose a threat to the health and welfare of Palatka residents. Our most sensitive to adverse impacts from brownfields are those already disadvantaged and include the following populations (source: EPA EJScreen Community Report): Low Income (66% of total population); People of color (57% of total population); Unemployed (11% of total population); Persons with disabilities (20%); and those with less than high school education (19% of total population).

A particular concern is our low-income population, that makes up nearly 70% of the total population in our target areas, as they are likely to have a greater risk of exposure to environmental contaminants and pollutants prevalent in media at brownfield sites. Brownfields pose compound concerns to these populations, as they are often isolated from other local amenities. Walking and biking routes in the target are unsafe and disconnected, and trespassing on vacant properties poses exposure risks. Additionally, deteriorating housing stock contributes to Palatka's lead paint indicator as 89th percentile in the state, which is further concerning since the highest poverty demographic is children less than 5 years (at significant risk to health impacts from lead exposure). The presence of brownfields properties contributes to the lack of safe, stable, and affordable housing for many residents who in turn live at or below the poverty line, often leading to homelessness, constant mobility, stressed family life, unemployment, low educational achievement, poor health indicators, and lack of health care access. Our target areas are experiencing perilous and declining economic conditions that can be improved with targeted efforts, like brownfield assessment, remediation, and redevelopment. This grant will serve to identify specific threats related to brownfields in our target areas and will facilitate the cleanup of sites with real environmental impacts. This will also support the positioning of properties for redevelopment into affordable housing with access to reliable public transportation and employment opportunities.

(1) Greater than Normal Incidence of Disease and Adverse Health Conditions – The priority brownfields identified in Table 1 and others located across the city pose numerous health concerns to residents. Since many of these sites are unpaved and contaminated and lie in populated areas in close proximity to residences, schools, libraries, and parks, they have a greater negative impact on the most sensitive populations identified above. These already disadvantaged people are more often exposed to contaminants by direct contact, ingestion, airborne particulate inhalation, and vapor intrusion pathways because they live and play in the immediate shadow of brownfield sites. The fact that greater percentages of sensitive populations are residing in brownfield-prone areas combined with greater than normal incidences of adverse health conditions throughout Palatka indicates that there is a likely correlation between income and race, and health impacts from contaminated properties. The EPA Environmental Justice Screen tool shows a high degree of both demographic and environmental factors that are concerning in Palatka, summarized by the Health Indicators below. Additionally, we rank in the 97th percentile in the state for low-income population. We are above the 85th percentile for the following threats: diesel exposure, cancer risk, respiratory issues, toxic releases into the air, traffic proximity, lead paint presence, proximity to underground storage, and wastewater discharge.

Indicator*	Health Value	State Average	US Average
Low Life Expectancy	26%	19%	20%
Heart Disease	9.4	7.2	6.1
Asthma	11.3	8.7	10
Persons with Disabilities	19.1%	13.9%	13.4%

* Source: EPA EJScreen Tool. Low life expectancy and persons with disabilities are measured in percentages of total population, while heart disease and asthma are health indicator values.

This grant will serve to identify brownfield-related and site-specific threats our target areas, and will facilitate the remediation of sites with known environmental contaminants and pollutants that contribute to the health statistics above, while positioning properties for redevelopment into resources that fill critical service gaps in Palatka including transportation, employment, and affordable housing.

(2) Environmental Justice

(a) Identification of Environmental Justice Issues - Brownfields throughout Palatka represent a significant social and environmental injustice concern, as they contribute to exposing our high population of impoverished and minority residents to increased environmental and health hazards. Residential neighborhoods within our target areas are currently squeezed around industrial and heavy commercial properties, as well as vacant and deteriorating sites, and these populations don't have the means to relocate elsewhere. Palatka's 2020 median household income (\$28,082) is only 40% of the US average (\$69,021). Similarly, the per capita income is over 45% lower, with a staggering 49% of black residents living in poverty, compared to 17% nationwide, and 20% in Florida. Until we're able to address brownfields in our target area and put them into active reuse in ways that serve our disadvantaged populations, we continue to experience significant environmental justice issues. Putnam County and the City of Palatka are designated a "Rural Area of Critical Economic Concern" by the State of Florida and will both benefit from this project. (source: City-data.com)

(b) Advancing Environmental Justice - The City intends to invest in target areas and Census Tracts within Palatka that are the most disadvantaged. Our priority is to reinvest in these areas with the goal of improving quality of life through increased connectivity, enhanced environmental health, improved infrastructure, and added amenities, including housing, connectivity to transportation, and employment. We will carefully review the revitalization strategies to address the needs of the local populations to ensure that displacement of current residents is minimized. Through brownfield revitalization, we will meet our disadvantaged and sensitive populations where they are, to minimize their displacement and advance environmental justice.

b. Community Engagement

c.

i. Project Involvement – Name of Entity	Point of contact (name, email & phone)	ii. Project Roles - Specific involvement in the project or assistance provided
Putnam County Chamber of Commerce	President Ashley Alford Glance, chamber@putnamcounty.org , 304-757-6510	They will provide outreach support members at meetings and will connect prospective new or expanding businesses with available brownfield sites. Additionally, once sites have suitable environmental due diligence, they will add them to the 'sites/inventory' and 'property inventory' database accessible through their website to promote the sale and redevelopment of these parcels.
Revitalize Historic Palatka, Inc.	Robbi Correa [REDACTED]	Non-profit 501(c)3 focused on the revitalization and historic preservation of downtown Palatka. Their role will be to build consensus and cooperation among downtown stakeholders through partnerships and joint efforts so that the image of Downtown Palatka and the region is conveyed as one voice that defines the community. To achieve their goals of strengthening the Downtown and Riverfront district's economic base, they will be using their social media following of over 1,900 people to promote public workshops, renderings and plans showing reuse visions for BF sites, and branding created for specific sites and target areas.

City of Palatka, Florida FY 2024 Brownfield Assessment Grant Application

Palatka Housing Authority	President Dr. Anthony E. Woods, aewoods@palatkaha.org 386-329-0132 ext. 211	Palatka Housing Authority (PHA) is committed to working with Palatka and the surrounding areas to build better families and communities. PHA will help convene multi-agency teams that can facilitate equitable housing production on brownfield properties. PHA can assist in addressing related environmental justice, land use, and community health concerns that may arise when developing housing on brownfields.
Downtown Palatka, Inc.	President Sam Deputy graphicsiii@bellsouth.net , 386-328-4021	Non-profit merchants association that supports the economic development, enhancement, and promotion of Downtown Palatka. With a social media following of over 2,100, they will support our meetings, outreach sessions, and connect with residents and business owners about local brownfield opportunities.
Putnam Historical Society	pchs1853@gmail.com , 386-385-3975	The Putnam Historical Society's (PHS) goal is to promote the interest of all people in the history of the area, including Palatka. PHS will inform redevelopment and reuse visions when brownfields are located on historic sites or within historic districts. They will help educate the community and stakeholders about the legacy of Brownfield sites and ensure reuse honors their heritage and there is local buy-in for sites' revitalization.

iii. Incorporating Community Input - The efforts made during our FY2015 and FY2019 Grants will be continued, as will our stakeholder group (the Brownfield Advisory Committee) of business owners, educators, citizens, and officials that will convene and advise on planning, cleanup, and reuse phases while collaborating with our consultants on revisioning select sites. Palatka has, and will continue to utilize, the open meetings public notice system with public notices of meetings announced in local newspapers as well as linking to our dedicated City Brownfield StoryMap website with all brownfield and grant-related information. At a minimum, we plan to host four public meetings: 1) to announce the grant award and explain the process of being involved 2) at the end of the first year to gather additional public input regarding sites to evaluate, and 3) at the end of the assessment phase to discuss results and gather input for reuse planning and specific revitalization options for selected sites. If any specific health implications for the public are identified, we will work with those affected residents to conduct educational outreach sessions for the affected populations. We plan to use a variety of communication methods due to our broad geographic area: social media poses (Facebook), e-mail, City and partner websites, piggy-backing flyers and other information on our communication infrastructure, and press releases to local media and newspapers. Meeting dates, times, and venues will be chosen to accommodate residents and other stakeholders and will be ADA accessible. Written correspondence (fact sheets, meeting announcements) and oral meeting content will be translated as necessary. Finally, public outputs would be posted on our website and copies made available at local libraries where activity is occurring for residents without internet to review. Meetings may be piggybacked on local events throughout our region to get better participation due to often low attendance using the standard public meeting strategy. Sites with redevelopment potential will be marketed to business contacts and lenders through online inventories. We will develop meeting minutes along with capturing oral input and written comments, compile those comments, and use those in selecting sites to evaluate, future end-use visioning and planning efforts, and provide those on our dedicated City brownfield website.

3. TASK DESCRIPTIONS, COST ESTIMATES, AND MEASURING PGROGRESS

a. Description of Tasks/Activities and Outputs

Task 1 - Grant Management	iii. Lead: City of Palatka with Assistance by QEP
<i>i. Project Implementation:</i> 1) Prepare Work Plan, 2) Execute Cooperative Agreement (CA) 3) Retain a qualified environmental professional (QEP) to assist in managing the activities funded by the EPA grant. 4) Complete ACRES updates, quarterly reports, financial reporting and accountability, annual MBE/WBE reports, and financial audits. 5) Upon completion, development of grant closeout report summarizing accomplishments, expenditures, outcomes, outputs, and resources leveraged. 6) Conduct financial draws 7) Travel & Training (brownfields related meetings, training sessions, conferences). 8) Monthly calls with advisory committee QEP, and other relevant stakeholders. 9) Establish Brownfield Advisory Committee (BAC).	
<i>ii. Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> Work Plan within 1 month of notification of award, CA within 3 months of award, QEP by October 1, 2024, Quarterly and Annual reporting (including MBE/WBE and Federal Financial reports) within 30 days of	

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reporting period, ACRES updated as both priority and non-priority sites are assessed or cleaned or redeveloped, Closeout reporting would be completed upon end of performance period; Travel & training throughout the grant term; management calls monthly, BAC establishment within Q1 2025.		
iv. <i>Outputs:</i> Work Plan, CA, BAC, Quarterly progress reports (16) with budget and schedule status; annual reports including financial and MBE/WBE (4 total); ACRES reporting; and Grant Closeout Report		
Task 2 – Site Inventory/Community Outreach		iii. Lead: City of Palatka staff led, with QEP
i. <i>Project Implementation:</i> 1) Kickoff meeting with Brownfield Advisory Committee 2) Create GIS StoryMap Website for Grant 3) Incorporate Site Inventory into GIS and include in StoryMap 4) Promote submittal of non-priority sites from public or private development community 5) Develop criteria and score non-priority sites 6) Develop Community Involvement Plan (CIP). 7) Community outreach meetings with local, county, or regional organizations (see Community Input section; at least 3 outreach meetings are anticipated).		
ii. <i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> Website created in Q1 2025, develop scoring criteria in FY2025, inventory and outreach activities ongoing throughout grant, CIP created in FY 2025.		
iv. <i>Outputs:</i> Updated brownfields inventory and prioritization, GIS StoryMap, CIP, Community workshop summaries		
Task 3 – Environmental		iii. Lead: QEP
i. <i>Project Implementation:</i> Priority sites and additional sites evaluated through Phase I or Phase II ESAs conducted in accordance with ASTM E1527-21, All Appropriate Inquiry, or other applicable standards, QEP to prepare Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) and submit to EPA for approval. Health and Safety Plans (HASPs) and Sampling and Analysis Plans (SAPs) prepared for Phase II ESAs. Secure site access for Phase II ESA assessments. Coordination on results with QEP, City of Palatka, community, and FL DEP. Completion of ABCAs as needed.		
ii. <i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> Phase I and II ESAs and ABCAs completed throughout performance period, Phase II's to begin upon approval of QAPP and SAPs. QAPP completed by Q3 2025.		
iv. <i>Outputs:</i> One QAPP, 12 Phase I ESAs, 6 Phase II ESAs (incl HASPs/SAPs for each) , 4 Draft ABCAs		
Task 4 – Site and Area-Wide Revitalization Planning		iii. Lead: QEP with City assistance
3-Day Revitalization Workshop - exploration of redevelopment opportunities, including affordable housing, in all target areas and community-wide. Review existing planning documents, inventories, and ongoing projects, and relevant case studies. Include business owners and developers in a mobile tour to discuss priority sites and target areas.	Q4 2025	Workshop Summary Report
Site-Specific Revitalization Planning (site concepts, infrastructure needs assessments, financial pro-forma for catalyst sites including economic development analyses and sustainable reuse scenarios, funding roadmaps, and other eligible planning activities as deemed necessary on Brownfield sites)	Ongoing	5-8 Revitalization Plan Reports
Madison Street Target Area Visioning - Review of properties, connectivity to surrounding areas, branding opportunities to catalyze redevelopment, exploration of compatible reuses, resource roadmapping	Q2 2026	1 Target Area Summary Report
Downtown CRA Target Area Visioning – Review of properties, connectivity to surrounding areas, branding opportunities to catalyze redevelopment, exploration of compatible reuses, resource roadmapping	Q3 2026	1 Target Area Summary Report
Northern Industrial Target Area Visioning – Review of properties, connectivity to surrounding areas, branding opportunities to catalyze redevelopment, exploration of compatible reuses, resource roadmapping	Q4 2026	1 Target Area Summary Report
Community-wide review and summary created & published including redevelopment profiles for catalyst sites.	Q3 2027	Community-Wide Summary Report
Reflections Workshop. Grant closeout workshop and presentation of final Area Wide Plan deliverables	Q3 2028	Workshop Summary Report

b. **Cost Estimates:** 30% of the grant is to be used for Area Wide Planning, 5% for grant management (included in Task 1), and 50% for Environmental Assessment. Costs for tasks noted below were verified by City staff and recent project experience.

Task 1 – Grant Management (contractual)

- Travel includes an assumed \$3,000 per trip for two staff to attend two National Brownfield Conferences (Each staff, per conference: \$500 flight, \$200/night hotel x3, Registration @ \$250, Meals @ \$50/Day x3 = \$6,000)

- Contractual assumes approximately \$750 each quarterly report (12), \$1,000 each annual report (3), and \$3,000 closeout report. QEP coordination on calls and advisory committee meetings throughout grant period. QEP, 100 hours @ \$150/hour and 80 hours @ \$125/hour, totaling \$25,000.

Task 2 – Site Inventory/Community Outreach (contractual)

- StoryMap creation and updates (80 hours @ \$125/hour = \$10,000)
- Updated site inventory and scoring criteria (40 hours @ \$150/hour = \$6,000)
- Creation of CIP (30 hours @ \$125/hour = \$3,750)
- Development and publishing of outreach materials (40 hours @ \$150/hr, 20 hours @ \$125/hr = \$6,000, and \$750 printing = \$9,250)
- Kickoff and annual community outreach meetings (4 meetings at 25 hours per staff, \$150/hour (1) and \$125/hr (2) = \$40,000)

Task 3 – Environmental (contractual)

- QAPP @ average cost of \$5,000
- 12 Phase I ESAs @ average cost of \$4,000 each = \$48,000
- 6 Phase II ESAs (including HASP and SAP) @ average cost of \$30,000 each = \$180,000
- 4 ABCAs @ average cost of \$4,250 each = \$17,000

Task 4 – Planning (contractual)

- Revitalization Workshop (50 hours per staff, \$150/hour (1) and \$125/hr (2) = \$20,000)
- Site Specific Planning (6 Revitalization Plan reports at an average cost of \$10,000 each = \$60,000)
- Target Area Visioning (3 areas at an average cost of \$15,000 per exercise = \$45,000)
- Area-Wide Planning (estimated 1 staff @ 25 hours @ \$150/hour (1) and 2 staff @ 45 hours @ \$125/hr = \$15,000)
- Reflections Workshop (25 hours per staff, \$150/hour (1) and \$125/hr (2) = \$10,000)

Budget Categories		Project Tasks (\$)				Total
		Task 1: Grant Mgmt.	Task 2: Inventory/ Outreach	Task 3: Environmental	Task 4: Planning	
Direct Costs	Travel	\$6,000				\$6,000
	Contractual	\$25,000	\$69,000	\$250,000	\$150,000	\$494,000
Total Budget		\$31,000	\$69,000	\$250,000	\$150,000	\$500,000

c. Plan to Measure and Evaluate Environmental Progress and Results – In cooperation with the EPA Regional staff and a QEP, we will develop a work plan and timeline for activities under the grant. Our team understands the ACRES system and will develop quarterly and annual reports and a final report to track, and document grant-related activities and outputs. The program manager will track, measure, and evaluate the accomplishments/outputs compared to work plan schedule and meet with those involved in each task to make sure activities stay on schedule. The program manager will take corrective actions should an activity fall behind. We will track the number of jobs created and funding leveraged through the economic reuse of sites as well as the number of acres made ready for reuse. Additional results will include new businesses, parks or green spaces, housing developments, and transportation and connectivity investments in the target areas. We will track the number of brownfield sites assessed and that change ownership, private investment dollars leveraged, and increased property/sales tax revenue generated. We will meet to review/compare the schedule progress against the work plan schedule/goals and determine if corrective actions are needed to remedy any issues. Our project team will evaluate project progress semi-annually against our goals and if goals are not being met or are off schedule, will meet with our consultant to adjust the project approach and schedule, as needed.

4. PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE

a. Programmatic Capability

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

Palatka has a large variety of experienced staff to pull from to ensure the highest degree of success for this project. Success on our past EPA Assessment Grant projects has been realized through the City of Palatka’s solid partnerships throughout the City, region, state, and nationwide. Palatka manages projects through a consensus of relevant stakeholders to ensure sustainable projects that meet the needs of our residents. We apply for and successfully manage federal grants

on a daily basis, and are able to effectively complete all technical, administrative, and financial requirements and have the mechanisms to acquire qualified contractors in select roles as needed. Palatka's EPA grant manager will be Jonathan Griffith, Interim City Manager. Mr. Griffith plans, organizes, and manages grants, programs, and special projects; initiates and oversees redevelopment policies and programs, particularly for the downtown area and for Palatka's parks; manages the capital improvement program; directs strategic planning efforts; and assists with development review and design-related tasks as needed. His position is also responsible for fostering cooperative working relationships among City departments, divisions, and with intergovernmental and regulatory agencies and various public and private groups. He will be assisted by Jayde Baggs, Project Manager/Grants Administrator, as the day-to-day administrator and QEP coordinator for the City. Together, Mr. Griffith and Ms. Baggs have over 15 years of experience in grant and project administration and will ensure compliance with EPA requirements, coordinate with the assigned EPA project officer, and complete and submit grant reports. The City finance department, lead by Lauren Shank, Finance Director, will provide project accounting and assist with financial reporting. Mr. Griffith will be responsible for coordinating the brownfields area-wide assessment process. We understand additional technical expertise and resources will be needed to effectively perform this project, to be provided by the selected QEP(s).

iv. Acquiring Additional Resources In accordance with 2 CFR Part 200 and 2 CFR Part 1500, a QEP experienced in brownfield projects will be procured and contracted through a competitive process. The City wants to move quickly on this project to ensure that all goals and milestones are met efficiently, so the procurement process is expected to commence shortly after notice of award. The QEP will aid Palatka in the management and technical aspects of this grant and will help ensure the highest rate of project success.

b. Past Performance and Accomplishments

i. Currently Has or Previously Received and EPA Brownfields Grant

(1) Accomplishments – Three critical goals were the accomplished with the FY2015 and FY2019 Grant funding: continuation of area-wide planning activities targeted at integrating brownfield reuse efforts with the Community Redevelopment Plan (CRP); conducting Phase I and Phase II ESAs over the most critical acreage allowable to provide the background data for prospective developers to move forward with minimal environmental delays; and development of strategies for improvements to St. Johns Avenue, a multi-modal transportation hub, and infrastructure improvements.

In addition: 12 properties were examined, including 12 Phase I's completed on approximately 120 acres of land and three Phase II investigations on 71 acres of land; Drawings of key brownfield sites (i.e. the Transit Hub) were developed and plans prepared for creation of a Tax Incremental Financing (TIF) district around the larger acreage brownfield properties. Following collaboration with the USEPA, additional efforts were focused on utility and infrastructure planning and pre-engineering to develop infill and site development scenarios at catalyst sites (Cypress Mills, Florida Furniture, and Depot Site) to promote development and to leverage for additional funding such as the TIF district. The Transit Hub site is identified as one that will be a future transportation and trail hub, business hub, and museum, and is expected to be able to leverage the efforts from work performed under this grant into additional funding from a variety of local, state, and federal sources; and critical planning and public outreach sessions were held over six meetings, a branding and redevelopment concept effort for the former Cypress Mills property was carried out, and the CRP updated as the brownfield initiative progressed. All of the metrics for these accomplishments were incorporated into the Final Report and ACRES. Additionally, one site where FY2015 Grant money was used led to leveraging \$440,000 of outside funds, and the completion of a \$794,000 Booker Park project to improve stormwater quality and performance in our city.

(2) Compliance with Grant Requirements - We completed the FY2015 and FY2019 Grants in full compliance with the programmatic requirements and completed expenditure of all funds by grant closeout. While workplan funds and scope varied in some ways from the initial budget, all approvals and modifications to budget elements were coordinated directly with EPA staff. The same City team that administered the prior grants is continuing to lead this effort, providing EPA with the assurance of a consistent and reliable track record of quarterly reporting, AAI documentation, ACRES reporting, and consultant management.

Threshold Criteria for Assessment Grants

1. Applicant Eligibility:

- a. The applicant for this combined EPA Community-Wide Assessment Grant is the City of Palatka, FL. The City of Palatka fulfills the definition of an “eligible entity” by being a General-Purpose Unit of Local Government.
- b. The City is not exempt from Federal taxation under section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code.

2. Community Involvement: Project goals in terms of our community engagement and partnership efforts are to achieve the following: 1) assist the public in contributing to and understanding the decision-making process during project planning, assessment, cleanup, and revitalization phases; 2) give the public accessible, accurate, timely, and understandable information about Palatka’s brownfield initiative; 3) ensure adequate time and opportunity for the community and community groups to provide informed and meaningful participation and for that input to be considered; 4) reflect community concerns, questions, and information needs; and 5) respect and fully consider and include public input in the implementation of the project. Our project team will develop a written Community Involvement Plan to document and formalize the process to share information and seek public input in decision-making. Input will be sought on site selection, project planning, and cleanup/reuse planning. The public will be given a chance to submit suggested sites for assessment through community workshop participation. Our community residents will be encouraged to participate in the prioritization process through planning charrettes and public meetings.

The community involvement efforts made during our FY2015 and FY2019 assessment grants will be carried forward, as will our stakeholder group (the Brownfield Advisory Committee) of business owners, educators, citizens, and officials that will convene and advise on planning, cleanup, and reuse phases while collaborating with our consultants on revisiting select sites. Palatka has and will continue to utilize an open meetings system to announce public notices of meetings in local newspapers and social media outlets. Additionally, all project information will be upkept on a dedicated City Brownfield Program website.

At a minimum, we plan to host three public workshops: 1) to announce the grant award, explain the brownfield process, and discuss how to be involved 2) at the end of the first year to gather additional public input regarding site inventory and desired reuses, and 3) at the end of the assessment phase to discuss results and gather input for reuse and revitalization planning for selected sites and their connection to the surrounding target areas. If specific health implications for the public are identified, we will work with those affected residents to conduct educational outreach sessions for the affected populations. Meeting dates, times, and venues will be chosen to accommodate residents and stakeholders, and will be ADA accessible. Workshops may be piggybacked onto existing local events to draw more robust participation and visibility.

3. Expenditures of Assessment Grant Funds: The City of Palatka does not currently have an assessment grant.

4. Discussion on named contractors and subrecipients: Contractors or subrecipients have not been procured or named.