



1. Applicant Identification

Bessemer City
132 West Virginia Avenue
Bessemer City, North Carolina 28016

2. Funding Requested

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

3. Location

- a) Bessemer City
- b) Gaston County
- c) North Carolina

4. Target Area and Priority Site Information

- Target Areas: Center City Corridor – Census Tract 37071030802
- Priority Sites:
 - Priority Site 1 – Atlantic Spinners, 212 E. Virginia Avenue, Bessemer City, North Carolina 28016
 - Priority Site 2 – Bessemer City Oil Company, 311 E. Virginia Avenue, Bessemer City, North Carolina 28016
 - Priority Site 3 – Dawn Processing Mill, 205 E. Alabama Avenue, Bessemer City, North Carolina 28016

5. Contacts

a. Project Director

Nathan Hester, Director of Development
Services
704-629-5542
nhester@bessemercity.com
132 West Virginia Avenue, Bessemer City,
North Carolina, 28016

b. Chief Executive/Highest Ranking Elected
Official

Becky Smith, Mayor
704-629-5542
bsmith@bessemercity.com
132 West Virginia Avenue, Bessemer City,
North Carolina, 28016





6. Population
 Bessemer City, NC: 5,452
 (US Census: 2017–2021 American Community Survey)

7. Other Factors

Other Factors	Page #
Community population is 10,000 or less.	4
The applicant is, or will assist, a federally recognized Indian Tribe or United States Territory.	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.	4
The reuse of the priority site(s) will incorporate energy efficiency measures.	4
The proposed project will improve local climate adaptation/mitigation capacity and resilience to protect residents and community investments.	4
At least 30% or more of the overall project budget will be spent on eligible reuse/area-wide planning activities, as described in Section I.B., for priority site(s) within the target area.	NA
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 attached.

9. Releasing Copies of Applications
 Not Applicable.





NORTH CAROLINA
Environmental Quality

October 26, 2023

ROY COOPER

Governor

ELIZABETH S. BISER

Secretary

MICHAEL SCOTT

Director

Nathan Hester, MPA, CZO
Director of Development Services
Bessemer City
132 West Virginia Avenue
Bessemer City, NC 28016
nhester@bessemercity.com

Re: U.S. EPA Brownfields Community-Wide Assessment Grant – Bessemer City

Dear Mr. Hester

The North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Brownfields Redevelopment Section (BRS) acknowledges and supports Bessemer City's application for a U.S. EPA Brownfields Community-Wide Assessment Grant. We understand your grant will focus on the Center City Corridor with priority sites including the Former Atlantic Spinners, Inc. textile mill and the former Bessemer City Oil Company. The purpose of the grant will be to bring revitalization to the Center City Corridor, which would be a tremendous economic development success for Bessemer City.

The BRS offers technical project guidance to help ensure assessments conducted utilizing grant funds are in accordance with our program requirements throughout the life of your project. Coordination with the BRS is critical to ensuring that the assessments make efficient use of the federal funds awarded. The BRS can also assist with evaluating the benefits of entering specific properties into our State Brownfields Program through a brownfields agreement. A brownfields agreement outlines the controls needed to make the site safe for the intended reuse and is often a marketing tool for developers and instrumental in securing redevelopment financing. Additional tax incentives are also available upon completion of Brownfields redevelopment if completed in the State's Program.

We hope that the City is successfully awarded this grant, but we will continue to support you in your Brownfields redevelopment efforts whether a grant is awarded or not. We truly believe successful Brownfields projects can rejuvenate a community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jordan L. Thompson".

Jordan Thompson
Brownfields Project Manager

ec: NCDEQ Brownfields Public Outreach Team



North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality | Division of Waste Management
217 West Jones Street | 1646 Mail Service Center | Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1646
919.707.8200



Bessemer City, NC

**FY24 Brownfield Assessment Grant
Narrative**



1. PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION AND PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION

a. Target Area and Brownfields i. Overview of Brownfield Challenges and Description of Target Area: Dating back to the late 1800s, the founders of Bessemer City (City) had a grand vision for creating a beautiful city in the Central Piedmont region of North Carolina, one primed for growth and expansion. The founders initially planned the City on a Jeffersonian grid of streets and blocks, with residential streets surrounding a downtown core. This design made it easy for residents to live, work, and commune within walking distance—a model that attracted business and industry. In addition to grid development, a busy rail line divided the city’s downtown, serving the industrial manufacturing base, which significantly contributed to the city’s revenue. Historic industry within the downtown core was primarily made up of textile mills developed in response to the growing success of cotton crops throughout the region. The first textile mill, Southern Cotton Mills, was opened in 1895. An increased demand for American-made textile goods during the Great War era, particularly for military uniforms, blankets, and other apparel, stimulated the North Carolina textile industry and resulted in a large increase in the number of textile mills in the state. By 1921, North Carolina mills were producing \$191 million worth of textiles annually, more than twice the production of 1914. This growth continued after the war, and by 1923 North Carolina had overtaken Massachusetts as the leading textile-producing state in the nation. The success of the North Carolina textile industry carried on through much of the 19th century. A monumental change came from 1975 to 1985 when more than 800 mills closed nationwide, and textile employment in North Carolina declined dramatically due to mergers, takeovers, and a decline in the industry.

The geographic boundaries of this assessment grant are the city limits of Bessemer City. Today, the footprint of the **abandoned textile industry** remains visible within the downtown core of the City as industry has spread away and to the east, closer to Interstate 85 where large expanses of former agricultural land are being developed for warehousing, distribution, and industrial business parks. The City’s proximity to nearby Charlotte, North Carolina, a bustling southern metropolis, is an attractive draw for growth industries looking to capitalize on the connectivity of major highways, rail corridors, one of the busiest international airports in the nation, and affordable workforce housing potential. While this proximity is an advantage to the City, **aesthetic and environmental impacts** of past industry have stifled the City’s ability to transform the **Center City Corridor (CCC)**.

The **Target Area** for this grant application is the **CCC** that comprises **Justice40 Initiative Disadvantaged Census Tract 37071030802**. The City is focusing on the development of the **CCC** based on the **2020 Vision Plan** that identifies the desire to develop the downtown area into a desirable place to live, with walkability to local employment opportunities and nearby amenities including places to shop, dine, and socialize. The City intends to use this grant to address the abandoned and derelict downtown properties and allow for better connectivity, affordable housing, increased job opportunities, and to reestablish a thriving downtown to promote sustainable economic growth for the CCC’s **underserved** community.

ii. Description of the Priority Brownfield Site(s): While a formal inventory has not been completed for the **CCC**, a windshield survey of the target area identified at least **15 potential hazardous sites**, including current and former filling stations, oil companies, dry cleaners, and abandoned textile manufacturing facilities. Based on a preliminary review of regulatory files of the target area, there are concerns due to eight leaking underground storage tank (UST) incidents, one leaking aboveground storage tank (AST) incident, three active registered UST facilities, and two Inactive Hazardous Sites Branch (IHSB) incidents that were all identified in the **CCC**. Contaminants associated with the current and historic uses of these sites include volatile organic compounds



(VOCs), semivolatile organic compounds (SVOCs), petroleum constituents, chlorinated solvents (dry cleaning, degreasing, and parts washing), and metals. Additional concerns associated with aging structures include lead-based paint (LBP), asbestos (ACM) from various building materials, and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). The City has **identified three priority sites within the CCC** for assessment and redevelopment due to their prime location and proximity to residents.

Priority site 1 is a former spinning mill, **Atlantic Spinners**, located at **212 E. Virginia Avenue**. **Atlantic Spinners** is approximately 5.75 acres of abandoned parcels. The site was historically used as a spinning mill and textile manufacturing facility. Textile manufacturing operations occurred at the site from 1902 until at least the early 2000s. The former Atlantic Spinners site has been vacant since 2007. **Chlorinated solvents** are the primary concern at this site. However, **PCBs** associated with old ballasts, **asbestos and lead** from building materials, and **petroleum products** are also potential environmental concerns. There are no structures on the site currently, with some former building foundations visible but mostly grass and vegetation. Additionally, the site is currently unsecured and located **near a park, several churches, and a Boys & Girls Club**. Unrestrained access to the site poses risk due to **potential for the public to encounter soil contaminants as well as groundwater contamination and air quality issues** for sensitive populations. The site does have at least one registered UST incident with a notice of **residual petroleum** issued. The barren and abandoned site is a detracting landmark in the CCC and is considered a priority. Reuse plans include **mixed-use commercial/retail along with a healthcare facility, potential affordable housing, and green space**. The City has received verbal access to include the priority site in community-wide assessment activities.

Priority site 2 is **Bessemer City Oil Company** located at **311 E. Virginia Avenue**. This 0.8-acre site operated as the oil company from the 1980s until late 2010. The property is comprised of a 3,200-square-foot brick warehouse and multiple out-of-service, dilapidated ASTs. In addition to **petroleum-related** environmental concerns, **asbestos and lead** from building materials and **degreasing solvents** are potential environmental concerns at this site. The facility is surrounded by a fence but is located in a high pedestrian traffic area and is **near a local park, several churches, and the Crowders Mountain Volunteer Center**. There are concerns related to **groundwater contamination and air quality issues** for sensitive populations. The Reuse plan for this property is a **commercial/retail space**.

Priority site 3 is the **Dawn Processing Mill** located at **205 E. Alabama Avenue**. **Dawn Processing Mill** was constructed in 1903 as a one-story brick structure with a basement sitting on approximately three acres, with two wings that were added after 1909 and other smaller additions after 1922. The existing building is dilapidated with several doors missing and a roughly cut hole in the south wall of the east end of the main mill. Several of the concrete-block additions to the mill and the three surrounding hydrant houses are missing sections of roof and are overgrown with vines. The mill was repainted white at an unknown time. The mill building is still used for warehousing and the small-scale operations of a food dye manufacturing business, although information suggests that the business is dwindling, and operations are on the verge of decline. While the area is secured with a fence, it is in a **high pedestrian area with a park, churches, and neighborhoods nearby**. The potential hazards are **asbestos and lead-based paint** due to the age of the buildings, as well as **chlorinated solvents and petroleum products**. Reuse plans for this property include **mixed-use commercial/retail space along with affordable housing**.

iii. Identifying Additional Sites: The City will focus on identifying sites for assessment throughout the target area with priority given to sites in **underserved** areas. The target area is defined by the **Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST)** as a **Justice40 disadvantaged**



community. In preparation for this Brownfield Grant application, the City conducted a windshield survey of the target area and identified at least 15 potential brownfields sites. During this grant project, a more in-depth site inventory and evaluation ranking criteria process (Budget Task 2) will be established as the City works diligently with target-area residents to identify and prioritize sites within the **disadvantaged** community. Those properties will be researched further by City staff using the property appraiser's website. The evaluation criteria used to determine which sites are added to the inventory will be based on community need, project partner and resident input, and **CEJST** and US Census data to ensure priority is given to the **underserved** community's benefit from this project. In the event all target-area sites have been addressed with grant funding, **the City will work with project partners and residents throughout the geographic boundary of the city limits to identify abandoned and underused properties.** Once identified, the City will apply the already established evaluation ranking criteria (based on need of the underserved) to determine the order in which sites will be addressed.

b. Revitalization of the Target Area i. Reuse Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans: Walkability to employment, dining, entertainment, retail, and amenities situated centrally among blocks of affordable residences is a vision many communities aim to achieve. Bessemer City has the advantage of a longstanding identity within the CCC target area, which was developed with that very vision. The **2008–2009 Land Use Plan Vision** identifies, among others, the following goals: 1) Focus retail/office development in the downtown core to create employment opportunities, 2) Create a historic district, 3) Plan for a mixed-use redevelopment area, and 4) Support affordable housing. The **updated 2020 Vision Plan** advances those goals, highlighting the importance of adding additional green space and keeping the city's unique character with a consistent grid of residential streets surrounding a downtown core. In 2022 and 2023, the City commissioned a **Pedestrian Plan Update** and **Greenway Feasibility Study** to improve the pedestrian experience, contributing to the sense of safety, health, community, and local economy.

With the **2020 Vision Plan** further identifying the public's interest to develop the downtown area into a desirable place to live, with walkability to local employment opportunities and nearby amenities including places to shop, dine, and socialize, it is vital to access brownfields funding to complete these goals for the future of the City. For priority site 1, **Atlantic Spinners**, the City is planning to redevelop the site into a new Kintegra Health Services **healthcare facility** and mixed-use commercial/retail. For priority site 2, **Bessemer Oil Company**, the City is planning to use this area as **commercial/retail space** with opportunities for restaurants/entertainment. The City's reuse/redevelopment plan for priority site 3, **Dawn Processing Mill**, includes potential for **mixed-use commercial/retail space with options for affordable housing and hybrid green space.** The City recognizes the importance of redeveloping the abandoned CCC properties into the reuses identified in the **2020 Vision Plan** to help our **underserved** residents and to create an affordable area where all people can live, work, and play.

ii. Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategy: The City's plan is to encourage infill, by creating new businesses and **job** opportunities that will increase the **tax base (economic benefit)** and by improving downtown business and neighborhood aesthetics, creating **new affordable housing** options, **green space**, and providing better connectivity (**noneconomic benefit**). These goals will be significantly aided by Assessment Grant funds. A newly redeveloped downtown will draw visitors and tourism, who will patron the CCC businesses and bring in revenue benefiting the local community (**economic benefit**). Bessemer City is also currently recognized as a **Main Street Community** through the North Carolina Department of Commerce's (NCDoC) Main Street Center. In 2011, Bessemer City was designated as a **Small Town Main Street Community** and



in 2015 was moved into the **Main Street Program**. The City's redevelopment plan aims to produce a more connected and walkable community, adding hybrid green spaces, and bringing in restaurants, retail, and affordable housing that highlight the attractiveness of the City. The passion evoked through developing the downtown core with the **2020 Vision Plan** has already led to frequent year-round events, including three major festivals and a summer music series.

By protecting the **sensitive** populations of the target area, the **planned assessment and redevelopment will also improve climate adaptation/mitigation capacity and resilience** of the CCC. The elimination of toxins, hazardous chemicals, and blight from the target area will decrease levels of atmospheric and greenhouse gases while creating hybrid green spaces and other community enhancements in an **underserved and disadvantaged community**. The City will work with developers to use **energy-efficient sources and renewable energy, including using solar park lighting, energy-efficient water heaters, wind, and renewable natural gas options** in their redevelopment plans.

c. Strategy for Leveraging Resources i. Resources Needed for Site Reuse: The City is a local unit of government that is eligible to apply for county, state, and federal grant funding. The City is making every effort to secure additional funding to further its Brownfields Program redevelopment goals and has already discussed several funding opportunities with agency representatives. In the event further assessment is needed within the target area upon the close of this grant, the City can apply to the EPA Region 4 Targeted Brownfields Assessment Program available to municipalities in North Carolina. The City has identified additional potential funding sources including Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), NCDoc Rural Transformation Grants, Main Street Solutions Fund, Business Accelerator Grants, and Golden LEAF Infrastructure Grants. As sites are identified for cleanup, the City will apply for EPA Brownfields Cleanup Grant funding to remediate assessed sites.

ii. Use of Existing Infrastructure: The City's plans for target area and priority site redevelopment will include the **use of existing infrastructure (streets, transportation, water/sewer, power)** within the CCC as it is sufficient for new redevelopment. In the event additional infrastructure improvements are needed, the City will look to state and federal funding opportunities.

2. COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

a. Community Need i. The Community's Need for Funding: Bessemer City is a **small** community with an **impoverished population (5,452)** base.¹ The target area's per capita income of **\$26,327** and median household income **\$38,276** is much lower than the US (\$37,638/ \$69,021).¹ The **target area ranks in the 85th percentile for low income**.² With a financially stressed tax base, redevelopment of aging structures and vacant parcels within the CCC that pose environmental concerns is not achievable alone. Without the assistance of an EPA Brownfields Community-wide Assessment Grant, the limited reuse potential causing **underutilization of properties** and a decline of surrounding property values will persist.

The City depends on property taxes as their primary source of revenue. With already low property values in the target area, further decline will continue to erode the tax base. The City's entire tax revenue is spent on city services and infrastructure, with no surplus available for assessment activities to create momentum for redevelopment. Brownfields funding is needed to initiate the process of assessment in the Center City Corridor (CCC) and encourage redevelopment. With the assistance of an EPA Brownfields Community-wide Assessment Grant, the CCC development can transform the historic aesthetic and ensure a healthy environment for residents.

¹ US Census: 2017–2021 ACS

² Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST)



The redevelopment of the CCC will invite business/investment opportunities that will positively impact this **underserved** area, keeping pace with the progressive growth of similar commuter towns surrounding the Charlotte metropolitan area that have the advantage of higher tax bases.

ii. Threats to Sensitive Populations (1) Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations: The sensitive populations within the target area are the low-income and adverse-health citizens of Bessemer City. The CCC target area consists of a **Justice40 Initiative Disadvantaged Census Tract (37071030802)**. With a city population of only **5,452³** and ranking in the **79th percentile for low-income⁴**, there is a desperate need for assistance to positively transform the future of this **underserved** area. The hardships for the sensitive population within the CCC target area are ever-increasing as the **median household income of \$38,276** is well below the **national figure of \$69,021³**. A focus on revitalizing the historic aesthetic of the CCC will attract residents with higher paying jobs in the metropolitan area that desire the small-town appeal. An increase in the median household income of the tax base will positively impact future development efforts.

Welfare issues such as lack of affordable housing within the target area is affecting the residents. Within the CCC, the average monthly rent is \$755 (US \$1,163), and the average median value of a home is \$133,100 (US \$244,900).³ Even with the low cost of monthly rent and low home values, the community is suffering as a significant portion of their annual income goes to cover housing costs. According to the CEJST, the target area is in the **65th percentile of low-income households spending more than 30% of their income on housing**. To make matters worse, existing housing within the target area is aged, with 49% of all homes being constructed prior to 1979, creating an environmental concern of asbestos and lead.³ The Environmental Justice (EJ) Screen Report **Lead Paint indicator reports the target area in the 69th percentile** in the state. Additionally, the target area also ranks in the **94th percentile for lack of indoor plumbing**, demonstrating just a portion of the everyday struggles in this sensitive area.⁵ With a populace that has a high rate of social vulnerability and difficulties making ends meet, raising taxes to fund assessment and remediation in the CCC is not an option. But with the assistance of an EPA Brownfield Community-wide Assessment Grant, the development can flourish.

(2) Greater Than Normal Incidence of Disease and Adverse Health Conditions: Within the target area, the **sensitive populations of youth under 18 (17%), elderly (17%),³ and people with disabilities (84th percentile)⁴** suffer disproportionately from disease and health conditions attributed to exposure to environmental concerns such as **air emissions, hazardous substances, petroleum products, and chlorinated solvents**. Additionally, Bessemer City has one of the highest rates of **uninsured citizens (15%)** when compared to other cities in Gaston County.⁴

The compounding risks associated with living in the target area are evident in the **low life expectancy rate that puts the area in the 91st percentile⁵**. Hazardous substances and petroleum products associated with the plethora of former textile mills, filling stations, dry cleaners, and aging structures that have historically occupied the target area are a cause for concern, especially when considering the **second leading cause of death** in Gaston County is **cancer with 273 deaths per 100k⁶**. **Asthma** and respiratory diseases are the third leading cause of death in the county and are a major concern for the target area, with **67 deaths per 100k (target area health data not available)**. The target area is in the **70th percentile for Air Toxics Respiratory** for the US and **81st percentile for Particulate Matter** in the state.⁴ These contributing factors have placed the target area in the **75th percentile for those who have been told they have asthma⁵**. These health

³ US Census: 2017–2021 ACS

⁴ EPA EJ Screen Report

⁵ CEJST

⁶ 2021 Gaston County Community Health Assessment



statistics confirm the need for an assessment of brownfield sites and their remediation, especially considering the increased low life expectancy rate and the apparent environmental concerns.

(3) Environmental Justice: (a) Identification of Environmental Justice Issues: The target area is in a **Justice40 Initiative Disadvantaged Census Tract (37071030802)**. With the many target-area properties vacant or abandoned, the potential environmental issues, and the threats to community health, it is extremely important for the City to advocate for these **disadvantaged-community, underserved** residents. The EJ Screen Report shows the target area in the **84th percentile for Superfund proximity, 86th percentile for RMP facility proximity, 78th percentile for UST, and 81st percentile for wastewater discharge in the state**. Vacant/abandoned properties cause a decrease in taxable revenue, a decrease in property values, and an increase in environmental justice (EJ) issues such as **low income, substandard housing, lack of affordable healthcare facilities, and distressed neighborhoods**. Obtaining the Brownfield Assessment Grant will help address and reduce the EJ issues facing this underserved community.

(b) Advancing Environmental Justice: Industrial buyouts, takeovers, and shifts of the economy have led to numerous abandoned target-area properties and ongoing exposure to contaminants and poverty. Focusing on **President Biden’s Justice40 Initiatives**, EPA Brownfields funding will address several EJ issues plaguing this community by reducing the EJ burden, **decreasing the number of abandoned and blighted properties, creating new and affordable housing, and creating new job opportunities for the community**. The redevelopment of the three priority sites into mixed-use commercial/retail, affordable housing, added hybrid green space, and access to local healthcare will begin to address the EJ issues and set the stage for revitalization, which will create an improved standard of living. The proposed reuse of the priority sites will **improve the health and well-being of the sensitive populations** and remedy the many inequalities in health risk, lack of affordable housing, access to green space, and transportation barriers affecting this **underserved** community. **None of the planned redevelopment discussed in this grant application will displace residents or businesses**, and the City will employ redevelopment strategies that will prevent/minimize the potential of any future displacement.

b. Community Engagement i. Project Involvement & ii. Project Roles:

Name of Org.	Point of Contact	Specific involvement in the project or assistance provided
Bessemer City Chamber of Commerce (COC)	Otis Whitehurst, [REDACTED] 704-629-3900	The COC is a 501(c)(6) nonprofit that serves Bessemer City in business, economic development, tourism, and education. The COC will assist in site identification, prioritization, and marketing assessed sites to interested developers for revitalization .
Kintegra Health	Dana Ijames, [REDACTED] 704-629-3465	Kintegra Health, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, is a property owner and health provider in Bessemer City. Kintegra will assist in site identification and community outreach and education .
Bessemer City Boys & Girls Club (BBGC)	Brittany Davis bdavis@bgcgreatergaston.org 704-629-5663	The BBGC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that provides facilities, programs, and leadership opportunities for Bessemer City area youth. BBGC will host community meetings and assist with community outreach and education .
Gaston County Economic Development Commission (GCEDC)	Donny Hicks, donny.hicks@gastongo.com , 704-718-0528	The GCEDC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that serves as the lead economic development agency for Gaston County. The GCEDC will assist with site identification, future reuse planning, and community outreach .
Gaston County Community Foundation (GCCF)	Sydney Wyrick, swyrick@cfgaston.org , 704-864-0927	The GCCF is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that serves as the steward of philanthropic giving by connecting donors with community needs throughout Gaston County. The GCCF will assist with community outreach and education .



iii. Incorporating Community Input: The City informed the public of their intent to pursue an EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant for the CCC at the City Council meeting held on **September 11, 2023**, and it was unanimously approved by the council. Bessemer City understands that working closely with community members is the key to implementing a successful Brownfields Program. The City will cultivate productive and thought-provoking interactions between target-area residents and community organizations while ensuring that the needs of the underserved community are being heard, especially those most affected by the brownfield project. The City has developed a **Brownfields Project Team (BPT)**, consisting of City staff, community business partners, nonprofits, and residents, that is responsible for providing direction and promoting the Brownfields Program. The **BPT** will be critical in communicating with the community and implementing outreach activities, as they know that their citizens are most informed of the specific needs that are paramount to the success of their community. When community/resident comments or concerns are received, the BPT will review and respond to individuals within one week of receipt and post responses on the City’s brownfield webpage. A **Community Involvement Plan (CIP)** will be developed, laying the foundation for outreach efforts, establishing a schedule for activities, providing project background, and detailing the list of key project players. Monthly meetings with the Task Force will provide updates.

In addition to the City’s current community meetings (online and in-person), a community-wide brownfields kick-off informational meeting will notify the community of assessment project commencement, present an anticipated project schedule, discuss the City’s expectation of success for the Brownfields Program, and solicit community input. The City and BPT will host regular outreach activities to keep the community updated on project progress and provide a platform for public input on site identification, site prioritization, and cleanup planning, with a focus on the underserved parts of the community. Community charrettes and visioning sessions will be utilized for the development of cleanup, reuse, and redevelopment plans. The City will collaborate with local schools to provide educational opportunities and promote interest and career development in the environmental sciences. The City will continue to communicate with the community with various forms of media (printed and online) throughout the life of their Brownfields Program and beyond, including a project brochure to be distributed throughout the community, a project website to provide project news and information, and social media to provide real-time project updates, photos, news, and opportunities for public input. All brownfields project community information will be provided in English and Spanish.

3. TASK DESCRIPTIONS, COST ESTIMATES, AND MEASURING PROGRESS

a. Description of Tasks/Activities and Outputs:

Task 1: Outreach	
i.	<i>Project Implementation:</i> The City’s Brownfields Project Director, with the assistance from the Environmental Contractor (EC), will develop a Community Involvement Plan (CIP), outreach materials, Brownfields Project website and social media posts, and host community meetings to keep the public informed about the project. Supplies: printing of outreach materials (brochures/handouts) and office supplies to manage the grant.
ii.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> CIP created within three months of award. Community Meetings held 1 st and 3 rd quarter Year 1–3 and 1 st quarter of Year 4. Website and outreach materials created in the 1 st quarter and posted quarterly throughout the grant project.
iii.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> Nathan Hester, Brownfields Project Director
iv.	<i>Outputs:</i> CIP, Brownfields Website, 7 Community Meetings, Brochures/Handouts, Social Media Posts, Summary of Community Meetings in EPA required Quarterly Reports.
Task 2: Site Inventory	



Bessemer City, NC
FY2024 US EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant

i.	<i>Project Implementation:</i> The City’s Brownfields Project Director will work with target-area residents during community meetings to create a thorough site inventory for assessment. Abandoned and underused properties identified by target-area residents will be researched further by City staff using the property appraiser’s website and Gaston County GIS. Once a list is compiled, the EC will work with City staff to create an evaluation ranking tool to determine, with the help of residents, the order in which the sites will be addressed with priority given to underserved areas.
ii.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> Community meeting held in 1 st quarter will continue the preliminary inventory process, which began with this application, with the evaluation ranking process taking place in the 2 nd quarter and continuing throughout the grant project.
iii.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> Nathan Hester, Brownfield Project Director
iv.	<i>Outputs:</i> Evaluation Ranking Tool, Site Inventory List
Task 3: Assessment	
i.	<i>Project Implementation:</i> The EC will conduct Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) activities at sites selected and ranked through the Site Inventory Task, starting first with the three priority sites listed in this application. ASTM-AAI compliant Phase I; Generic Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP); Phase II which will include the SS-QAPP. Prior to assessment, site access agreements and property eligibility determinations approval will be obtained.
ii.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> Assessment activities begin in 2 nd quarter and continue throughout the grant.
iii.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> The EC will implement the technical aspects of the project with oversight from the City: Nathan Hester, Brownfields Project Director
iv.	<i>Outputs:</i> 20 Phase I ESAs; 1 Generic QAPP; 10 Phase II ESAs including SS-QAPP, Site Access Agreements, and Property Eligibility Determinations.
Task 4: Remediation/Reuse Planning	
i.	<i>Project Implementation:</i> For projects identified for cleanup, the EC will prepare the Analysis for Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA) and/or Cleanup Plans. Cleanup planning will include evaluating cleanup alternatives, calculating cleanup costs, and determining site-appropriate remediation/reuse planning to reduce health/environmental risks. The EC will assist the City in hosting charrettes/visioning sessions for key properties. A planner will create Site Reuse Assessments and a Brownfields Revitalization Plan.
ii.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> Plans & Charrettes to begin the 6 th quarter and continue throughout the grant.
iii.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> The EC will implement the technical aspects of the project with oversight from the City: Nathan Hester, Brownfields Project Director.
iv.	<i>Outputs:</i> 4 ABCAs, 2 Vision Sessions/Charrettes, 2 Site Reuse Assessments, 1 Brownfields Rev. Plan.
Task 5: Programmatic Support	
i.	<i>Project Implementation:</i> The City will procure an EC to assist with this project. The City’s Brownfields Finance Director oversees grant administration to ensure compliance with the EPA Cooperative Agreement Work Plan, schedule, and terms and conditions. The selected EC will assist the City in completing ACRES Database Reporting, Yearly Financial Reporting, Quarterly Reporting, MBE/WBE Forms, and all additional Programmatic Support for the four-year term of the grant. The City staff travel budget allows for two staff to attend three national/regional/grantee brownfields training conferences/workshops.
ii.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> ACRES & Quarterly Reporting begins the 1 st quarter and continues throughout the grant project. Annual Reporting and Forms created in 5 th , 9 th , and 13 th quarters and during final closeout.
iii.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> Ms. Diane Jenkins, Brownfields Finance Director
iv.	<i>Outputs:</i> ACRES Database Reporting, 4 Annual Financial Reports, 16 Quarterly Reports, 4 MBE/WBE Forms, Programmatic Support for the four-year grant period. Two staff to attend three events.

b. Cost Estimates: Below are the anticipated cost estimates for this project *based on past Brownfield Projects as determined by local market standards with contractual hourly rates based on the skills needed for the specific tasks.* The budget for this project includes travel, supplies, and contractual costs only. **Sixty-two (62%) percent of the budget will be spent on site-specific work.** **Task 1 Outreach:** Contractual: Community Involvement Plan \$4,000 (40hrs x \$100); Brownfields Website, Outreach Brochure/Handouts, Social Media Posts \$3,500 (35hrs x \$100); 7 Community Education Meetings \$10,500 (105hrs x \$100; \$1,500/meeting). Supplies: Outreach



Supplies \$1,500 (printed brochures \$1,000 [1,000 x \$1.00]; printed display boards \$200 [2 x \$100]; notebooks, paper, pens, other miscellaneous office supplies \$300). **Task 2 Site Inventory:** Contractual: Brownfields Site Inventory and Evaluation Ranking Tool Creation \$10,000 (100hrs x \$100). **Task 3 Assessment:** Contractual: 20 Phase I ESAs \$3,500 each for a total of \$70,000; 1 Generic QAPP \$5,500; 10 Phase II ESAs including SS-QAPP at \$23,500 each for a total of \$235,000. **Task 4 Remediation/Reuse Planning:** Contractual: 4 ABCAs \$6,500 each for a total of \$26,000; 2 Visioning Sessions \$7,000 (\$3,500/meeting); 2 Site Reuse Assessment Plans at \$20,000 each for a total of \$40,000 (Planner: 100hrs x \$150; Market Analysts: 25hrs x \$125; Environmental Professional: 15hrs x \$125 x 2 plans); 1 Brownfields Revitalization Plan \$50,000 (Planner: 200hrs x \$150; Market Analysts: 100hrs x \$125; Environmental Professional: 60hrs x \$125). **Task 5 Programmatic Support:** Contractual: ACRES Database Reporting, Yearly Financial Reporting, Quarterly Reporting, MBE/WBE Forms, Programmatic Support for the four-year grant period \$25,000 (250hrs x \$100). Travel: 2 staff to attend 3 events \$12,000 (flights \$800, \$300 hotel x 3 nights, incidentals and per diem at \$75 per day [4 days] x 2 attendees x 3 events).

Category	Tasks					Totals
	Outreach	Site Inventory	Assessment	Remediation/Reuse Planning	Programmatic Support	
Travel					\$12,000	\$12,000
Supplies	\$1,500					\$1,500
Contractual	\$18,000	\$10,000	\$310,500	\$123,000	\$25,000	\$486,500
Total Budget	\$19,500	\$10,000	\$310,500	\$123,000	\$37,000	\$500,000

c. Plan to Measure and Evaluate Environmental Progress and Results: To ensure this EPA Brownfields Project is on schedule, the City’s internal **BPT**, which includes the EC, will meet quarterly to track **outputs identified in 3.a.** using an Excel spreadsheet and will report progress in fulfilling the scope of work, goals, and objectives to the EPA via quarterly reports. In addition, project expenditures and activities will be compared to the project’s schedule to ensure the grant project will be completed within the four-year time frame. Site specific information will be entered and tracked in the ACRES database. The outputs to be tracked include the number of neighborhood meetings, public meetings, meetings with community groups and project partners, environmental assessments, ABCAs, and cleanup/redevelopment plans. The outcomes to be tracked include community participation, acres assessed, acres ready for reuse, redevelopment dollars leveraged, and jobs created. In the event the project is not being completed in an efficient manner, the City has countermeasures in place to address this problem by making monthly calls to its EPA Project Officer and, if needed, create an EPA Corrective Action Plan.

4. PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE

a. Programmatic Capability *i. Organizational Capacity, ii. Organizational Structure, & iii.*

Description of Key Staff: The Bessemer City government is comprised of an elected mayor and six city council members. Through their years of experience, the City has demonstrated their capacity and competency to manage federal and state funded grant opportunities awarded for the betterment of their community. The City’s **Brownfields Project Team**, described below, and their supporting staff are more than adequate and capable to successfully manage this Brownfields Assessment Grant. **Mr. Nathan Hester** will serve as the **Brownfields Project Director**. Mr. Hester was named the City’s Director of Development Services in 2021 with over 15 years of government management experience, including grant management experience. Mr. Hester’s current role oversees all municipal functions of planning, zoning, economic development, stormwater, and downtown development. Mr. Hester will be the primary point of contact for the



project and will be responsible for the overall management of the grant, including the oversight of team members. **Mr. Josh Ross** will serve as the **Brownfields Project Manager**. Mr. Ross, the City Manager, has been in his role since 2022 and has over 12 years of experience in local government leadership and service. Mr. Ross manages day-to-day operations within the City government in addition to being responsible for community engagement and meetings, as well as local and regional committee leadership roles. Mr. Ross will assist Mr. Hester in the day-to-day tasks involved with this project. **Ms. Diane Jenkins** will be the **Brownfields Finance Director**. Ms. Jenkins has served as the City's Finance Director for over 10 years. She oversees the day-to-day financial objectives and is responsible for the City's state and federal grant reporting. Ms. Jenkins will be responsible for managing the finances of this EPA Grant and will complete all programmatic reporting and drawdowns via ASAP.gov. **Mr. Jamie Ramsey** will serve as the **Brownfield Project Assistant**. Mr. Ramsey has served as the City's Public Works Director for over 30 years and has extensive knowledge of all utility operations of the City including water/sewer and natural gas systems. He will serve as an assistant in providing vital project knowledge and project management assistance. An EC will assist with the technical portions of this project.

iv. Acquiring Additional Resources: The City will procure a qualified environmental contractor and subcontractors to assist with technical and reporting aspects of the Brownfield Community-wide Assessment. Procurement procedures will comply with both the local contracting and procurement process and with EPA requirements for "Professional Service." The City will promote strong practices, local/hiring, and will link members of the community to potential employment opportunities for all brownfield-related redevelopment via community outreach practices and project updates to project partners.

b. Past Performance and Accomplishments ii. Has Not Received an EPA Brownfields Grant but has Received Other Federal or Non-Federal Assistance Agreements (1) Purpose and Accomplishments: In 2019, Bessemer City received a \$4,065,000 grant from the USDA Rural Development that funded upgrades to the water treatment plant to improve the water and sewer system. The project included approximately 2,300 linear feet of new 8-inch gravity sewer lines, 12 new manholes, and 1,200 linear feet of new 6-inch water lines. The water treatment system project is ongoing but continues to meet goals, and the City has complied with the agreed upon plans, schedule, timely reporting, and terms and conditions of the award. In 2019, the City was awarded a \$750,000 CDBG Grant from the NCDoc Rural Economic Development Division to renovate 10 single-family residential homes. Renovations brought the homes up to code and improved living conditions for the residences. The COVID-19 pandemic delayed progress on the grant performance but the City is finishing up renovations and has maintained compliance with the work plans, schedule, timely reporting, and terms and conditions of this award. In 2022, Bessemer City was awarded \$500,000 through the NCDoc Business Accelerator grant program. These funds are being used to purchase and resell the properties within the CCC to increase economic development opportunities. The City has complied with the agreed upon work plans, schedule, timely reporting, and terms and conditions of this award.

(2) Compliance with Grant Requirements The City has a history of compliance with grant work plans, schedules, and terms and conditions and has an excellent history of timely reporting with all award agencies. The City is on schedule on all active grants. Mr. Hester along with the **Brownfield Project Team** are skilled in project management and will monitor all grant activities to ensure compliance with all financial reporting requirements.



Bessemer City, NC

**FY24 Brownfield Assessment Grant
Threshold Criteria**



Threshold Criteria

1. Applicant Eligibility

- a. Bessemer City (City) is eligible to apply for the EPA Brownfields Community-wide Assessment Grant as a general-purpose unit of local government as defined under 2 CFR § 200.64.
- b. The City is not exempt from Federal taxation under section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code.

2. Community Involvement

The City informed the public of their intent to pursue an EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant for the CCC at the City Council meeting held on **September 11, 2023**, and it was unanimously approved by the council. Bessemer City understands that working closely with community members is the key to implementing a successful Brownfields Program. The City will cultivate productive and thought-provoking interactions between target-area residents and community organizations while ensuring that the needs of the underserved community are being heard, especially those most affected by the brownfield project. The City has developed a **Brownfields Project Team (BPT)**, consisting of City staff, community business partners, nonprofits, and residents, that is responsible for providing direction and promoting the Brownfields Program. The **BPT** will be critical in communicating with the community and implementing outreach activities, as they know that their citizens are most informed of the specific needs that are paramount to the success of their community. When community/resident comments or concerns are received, the BPT will review and respond to individuals within one week of receipt and post responses on the City's brownfield webpage. A **Community Involvement Plan (CIP)** will be developed, laying the foundation for outreach efforts, establishing a schedule for activities, providing project background, and detailing the list of key project players. Monthly meetings with the Task Force will provide updates.

In addition to the City's current community meetings (online and in-person), a community-wide brownfields kick-off informational meeting will notify the community of assessment project commencement, present an anticipated project schedule, discuss the City's expectation of success for the Brownfields Program, and solicit community input. The City and BPT will host regular outreach activities to keep the community updated on project progress and provide a platform for public input on site identification, site prioritization, and cleanup planning, with a focus on the underserved parts of the community. Community charrettes and visioning sessions will be utilized for the development of cleanup, reuse, and redevelopment plans. The City will collaborate with local schools to provide educational opportunities and promote interest and career development in the environmental sciences. The City will continue to communicate with the community with various forms of media (printed and online) throughout the life of their Brownfields Program and beyond, including a project brochure to be distributed throughout the community, a project website to provide project news and information, and social media to provide real-time project updates, photos, news, and opportunities for public input. All brownfields project community information will be provided in English and Spanish.

3. Expenditure of Existing Grant Funds

The City affirms that it does not have an active EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant or Multipurpose Grant.



4. Contractors and Named Subrecipients

Not Applicable.