

**Narrative Information Sheet – City of Ripley, Mississippi**

1. **Applicant Identification:** The City of Ripley, Mississippi as a local municipality, with an address of 500 South Main Street, Ripley, Mississippi 38663 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 Ripley, Mississippi
4. **Target Area and Priority Site/Property Information:**
 - a. **Target Area(s):**
 - i. Downtown Ripley (Census Tracts 28139950300)
 - b. **Priority Site(s) Address(es):**
 - i. Tippah Wholesale Co. Warehouse: 143 West Walnut Street, Ripley, MS 38663
 - ii. Freeman Lumber Co. Parking Lot: 201 West Water Street, Ripley, MS 38663
 - iii. Commerce Car Wash: 204 S Commerce Street, Ripley, MS 38663
5. **Contacts**
 - a. **Project Director:** Ms. Elizabeth Behm, Executive Director and Grant Manager, will serve as the Project Director for this proposal. Ms. Behm's contact information is as follows: Phone: (662) 815-0021, Email: ripleymainstreet@gmail.com, mailing address: 111 East Spring Street, Ripley, MS 38663
 - b. **Highest Ranking Elected Official:** Mr. Jon Grisham, the City of Ripley's Mayor is the highest-ranking elected official. Mr. Grisham's contact information is as follows: Phone: (662) 837-9444, Email: jonmgrisham@ripley.ms.gov, mailing address: 500 South Main Street, Ripley, MS 38663
6. **Population:**
 - a. City of Ripley Population: 5,462 (2020 Decennial Census)
7. **Other Factors Checklist:**

Other Factors	Page #
Community population is 10,000 or less.	1, 4
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.	NA
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
The proposed project will improve local climate adaptation/mitigation capacity and resilience to protect residents and community investments.	3
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.



State of Mississippi

TATE REEVES
Governor

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

CHRIS WELLS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

October 13, 2023

Mayor Jon Grisham
City of Ripley
500 South Main Street
Ripley, MS 38663

**RE: EPA Brownfield Grant Application Acknowledgement
FY24 104(k) Community-Wide Assessment Grant
City of Ripley, MS**

Dear Mayor Grisham:

The Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) hereby acknowledges the City of Ripley's plans to conduct brownfield assessments and apply for federal grant funds through the United States Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Brownfields initiative. MDEQ believes the targeted areas within the City of Ripley's community are in considerable need of brownfield assessment and future redevelopment opportunities.

Since many brownfields are abandoned, underutilized, and contaminated, MDEQ is expressly interested in seeing entities like the City of Ripley taking the initiative to assess, remediate, and return these sites to productive use. These efforts are consistent with our mission to safeguard the health, safety, and welfare of present and future generations of Mississippians. We look forward to our continued role in the City of Ripley's Brownfield Initiative and are available to assist you at any time. Should you have any questions or comments concerning this matter, please contact me at (601) 961-5240.

Sincerely,

Thomas L. Wallace

Thomas L. Wallace, P.E.
Division Chief – GARD
Mississippi Brownfield Coordinator

1. PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION AND PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION

a. Target Area and Brownfields

i. Overview of Brownfield Challenges and Description of Target Area

The City of Ripley is in northeastern Mississippi, just south of the Tennessee border. Ripley serves as the County seat of Tippah County and is home to 5,412 residents (American Community Survey (ACS), 2021). Intersected by multiple highways and the Ripley & New Albany (RNA) Railroad, Downtown Ripley is centrally located within City limits. Tucked away within a Downtown Ripley alleyway, is an award-winning art installation, Blues Alley, which plays homage to Mississippi's Hill Country Blues. The small City is surrounded by farmland and deciduous forests, industries by which historically supported the local economy. Although subsistence farming first dominated, farmers later grew cash crops, which included corn, tobacco, cotton, and hogs. Raw goods and passengers were moved via rail, north to Chicago. Another cultural relic unique to Ripley is the ongoing First Monday Trade Day, during which residents from all over the region once gathered to trade, barter, and sell their goods. Economic downturn during the 1950s and 60s, caused nearly one in four Tippah County residents to leave and Ripley's population has remained stagnant since (US Census). Today, the loss of agriculture and industrial production has stifled Ripley's ability to attract and maintain its population and industries, while brownfield properties remain vacant posing hazardous to residents. Consequently, the entirety of Ripley is considered disadvantaged (EPA's Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST)). Exemplary of this loss is the closure of sections of railroad and the infrequent use of other sections. For example, the RNA Railroad is abandoned except for an approximate 20 mile stretch from the southern City of New Albany, north, to Ripley.

In a regional effort to revive the economy, this abandoned section of rail was converted to the multi-modal Tanglefoot Trail in 2013. The trailhead is currently located nearly 20 miles south, in the City of New Albany. Plans are in place to expand the non-motorized Trail an additional 18.8 miles north, creating a new trailhead within Downtown Ripley. This portion of the Tanglefoot Trail will act as a Rails *with* Trails project, seeing as the railroad is still in operation, averaging approximately two trains per week. Altogether, the additional mileage will create a 62.8-mile trail with Ripley at the northern head. Approximately 111,000 bicyclists visit the Tanglefoot Trail yearly, contributing an estimated \$2.1 million annually to the local economy (2022 RAISE Act Grant Application). To leverage this opportunity, Ripley seeks to redevelop the areas adjacent to the railroad track to attract and support the needs of the trail's bicyclists and pedestrians.

The Target Area of this application is centered around **Downtown Ripley**. The Target Area consists of 16 blocks, spanning 43 acres, bounded by Mulberry Street to the north, Siddall Street to the east, Section Line Street to the south, the railroad to the west, and anchored by the courthouse in the center. Either side of the railroad is occupied by industrial and municipal properties, which include former produce storage and vacant auto mechanic garages, the long-ago demolished railroad depot, and the currently operating lumber yard and Sheriff's Department. Directly to the east is the courthouse square, which is primarily occupied by vacant commercial buildings, serving as a ghostly reminder of the City's heyday. South of the courthouse square, lots become larger and less picturesque. An abandoned car wash, vacant discount grocery store, self-storage units, and a steel manufacturer separate Downtown from single family residential homes along the southern Target Area boundary. A total of 21 identified brownfields are located within the Target Area and over 600 residents within a quarter mile call the area home (EPA's Environmental Justice Screen (EJ SCREEN)). Here, the average per capita income is only \$22,171, compared to a national average of \$37,638 (EJ SCREEN; ACS). According to CEJST, Ripley citizens are within the 91st percentile for share of people in households where income is at or below 100% of the Federal poverty level, and the 99th percentile for low life expectancy. Minority populations are concentrated in the area as 45% of the population is a minority compared to the County level of 23.2% (EJ SCREEN; ACS).

To prioritize sustainable development and assess brownfield sites, the City of Ripley is applying for an EPA Community-Wide Brownfield Assessment grant. In conjunction with the Rails with Trails Tanglefoot expansion, this assessment grant will catalyze successful planning and redevelopment efforts, allowing Ripley to redevelop brownfields to improve the health of the community and environment and create destination based facilities to support and attract local and regional trail users. Through brownfield reuse, pedestrian-friendly infrastructure and community-centric greenspaces will be created within the Target Area. Due to the relatively small population in comparison to the numerous brownfield sites and required planning, the City of Ripley is requesting a \$500,000 community-wide assessment grant to carry out the project described within this application. Additional sites within City limits, held within a secondary inventory, will also be assessed as part of this brownfield program.

ii. Description of Priority Brownfield Sites

The City of Ripley has established a brownfield inventory of 59 sites within City limits by compiling data garnered from regulatory databases and the community. Inventoried brownfields within the Target Area consists of 21 sites that include vacant commercial buildings, industrial facilities, agricultural warehouses, and auto repair garages. From this inventory, three Target Area brownfields were identified as priority sites, carefully selected based on community input and environmental, economic, and human impacts. Within Downtown Ripley's Target Area, two priority sites are located directly east of the RNA railroad. The first priority site is the **Tippah Wholesale Co. Warehouse**. Situated on a 0.40 acre parcel, the large metal building spans 11,051 square feet. The award-winning Blues Alley is nestled between the Warehouse and the neighboring building to the east. Founded in 1922, Tippah Wholesale Company sold groceries, storing produce in the large, refrigerated warehouse and transporting goods including via train on the adjacent railroad. Due to competition from large corporate grocery stores, Ripley's Warehouse was no longer viable and was sold. Potential contamination on the

property stems from Asbestos Containing Materials (ACMs) used within building materials and railroad tracks that once crossed the property. ACMs were formerly used within a plethora of building materials but has since fallen out of use as the material breaks down over time, becoming friable and thus easily inhalable, causing a variety of lung illnesses. The former railroad spur and adjacent tracks brings concerns such as the use of creosote, composed of known carcinogens, which was typically applied to railroad ties to preserve the wood (Agency for Toxic Substances & Disease Registry (ASTDR)). Additionally, herbicidal defoliant utilized to control plant growth varied in chemical composition and historically often included arsenical herbicides and nontraditional products such as diesel fuel, leaded gasoline, or waste oil. These products have been labeled as “probable or confirmed human carcinogens” by the EPA and can cause central nervous system damage and neurology impairment in exposed children (ASTDR). Tippah Wholesale Co. Warehouse is a priority site due to its proximity to residents (less than 700 feet separate the property from a residential dwelling), prime location for redevelopment, as the building sits along the railroad (the future Rails with Trails Tanglefoot Trail), next door to Blues Alley, and within downtown. Furthermore, the site is owned by a Ripley Alderman, listed as a project partner below, the community leadership is devoted to redeveloping the Target Area.

The second priority site, **Freeman Lumber Co. Parking Lot**, is located just south of the Warehouse. The vacant lot has been owned by Freeman Lumber Co. since 1981, which operates on several parcels across the tracks. Spanning 0.32 acres, the property functions as overflow parking, however, the gray gravel and red dirt lot is mostly empty. On-site contamination stems from previous lumber yard operations and the railroad track at the edge of the property. If lumber piles were previously stored on the property, chemical compounds may have leached during wet conditions. Commonly used compounds during this period included chromated arsenicals, creosote, and pentachlorophenol. These wood preservatives are considered Polyaromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs) and Semi-Volatile Organic Chemicals (SVOCs) and are derived from chromium, copper, and arsenic, wood or coal tar, and other toxic chemicals (Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR)). Health effects from swallowing, breathing in, or dermal contact include damage to the liver, kidneys, blood, skin, lungs, nervous system, immune system, and/or gastrointestinal tract (ATSDR). Consumption can also cause unconsciousness, cancer, and even death (ATSDR). Spills, leaching, and/or poor waste management practices could contaminate groundwater, and/or the ground’s subsurface. See above, within the Warehouse priority site discussion, for railroad contamination concerns. Freeman Lumber Co. Parking Lot is a priority site due to its proximity to residents (less than 400 feet separate the property from a residential dwelling) and location along the future Rails with Trails Tanglefoot Trail.

The third priority site is located 1.5 blocks east, near the southeastern boundary of the Target Area. Referred to as the **Commerce Car Wash**, the 0.19 acre site operated as such between the 1960’s to the early 2000’s. After nearly a two decades of vacancy, Ripley Main Street Association purchased the property in 2021, with redevelopment plans in mind. Chemicals used for washing cars potentially include polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) from products which promote water run-off, such as RainX. PFAS is an emerging contaminant, also known as “forever chemicals”, as they don’t break down in the environment. This group of chemicals is thought to be an endocrine disruptor and is known to affect children to a greater degree (EPA). Furthermore, an improperly handled oil-water separator which catches the car wash’s water runoff, serves as an additional groundwater pollutant source. Commerce Car Wash is a priority site because of its proximity to residents (less than 50 feet separate the property from a residential dwelling) and the site has garnered redevelopment momentum, including secured funding for reuse.

iii. Identifying Additional Sites

The City will develop a site nomination form and evaluation process to appropriately rank and select candidate brownfield sites to ensure the prioritization of underserved communities 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 request 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. 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

A preliminary feasibility study for the trail’s development was funded by the MS Hills National Area, allowed for the preparation of the RAISE Act Grant application. The grant application details necessary steps the City will take to appropriately evaluate and mitigate environmental conditions and hazards. These steps include a wetlands and streams survey, biological assessment of potential protected species, environmental site assessments, an air quality study, and an environmental justice evaluation. Additional planning has been completed through the Northeast Mississippi Planning and Development District (NMPDD), a regional planning district that encompasses Tippah County. The NMPDD most recently published the 2022-2026 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) to guide regional planning and implementation. CEDS goals include A) reusing vacant buildings to improve infrastructure for economic development, B)

creating recreational parks and promoting regional tourism in order to improve quality of life, and C) supporting the startup and growth of local businesses and strengthen entrepreneurial activity in the District through use of incubators.

As the **Tippah Wholesale Co. Warehouse** and **Freeman Lumber Co. Parking Lot** are located along the railroad tracks (and future Tanglefoot Trail extension), both properties are envisioned to cater to bicyclists along their route. The expansive Warehouse will be used as an event space, providing a venue for local and regional musicians. The building will feature an in-house brewery and bar, serving beers crafted in the very same space. Following assessment and redevelopment, as a brewery and event space, the Warehouse will incorporate CEDS goal A and B. The Parking Lot will be redeveloped as a community greenspace, providing a grassy lawn for bikers to enjoy some rest and relaxation. Native shade trees, bushes, and flowers will be planted along the western property line to add character and create a cozy space, protected from the bordering railroad track. Signage, picnic tables, benches, and trash receptacles will complete the Freeman Lumber Co. Pocket Park. Subsequently, the Pocket Park will meet CEDs goal B by creating a recreational park that will be frequented by tourists and local alike. Ripley Main Street Association created plans for **Commerce Car Wash** to become an entrepreneur haven. The property will provide room for a food truck hub and retail incubators, allowing business owners to perfect their skills before committing to opening a larger operation. The property will also feature a greenspace with picnic tables for dining and limited parking. The retail incubators will be located within the remaining car wash bays, following proper installation and enclosure. Both uses will provide an opportunity for tourists to invest in local businesses. As a food truck hub and retail incubator space, the Car Wash will meet CEDS goals A, B, and C.

ii. Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategy

These redevelopments aim to improve infrastructure and quality of living for Ripley residents. In particular, by redeveloping brownfield properties and preserving greenspace, the City is thus preventing the destruction of wetlands and groundwater resupply surfaces, mitigating future flooding events, an important measure as the eastern portion of the City is located within Flood Zone A (FEMA). A RAISE Act Grant application was submitted in April of 2022, which involved community engagement and planning for the Rails with Trails project. Specifically, the application details necessary steps the City will take to protect local life, property, and public resources by taking advantage of resources and opportunities that are exemplified in the above revitalization strategies. Additional outcomes and benefits are outlined below.

The **Tippah Wholesale Co. Warehouse** redevelopment will reuse the existing building, incorporating energy efficient systems and building materials. Through redevelopment, the Warehouse will be transformed into a 11,051 SF brewery/event space, establishing a casual space for Tanglefoot Trail tourists to gather. The development will create an estimated 12 jobs (U.S. Energy Information Administration). Tourism dollars spent at the venue will increase local sales tax and property values. Because the **Freeman Lumber Co. Parking Lot** has no building on the property, and the end use is a public pocket park, the redevelopment will not create any jobs. The public pocket park will, however, create 0.32 acres of greenspace, improve aesthetics, walkability, stormwater management and accessibility along the railroad tracks. Furthermore, the park will improve livability and support tourists in the area. As a food truck hub (~3,250 SF) and retail incubator space (~2,400 SF), **Commerce Car Wash** will support the creation of approximately 10 jobs (8 jobs for the food truck hub and 2 jobs for the retail incubator space) (U.S. Energy Information Administration). The retail space will also incorporate energy efficient building materials, increase wages of local entrepreneurs, increase local sales and property values and tax, and attract Tanglefoot Trail tourists by providing dining and shopping opportunities. In fact, according to Retail Coach, a local retail recruitment firm, a study found that Ripley experiences a retail leakage (including restaurants) of approximately \$348.6 million. In combination, the Warehouse and incubator spaces will help alleviate a portion of this leakage, allowing Ripley to reallocated new tax dollars to other pressing community needs.

c. Strategy for Leveraging Resources

i. Resources Needed for Site Reuse

A readily available inventory of incentives and grants listed below will allow the City to maximize the leveraging of resources within the Target Areas. The City will be eligible to apply on behalf of or in partnership with another municipal entity and/or developer for all leveraging resources.

Grant Source	Purpose /Role (Assessment/Remediation/Reuse)
American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)	Reuse: Two secured ARPA grants provided Ripley Main Street Association with \$150,000 to redevelop Commerce Car Wash. Funding will be used to demolish the structurally unsound southern bays and complete build out of the project, as well as support other downtown initiatives.
Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Transportation Grants Program	Reuse: The City of Ripley was awarded a \$1.4 million RAISE grant in August 2022. Funding will covering a vast scope of work for the Rails with Trail’s development, including environmental due diligence, topographic survey, preliminary permitting, construction cost estimate, schematic design, operation and maintenance plan, and preliminary engineering report. The completion of this work is a crucial part of the implementation of the Rails-with-Trails and will support the future work proposed under this brownfield assessment grant.

National Association of Realtors: Placemaking Program	Reuse: This program would allocate grant funds from \$1,500 to \$5,000 to create a new, outdoor public space at the Freeman Lumber Co. Parking Lot/Pocket Park . Eligible activities include furniture, paint, signage, material, landscaping, and site preparation. The City will apply January of 2024.
MS Development Authority (MDA): Small Municipalities and Limited Population Counties Grant Program	Reuse: This Program provides financial assistance in the form of a grant up to \$150,000 for public infrastructure and facility needs. Priority is given to projects that are tied to economic development and that promote private job creation and capital investment. Competitive applications are accepted annually. The City of Ripley will apply in June of 2024 for sidewalk installation throughout the Target Area and Pocket Park construction at the Freeman Lumber Co Parking Lot . A 10% match is required.
MS Development Authority (MDA): MS Economic Redevelopment Act (MERA)	Remediation: MERA would divert sales, income, and franchise taxes collected from businesses located in the redevelopment project area to reimburse costs of environmental cleanup. All sites are eligible for funding following assessment and cleanup planning activities. The Developer would be reimbursed 2.5 times the cleanup costs. Furthermore, the project must first be approved by Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) and MDA.
MDEQ: EPA Revolving Loan Fund Grant	Assessment/Remediation: MDEQ was awarded a \$1 million Revolving Loan Fund Grant from the EPA in FY22. Under this Grant, the City of Ripley is eligible as a sub-entity to receive funding for cleanup activities to facilitate reuse after assessment. Funding can also be utilized if additional assessment work is required, outside of what the community-wide assessment grant can fund. The City will apply for funding following the award of this grant and assessment of an eligible property that requires cleanup.
Mississippi Hills National Heritage Area: Community Grant	Reuse: The non-profit provides grants up to \$20,000 for a variety of cultural enhancements, which could be used to fund utilities updates at priority sites. The grant requires a 50% match of funds or in-kind funding. The City will apply following the award of this grant, assessment of eligible properties, and as properties become redeveloped.

ii. Use of Existing Infrastructure

The City 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, and electrical. However, sites will require updated connections that will be funded via the leveraged sources outlined above and/or developer investment. Street and/or onsite parking is available for all priority sites. Sidewalks require updates, which will utilize funding from the Mississippi Development Authority: Small Municipalities and Limited Population Counties Grant Program.

2. COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

a. Community Need

i. The Community’s Need for Funding

Within the Target Area, the median annual per capita income is only \$22,171 and 31% of the population is considered low-income (EJSCREEN). Furthermore, most of the City, sitting within Census Tract 28139950300, is within the 72nd percentile nationally for low income as a large portion of households earn \$29,160 or less per year (CEJST) for our small population of just over 5,000 people. These low-income statistics are indicative of the Target Area populations’ limited funding to provide a reasonable protective financial buffer to care for their sensitive populations at home. Limited personal budgets and a small population play a substantial role in allowing the City of Ripley (the entirety of which is disadvantaged) to collect municipal taxes to utilize for the maintenance and redevelopment of the affected Target Area (CEJST). Additionally, the City and County don’t collect sales tax, causing the municipality to be overly reliant upon property and income tax. Faced with a plethora of vacant brownfield sites and a Target Area unemployment rate of 9%, tax revenue severely struggles to meet any financial demand beyond essential governmental services (i.e., police, fire, public utilities, etc.) (EJSCREEN). Therefore, Ripley is unable to provide funding to assess brownfield sites. Redevelopment of these sites would not only create jobs, increasing income tax for the Target Area populations but would also provide new attractions for locals and tourists alike, offsetting retail leakage estimated to reach over \$384.6 million. Redeveloping and potentially cleaning up brownfields will also increase property values, thus allocating additional property tax to the City, allowing the community to invest in future economic development.

ii. Threats to Sensitive Populations

(1) Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations

Minorities, children, and low-income individuals have been identified as sensitive populations living near priority sites. Specifically, within the Target Area, 45% of the population is a person of color, 40% of which are Black (EJSCREEN). Although children under the age of 18 only make up 18% of the Target Area population, 30% of Ripley’s youth lives in poverty. Additionally, 31% of Target Area households are considered low income, earning less than \$25,000 annually, 56% higher than the national rate of 17.4% (EJSCREEN; ACS). Census Tract 28139950300 falls within the 91st percentile nationally for poverty and 72nd for low income. Low incomes (median annual per capita \$22,171) coupled with high levels

of unemployment (9%), make many individuals unable to afford basic necessities. Such basic necessities that Ripley citizens are forced to go without include healthcare insurance, indoor plumbing, and heating and cooling (CEJST). For instance, 18% of all Target Area residents are uninsured, the City is in the 96th percentile for share of homes without indoor kitchens or plumbing, and 95th percentile for high energy costs (EJSCREEN; CEJST). Furthermore, Tippah County residents are physically inactive 37% more often and have 35% fewer exercise opportunities than the average U.S. citizen (County Health Rankings (CHR)). The resulting inadequate medical care, coupled with environmental threats, improper shelter, unsanitary conditions, and lack of exercise are leading factors in premature death. In fact, 28139950300 Census Tract residents are within the 99th percentile nationally for low life expectancy (CEJST). Redevelopment following assessment will identify environmental threats at all priority sites. The retail incubator space will provide an opportunity to create a competitive job market, offering higher wages for hourly employees. Furthermore, the increase in downtown spending, primarily from outside residents, will allow the City to reinvest tax revenue back into the community, thus providing resources for sensitive populations experiencing financial hardships. Finally, these new amenities will nicely complement the Tanglefoot Trail, thus providing additional exercise opportunities for all residents.

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

In 2022, Mississippi was ranked as having the 2nd worst overall health outcomes by America's Health Rankings (United Health Foundation). Health outcomes include cancer deaths, cardiovascular deaths, diabetes, disparity in health status, frequent mental and physical distress, infant mortality, and premature death. This statement is backed by statistics published by County Health Rankings (CHR). Considering Ripley's small population size, state and county data often provides the closest and most accurate available data. As childhood health is a good indicator for a community's general well-being, consider the March of Dimes 2022 Premature Birth Report Card graded the State of Mississippi as an "F". The premature birth rate for the state is 15% and the infant mortality rate is 8.3 per 1,000 live births (March of Dimes). Compare the state's infant mortality rate to the national average of 5.4 to find a discrepancy of 42.3% (March of Dimes). According to 2016-2020 data from NIH National Cancer Institute's State Cancer Profiles, Tippah County residents experience elevated incidence rates of leukemia and non-Hodgkin lymphoma, at a rate 33.8% and 32.4% greater than the state average, respectively (NIH). The International Agency for Research on Cancer notes that the onset of both cancers are known to be brought on by long term exposure of high levels of benzene, a Volatile Organic Compound (VOC), commonly found in gasoline. Considering the City falls within the 73rd percentile nationally for exposure to leaking Underground Storage Tanks (UST), this exposure may be a direct correlation (CEJST). Benzene is also a component of creosote, a preservation treatment widely used in railroad ties (EPA). Both the Tippah Wholesale Co. Warehouse and Freeman Lumber Co. Parking Lot may be contaminated by creosote due to the lumber treatment and adjacent railroad tracks. As creosote is easily dissolved in water, the associated chemicals can leach into drinking water sources, the most likely exposure pathway in this situation (CDC). Furthermore, the County's kidney and renal pelvis and lung and bronchus cancer incidence rate is 48.5% and 39% greater than the national average, respectively (NIH State Cancer Profile). As previously mentioned, arsenical herbicides, a group of older herbicides that have been used since the 1950s, may have been applied to the railroad tracks to keep the track clear of vegetation. The EPA classifies inorganic arsenic as a "human carcinogen," based on evidence in human studies of links to a variety of cancers, including kidney and lung. Therefore, the application of arsenical herbicides on the railroad may be the source of elevated kidney and lung cancers. Data at a local level, provided through CEJST shows the City as 90th percentile for heart disease and 75th percentile for asthma, the latter of which may be attributed to friable asbestos and other vapor related contaminants stemming from brownfields in close proximity to residents. The successful identification of contaminants will contribute to identifying and mitigating causes of elevated diseases, cancers, and premature death, leading to long-term public health improvements.

(3) Environmental Justice

(a) Identification of Environmental Justice Issues

The historical loss of agriculture and industrial production within the county has impacted our sensitive and underserved populations for decades. Resulting environmental contamination including VOCs, PFAs, ACMs, and herbicides stemming from priority sites endangers the health of nearby low-income residents and sensitive populations. In fact, residents live as close as 39 feet to the priority sites. The Target Area Census Tract (28139950300) falls into categories for burden thresholds associated with climate change, energy, health, housing, AND workforce development in combination with socioeconomic thresholds of low income and high school education attainment (CEJST). The target area populations are within the 91st percentile for poverty, while 22% of the population holds less than a high school diploma (more than double the minimum threshold) (CEJST). Within the target area nearly 50% of the population are minorities (EJScreen), and within the census tract they are in the **99th percentile for low life expectancy**. Additionally, newborns of minority populations are disproportionately affected as the rate of preterm births in Mississippi is highest for black infants (17.4% compared to 14.2% for all births). Furthermore, according to the EPA's Environmental Justice Screening Tool this population's demographics combined with proximity to sources of contamination, place the Target Area in the upper quartile nationwide for four Supplemental Indexes, including air toxics cancer risk (81st percentile), air toxics respiratory hazard (87th percentile), lead paint exposure risk (80th percentile), and underground storage tanks and LUSTs (83rd percentile). It is clear that low income, minority populations within the target area are disproportionately impacted by environmental justice concerns impacting their health, the environment in which they live, and the opportunities they are afforded.

(b) Advancing Environmental Justice

This grant will assist in taking the necessary steps to eliminate environmental hazards by assessing properties that are contaminated and negatively impacting the health of underserved residents. Once hazards are clearly identified and assessed, additional financial resources will be employed (including potential Cleanup Grants and resources listed in 1.c.i) to eliminate exposures and reduce environmental justice concerns. Consequently, we will then be able to reconsider the future of retail and community space for the Target Area. For example, the redevelopment of all priority sites will create additional tax revenue, allowing for the reinvestment into public programs that benefit Ripley residents. The elimination of brownfields and associated blight alone is a huge step towards relieving environmental justice burdens faced by our sensitive populations. Additionally, it should be noted no businesses nor residents will be displaced by these redevelopments. To minimize the potential for unintended displacement, the City will work with community-based organizations to incorporate strategies through planning and visioning that preserve small business opportunities and affordable housing in the Target Area.

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 below. The City will continually build upon this list to ensure inclusion of all stakeholders.

Organization & Point of Contact	Role
Tippah County Good Samaritan Center (662) 512-0031	The Tippah County Good Samaritan Center supports residents in need throughout the county with food delivery, housing and utility bill assistance, temporary assistance for the homeless. They support 600 families each month in the county. With a location in Ripley, the Center will provide a voice to those residents who are most in need. They will provide input on site selection, future reuse, and resident communication based on their relationships with citizens.
Board of Directors of the GM&O Rails to Trails Recreational District of North Mississippi Ray Collins, Chairman (Union County) (662) 489-2415 trailinfo@trpdd.com	The Tanglefoot Trail is governed by the Board of Directors of the GM&O Rails to Trails Recreational District of North Mississippi. The Board is made up of one representative from each of the three counties: Union, Pontotoc, and Chickasaw, in addition to one representative from each of the current municipalities: New Albany, Ecu, Pontotoc, Algoma, New Houlika, and Houston. The Board of Directors is responsible for establishing rules and regulations for the use of the recreational trail and developing, maintaining, and supporting the recreational facility. Three Rivers Planning and Development District serves as the Recreational District’s administrative and fiscal agent. As such, the Board will assist in securing right of way access and help coordinate funding opportunities for the trail’s expansion. The Board will also provide input on up-coming decisions for future brownfield reuses in order to attract tourists to Ripley.
Tippah County Development Foundation Chris Lewellen (662) 837-3353 clewellen@tippahcounty.org	The Development Foundation was formed as a non-profit organization in 1982. Member dues allow the Foundation to market available sites within the County to new companies and support local companies in sourcing local talent. The Foundation will assist in community engagement by sharing information, including open job opportunities related to the brownfield program on their website. Additionally, the Foundation will aid in building the brownfield inventory and prioritizing sites, while serving as a representative to residents.
Ripley Main Street Association Elizabeth Behm, Executive Director (662) 512-0226 ripleymainstreet.com	Established in 2001, the Association is a non-profit organization that focuses on enhancing the culture and quality of life in Ripley through planned revitalization, diversification, and preservation of the historic district and through active community involvement. Main Street has achieved a number of successful downtown improvements and is dedicated to assisting the brownfield program. Through various annual local events, including the Star Spangled Celebration, the Spirit of Ripley Festival and Chili Cook-off, the Christmas Parade, and Holiday Open House, the Association is able to garner public interest, stimulating conversations regarding redevelopment. During these events, Main Street will continue to disseminate information regarding brownfield redevelopment, acting as a liaison between the City and residents, assisting in community engagement.

<p>Freeman Lumber Co. (662) 837-8119</p>	<p>Located just west of the Target Area boundary, Freeman Lumber Co. currently owns the Freeman Lumber Co. Parking Lot priority site. The property owners will provide site access and input regarding future site redevelopment.</p>
<p>Ripley Board of Aldermen Barry Cook, Alderman at Large (662) 837-7154</p>	<p>The Board of Aldermen act as the Mayor’s right-hand assistants, providing input for a variety of duties, which will include site selection and future site redevelopment. Additionally, Alderman Bryant is the property owner of the Tippah Wholesale Co. Warehouse and will provide site access.</p>

The EPA, Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), and Tippah County Health Department are also established partners and/or will be involved throughout the grant cycle, each contributing to their own capacity. Specifically, MDEQ will be responsible for assisting in community 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, which include Mississippi Development Authority’s MS Economic Redevelopment Act (MERA), MDEQ’s EPA Revolving Loan Fund Grant, and an EPA Cleanup Grant.

iii. Incorporating Community Input

Following this grant’s award, a project kick-off meeting will be held. This meeting will provide an opportunity to establish a Brownfield Advisory Committee (BAC) consisting of representatives from local stakeholders. The Committee will review projects and make decisions to prioritize site assessments based upon the hierarchy outlined 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 of Ripley, 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 ways, including regularly held public meetings and charettes that are organized in partnership with community organizations such as those listed in 2.b.i.. As a large population of Hispanic people live within Ripley, communication and information will be provided in both English and Spanish. In the event that COVID-19 needs to be accommodated for, meetings will be held virtually through Zoom, with which the City, project partners, BAC, and local citizens have prior experience using. Otherwise, meetings will be held in person at City Hall to ensure close proximity to the Target Area’s residents. 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 the live meeting, can access the recorded meeting online, at the City’s website and/or can utilize a call in number for the meeting. 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 (or Zoom’s chat feature, if necessary) and via email to the project manager so that affected parties’ input can be captured and documented for use in decision making when selecting and prioritizing sites. 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. Input will be considered during public meetings in an open manner that embraces the diversity of the community and focuses on a constructive, forward-looking vision for Ripley. Additional communication regarding grant updates and opportunities will be conducted in a variety of ways including press releases with local newspapers which will include Southern Sentinel, and Tippah News (online and in print). Brownfield related announcements will also be featured on the City’s and Main Street’s websites, local news stations, and flier distribution via local businesses and community organizations. The following Facebook page will be used as well: “City of Ripley, MS”, reaching 3,200 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 Brownfield Advisory Committee (BAC); Qualified Environmental Consultant (QEC) selection based on a competitive bid process (per 40 CFR 30); meeting facilitation with the BAC, MDEQ, and EPA; required reporting; budget reconciliation.
- ii.** 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 supported annually. ACRES will be updated throughout the grant period.
- iii.** Task Lead: The City will oversee this task, with assistance from the BAC and selected QEC.
- iv.** Outputs: BAC development, 1 Work Plan, 1 Community Involvement Plan, 16 Quarterly Reports, 1 Close-Out Report, regular ACRES reporting, annual reporting of 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. Main Street will also attend various brownfield conferences.

- ii. 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; the 3rd public meeting will be held after the second round of assessments have been completed; and the 4th public meeting will be held when assessments are nearing completion and reuse planning begins.
- iii. Task Lead: The City will oversee this task, with assistance from the BAC, MDEQ, 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; 4-6 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, reporting, and printing expenses.
- ii. Schedule: Quarters 1-14: A QAPP will be completed within 1 month of selection. Once approved by MDEQ/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 10.
- iii. Task Lead: The QEC will oversee this task, with assistance from the City and the BAC.
- iv. Outputs: Priority Sites: 3 Phase I ESAs (3 Haz), 3 Phase II ESAs (3 Haz), 2 Haz Mat Surveys; Additional Sites: 9 Phase I ESAs (6 Haz and 3 Petro), 5 Phase II ESAs (3 Haz and 2 Petro), and 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. A public meeting will be held during this reuse planning period to solicit input from the public and community partners; we envision this meeting as a design charettes to encourage public participation. The total estimated budget for this task includes travel to attend meetings with stakeholders related to redevelopment plans, which will incorporate community input, market data, feasibility analysis for various reuse scenarios. 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.
- iii. 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.
- iv. Task Lead: The QEC will oversee the completion of ABCAs. The City will oversee the public meeting/design charettes associated with planning, with assistance from the QEC and BAC.
- v. Outputs: 4 ABCA reports; 1-3 public meeting/design charette (and associated outreach/presentation materials)

b. Cost Estimates

The following list outlines how costs were derived for each task. Allocation of grant funds is included within the table 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 \$2,440) = \$6,720
- 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 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: \$282,000 (56.4% of budget)
 - Priority Sites: \$101,000
 - 3 Phase I ESAs: estimated cost of \$4,000 per ESA = \$12,000
 - 3 Phase II ESAs: estimated cost of \$23,000 per ESA = \$69,000
 - 2 Hazardous Materials Surveys: estimated cost \$10,000 per survey = \$20,000
 - Secondary Sites: \$181,000
 - 9 Phase I ESAs: average estimated cost of \$4,000 per ESA = \$36,000
 - 5 Phase II ESAs: average estimated cost of \$23,000 per ESA = \$115,000
 - 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: \$168,000
 - 4 ABCAs: average estimated cost of \$4,500 per ABCA = \$18,000
 - 1 Community-Wide Revitalization Plan: \$150,000 (30% of budget) (EPA estimates a total cost of \$50,000-\$175,000)
 - \$140,000: consulting fees
 - \$10,000: supplies such as mapping, copying, publishing, mailing, etc.

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
Direct Costs	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	\$ 282,000	\$ 168,000	\$ 470,000
	Construction					\$ -
Total Direct Costs		\$ 15,820	\$ 22,540	\$ 287,820	\$ 173,820	\$ 500,000
Indirect Costs						
Total Budget (Direct + Indirect)		\$ 15,820	\$ 22,540	\$ 287,820	\$ 173,820	\$ 500,000

c. Plan to Measure and Evaluate Environmental Progress and Results

Per the requirements of the EPA Assessment Grant, the City 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 the City ever finds itself off track financially or schedule-wise. The City 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, the total project cost, and anticipated jobs created; 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., and iii. Organizational Capacity, Structure, and Key Staff

The City of Ripley’s grants are managed through the Main Street Association by Elizabeth Behm the Executive Director, who has a Business Degree from Mississippi State University. Ms. Behm will be the project manager for this grant serving as the point of contact with the EPA and selected environmental consultant. She will work with the City’s Purchasing Department for grant procurement needs to ensure selection of a consultant is done to both City and EPA guidelines. Ms. Behm will oversee the selected consultant, and the accounting, invoice management, and reporting requirements for the grant. During her time as the Executive Director, she has raised over \$800,000 for community improvement projects, managed all grant reporting and programming, and has received numerous awards for her community development work within the City. Additionally, Elizabeth is a longtime Ripley resident and business owner. She will be assisted by Mayor

John Grisham, who will serve as a backup grant manager and coordinate community involvement opportunities. Mayor Girsham has a long-standing history within his hometown of Ripley, including over 20 years of service to the community as a volunteer firefighter, 8 years as Mayor Pro Tem, and 10 years as a local business owner. He has a degree in business administration and management and his experience combined with his relationship will ensure meaningful input from the residents. The Administration department within the City is further supported by an executive assistant and City Clerk and Treasurer. All three will provide added assistance to the key staff as needed throughout the grant cycle. This structure will ensure timely and accurate expenditure of funds, and has proven successful on past community improvement funding projects.

iv. Acquiring Additional Resources

The City has 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 Phase 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 the City'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, all submissions will be available as public record. Following receipt of proposals, each application will be reviewed by an internal committee composed of City staff and Aldermen board members and the selected consultant will be recommended to the Mayor for approval via resolution. The City will also partner with the nonprofit Tippah County Development Foundation (TCDF) 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. TCDF works diligently to provide students and residents with real world skills for the future and participates in regional workforce events across the community. They can help connect residents, educators, and employers together as the applicable outcomes from this grant occur.

b. Past Performance and Accomplishments

ii. Has Not Received an EPA Brownfields Grant but Has Received Other Federal or Non-Federal Assistance Agreements

In 2022 and 2023, through the Main Street \$150,000 was awarded in ARPA funding for **Downtown Revitalization Projects**. The first \$50,000 of funding has been spent towards acquisition of the Commerce Car Wash, with the remainder of the funding to be disbursed. In 2022 **Mississippi National Heritage Grants** were awarded from the Tippah County to the City through our Main Street totaling \$23,585 to fund the first phase of the conversion of a unique structure in the city's downtown historic district into a multi-use community venue with exterior art that reflects Tippah County's Native-American heritage (which is in progress), to assist with the Alice Mae Blues Festival and the Blue Mountain Bluegrass Festival, and fund the creation of an African-American Public Art Quilt Trail, which will showcase traditional African-American quilt patterns. Between 2015 and 2021, the City was awarded a total of \$1,800,000 in grant funds through the **Federal Aviation Administration** for an Airport Improvement program. The AIP provides grants for the planning and development of public-use airports that are included in the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS). Through these funds successful projects have included runway rehabilitation, perimeter fencing, runway guidance system and lighting, and reconstruction of the airport beacon. In 2020 **Mississippi Main Street**, through the City's Main Street Program a \$2,500 grant to fund work on the blues alley project behind the local theater off Main Street. The successful use of funds allowed for murals featuring Mississippi Hill Country Blues artists, guitar cutouts, and blues lyrics on the walls. The project also included benches, lights, and pavers in the alley.

(2) Compliance with Grant Requirements

As shown through the City of Ripley's record of no audit findings, benchmark compliance goals on all past grants have been met. ARPA Downtown Revitalization Program funding requires monthly reporting documenting procurement, payroll, expenses, with a summary of accomplishments and expected activities over the next 30 days. All reporting has been completed on time thus far into the project. The National Heritage Grant requires a closeout report that includes documentation and summary of expenditures, this grant is in progress, however, management of expenses and associated documentation has been maintained for a successful report upon completion. The Federal Aviation grants have been successful completing all requirements and terms as required, thus allowing the city to continue receipt of funding over several fiscal years. Conditions included meeting federal procurement requirements, and successful close out of each fiscal year. To close a grant, the grantee and sponsor must complete together all projects outlined within the grant, all administrative and financial requirements (SF 425, Federal Financial AIP forms, SF 270 for advancement or reimbursement, and vendor invoices for anything over \$1,000), and close out processing in the form of a final project report. MS Main Street reporting includes a close out report, procurement documentation, and expenditure documentation and summary, all of which were completed on time. Because of a history of successful grant management, Ripley is better positioned to continue to pursue leveraging opportunities that support the community.

Threshold Criteria – City of Sheffield, Alabama

1. Applicant Eligibility:

The City of Ripley, Mississippi (“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 an opportunity to establish a Brownfield Advisory Committee (BAC) consisting of representatives from local stakeholders. The Committee will review projects and make decisions to prioritize site assessments based upon the following hierarchy: 1) community need, 2) degree of contamination, 3) level of future/obtained investment, 4) future economic impact. 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 of Ripley, 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 ways, including regularly held public meetings and charettes that are organized in partnership with community organizations such as those listed in 2.b.i.. As a large population of Hispanic people live within Ripley, communication and information will be provided in both English and Spanish. In the event that COVID-19 needs to be accommodated for, meetings will be held virtually through Zoom, with which the City, project partners, BAC, and local citizens have prior experience using. Otherwise, meetings will be held in person at City Hall to ensure close proximity to the Target Area’s residents. 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 the live meeting, can access the recorded meeting online, at the City’s website and/or can utilize a call in number for the meeting. 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 (or Zoom’s chat feature, if necessary) and via email to the project manager so that affected parties’ input can be captured and documented for use in decision making when selecting and prioritizing sites. 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. Input will be considered during public meetings in an open manner that embraces the diversity of the community and focuses on a constructive, forward-looking vision for Ripley. Additional communication regarding grant updates and opportunities will be conducted in a variety of ways including press releases with local newspapers which will include Southern Sentinel, and Tippah News (online and in print). Brownfield related announcements will also be featured on the City’s and Main Street’s websites, local news stations, and flier distribution via local businesses and community organizations. The following Facebook page will be used as well: “City of Ripley, MS”, reaching 3,200 followers.

3. Expenditure of Existing Grant Funds:

Not applicable; the City of Ripley does not have an existing EPA Brownfield Grant.

4. Contractors and Named Subrecipients:

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