

NARRATIVE INFORMATION SHEET

FY24 Electricities Brownfields Community-wide Assessment Grant Application

1. Applicant Identification:

Electricities of North Carolina, Inc.
1427 Meadow Wood Boulevard
Raleigh, North Carolina 27604

2. Funding Requested:

- (a) Assessment Grant Type: Community-Wide Assessment
(b) Federal Funds Requested: \$500,000

3. Location:

- (a) City: Albemarle, Apex, Ayden, Belhaven, Benson, Bostic, Cherryville, Clayton, Cornelius, Drexel, Edenton, Elizabeth City, Farmville, Fremont, Gastonia, Granite Falls, Greenville, Hamilton, Hertford, High Point, Hobgood, Hookerton, Huntersville, Kinston, La Grange, Landis, Laurinburg, Lexington, Lincolnton, Louisburg, Lumberton, Maiden, Monroe, Morganton, New Bern, Newton, Pikeville, Pineville, Red Springs, Robersonville, Rocky Mount, Scotland Neck, Selma, Shelby, Smithfield, Southport, Statesville, Tarboro, Wake Forest, Washington, & Wilson
(b) County: Beaufort, Brunswick, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Chowan, Cleveland, Craven, Davidson, Edgecombe, Franklin, Gaston, Greene, Guilford, Halifax, Iredell, Johnston, Lenoir, Lincoln, Martin, Mecklenburg, Nash, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Pitt, Robeson, Rowan, Rutherford, Scotland, Stanly, Wake, Wayne, Wilson
(c) State: North Carolina

4. Target Area and Priority Site Information:

- Town of Ayden, Pitt County:
 - Ayden Pickle Plant
4451 Lee Street
Ayden, NC 28513
 - CT#37147001401
- Town of Hertford, Perquimans County:
 - Hertford Livestock & Supply Company
807 & 809 South Edenton Road Street
Hertford, NC 27944
 - CT#37143920201

- Town of Robersonville, Martin County:
 - Robersonville Meat Packing Company
800 West Green Street
Robersonville, NC 27871
 - CT#37117970600

5. Contacts:

(a) Project Director:

Name: Carl Rees, Manager, Economic and Community Development
 Phone: (919) 760-6315 | Email: crees@electricities.org
 Mailing Address: 1427 Meadow Wood Blvd, Raleigh, NC 27604

(b) Chief Executive/Highest Ranking Elected Official:

Name: Roy Jones, Chief Executive Officer
 Phone: (919) 760-6000 | Email: rjones@electricities.org
 Mailing Address: 1427 Meadow Wood Blvd, Raleigh, NC 27604

6. Population:

- Population of Target Areas:
 - Town of Ayden: 4,991
 - Town of Hertford: 2,050
 - Town of Robersonville: 1,506

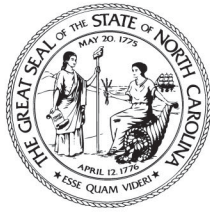
7. Other Factors:

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.	
The priority site(s) is impacted by mine-scarred land.	
The priority site(s) is adjacent to a body of water (i.e., the border of the priority site(s) is contiguous or partially contiguous to the body of water, or would be contiguous or partially contiguous with a body of water but for a street, road, or other public thoroughfare separating them).	2
The priority site(s) is in a federally designated flood plain.	2
The reuse of the priority site(s) will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy.	
The reuse of the priority site(s) will incorporate energy efficiency measures.	3, 8
The reuse strategy or project reuse of the priority site(s) considers climate adaptation and/or mitigation measures.	3, 8
At least 30% 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(s).	

Other Factors	Page #
The target area(s) is located within a community in which a coal-fired power plant has recently closed (2013 or later) or is closing.	

8. Letter from the State or Tribal Environmental Authority: A letter of acknowledgement from the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality is attached.

9. Releasing Copies of Applications: Not Applicable



NORTH CAROLINA
Environmental Quality

November 2, 2023

ROY COOPER

Governor

ELIZABETH S. BISER

Secretary

MICHAEL SCOTT

Director

Mr. Carl Rees
Senior Economic Developer
ElectriCities of North Carolina, Inc.
1427 Meadow Wood Blvd
Raleigh, NC 27604
crees@electricities.org

Re: U.S. EPA Brownfields Community-Wide Assessment Grant
ElectriCities Region

Dear Mr. Rees,

The North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Brownfields Redevelopment Section (BRS) acknowledges and supports the ElectriCities Corporation's application for a U.S. EPA Brownfields Community-Wide Assessment Grant. We understand that ElectriCities is a municipal corporation chartered by the State of North Carolina to provide wholesale electric supply and technical assistance to 51 municipalities within the state. This grant will be used as a tool to identify and define environmental conditions on sites that are targeted for future site development, which would be a tremendous economic development success for the member municipalities.

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 ElectriCities 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,

Jordan Thompson
Brownfields Project Manager

cc: 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

1. PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION & PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION:

1.a. Target Area & Brownfields:

1.a.i. Overview of Brownfield Challenges & Description of Target Area:

ElectriCities of North Carolina is a municipal corporation chartered by the State of North Carolina approximately 53 years ago to manage the wholesale electric supply and deliver technical assistance services to 51 cities and towns that provide municipal electric service. For purposes of this grant proposal, ElectriCities has selected 3 of these public power communities as initial target areas for this project, but all 51 cities and towns¹ will be included in the geographic boundary of the project. The three Target Area communities – **Ayden, Hertford, and Robersonville** – are located in eastern North Carolina, an area historically dependent on agriculture, and in census tracts identified as disadvantaged under the Justice40 Initiative.

The number of farms in North Carolina has changed significantly in the last 50 years. According to the USDA Census of Agriculture, the number of farms in the state was 106,000 in 1972, 66,000 in 1992, 58,000 in 2002, and 45,000 in 2022.² This represents a decline of **57.5%** from 1972 to 2022. The total land in farms also decreased from 12.4 million acres in 1972 to 8.3 million acres in 2022, a decline of **33.1%**. However, the average size of farms increased from 117 acres in 1972 to 184 acres in 2022, an increase of **57.3%**. These trends indicate that many small and medium-sized farms have been lost or absorbed by larger, mostly corporate farms over the past 50 years.

As the farms consolidated, the demand for local, specialty support businesses – agricultural supply houses, produce processing plants, meat processing plants, etc. – waned. Many of our public power communities saw some of their largest commercial and industrial customers disappear. Not only did this source of revenue disappear, but so did the jobs associated with those businesses. In 2003, over 350 workers were left unemployed when Purdue Farms closed their poultry processing facility in Robersonville, a town of only 2,050 residents. These properties now sit vacant, slowly deteriorating from lack of use and maintenance. The blight and environmental concerns from historic operations often hinder their redevelopment.

However, these sites also present an opportunity for these communities. The sites offer the acreage, structures, utilities, and infrastructure needed to attract economic development prospects. The ElectriCities economic development team can support the communities by promoting these sites to new and expanding businesses across the United States and beyond. The Smart Sites[®] program was created by ElectriCities to assist member communities in preparing shovel-ready sites for economic development. In today's competitive environment, it is rare for a company to locate on an undeveloped, unimproved property. The majority of new and expanding companies expect existing buildings or a prepared, shovel-ready site to shorten the amount of time needed for construction. Yet communities often struggle to garner the funds needed to develop inventory for economic development purposes. The valuable due diligence included in our program assists site selectors in making informed, intelligent choices. In short, the Smart Sites[®] program simplifies the process for consultants and companies and minimizes risk to them. Smart Sites[®] are then marketed domestically and internationally by ElectriCities at numerous tradeshows and industry events. ElectriCities will leverage this brownfield grant program to provide the environmental due diligence, cleanup planning, and reuse planning required to complete the Smart Sites[®] program.

1.a.ii. Description of the Priority Brownfield Sites:

As the first step in addressing our member communities' brownfield challenges, ElectriCities worked with the target areas (including municipal officials, the public, and community partners) to identify

¹ Includes: Albemarle, Apex, Ayden, Belhaven, Benson, Bostic, Cherryville, Clayton, Cornelius, Drexel, Edenton, Elizabeth City, Farmville, Fremont, Gastonia, Granite Falls, Greenville, Hamilton, Hertford, High Point, Hobgood, Hookerton, Huntersville, Kinston, La Grange, Landis, Laurinburg, Lexington, Lincolnton, Louisburg, Lumberton, Maiden, Monroe, Morganton, New Bern, Newton, Pikeville, Pineville, Red Springs, Robersonville, Rocky Mount, Scotland Neck, Selma, Shelby, Smithfield, Southport, Statesville, Tarboro, Wake Forest, Washington, & Wilson.

² https://www.nass.usda.gov/Quick_Stats/Ag_Overview/stateOverview.php?state=NORTH%20CAROLINA

priority brownfield sites. The following sites have been prioritized based on the needs of the surrounding community, the site's location in a Justice40 census tract (CT), the site's ability to spur additional economic development activities, and the potential for the site's reuse:

Ayden Pickle Plant – the old pickle plant, located at 4451 Lee Street in Ayden, Pitt County, NC 28513 (CT# 37147001401), was built in 1938 and closed in 1974. The 48,000 square foot (SF) building sits on approximately 10 acres, and a railroad spur once serviced the building. Prior to operating as pickle processing plant, the site was home to a veneer plant. Now, the building is underutilized for storage. Concerns of heavy metals, petroleum, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and solvents from years of industrial use have hindered the site's reuse. The Town selected the site for its redevelopment potential and the blight and potential environmental concerns impacting the adjacent residential neighborhoods.

Hertford Livestock & Supply Company – the former agricultural supply house, located at 807 and 809 S. Edenton Road Street in Hertford, Perquimans County, NC 27944 (CT# 37143920201), sits on 16 acres and includes six structures, a weigh scale, and several grain silos. The six structures total nearly 36,000 SF, and include a retail office with a garage, a separate garage, two warehouses, a weigh-station office building, and three pole shelters. The rear of the property borders Lakers Creek, and approximately 6 acres are in the floodplain. The property is currently for sale, but concerns exist that years of pesticide, herbicide, arsenic (metals), and petroleum storage and distribution may have contaminated soil and groundwater on the site. The Town selected the site for its redevelopment potential.

Robersonville Meat Packing Company – the former Purdue Farms poultry processing plant (later the Robersonville Meat Packing Company) is located at 800 West Green Street in Robersonville, Martin County, NC 27871 (CT# 37117970600), and includes 13 acres with over 75,000 SF of building space. Since closing in 2003, the site has been underutilized by a church, a meat packing company, and storage. The site now sits vacant and overgrown with vegetation. Concerns of soil and groundwater contamination from nitrites, solvents, and petroleum inhibit the site's reuse. The Town selected the site due to its impact on the surrounding properties and its redevelopment potential.

1.a.iii. Identifying Additional Sites:

Working with our community Members, ElectriCities has developed a preliminary inventory of 14 sites. ElectriCities will form a Brownfields Task Force (see Sec. 2b), to identify and prioritize these and additional sites. ElectriCities and the task force will continue to prioritize target areas in the underserved areas and the Justice40 disadvantaged census tracts. Sites will be prioritized based on community need; the environmental impact of the site on the surrounding community; and the redevelopment potential of the site.

1.b. Revitalization of the Target Area:

1.b.i. Reuse Strategy & Alignment with Revitalization Plans:

ElectriCities is committed to economic growth, and so are our community members. The 2020 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the Mid-East Commission, which includes the two target areas in Ayden and Robersonville, identified “strategically placed investments in water, sewer, and natural gas can make key industrial buildings and parcels available for growth and occupancy” as an opportunity in all counties. The CEDS also identified investment in economically distressed and underserved communities and environmentally sustainable development as guiding principles. The reuse plans for the target sites purposefully align with this goal by providing sites with existing infrastructure to foster economic growth. The *Envision Pitt County 2045 Comprehensive Plan*, adopted in March 2023, includes promoting “the development of prime industrial lands” as one the economic development recommendations. In 2017, ElectriCities supported the development of a strategic plan for the Town of Ayden, which set a goal to make sites shove-ready for new and expanding businesses. Through this brownfields project and the Smart Sites® program, ElectriCities and the Town of Ayden plan to complete the environmental due diligence and planning required to make the ***Ayden Pickle Plant*** a shovel-ready site for an economic prospect to bring a light industrial or commercial operation with jobs and tax and power revenue back to Town. Similarly, ElectriCities will assist the Town of Robersonville

with transforming the **Robersonville Meat Packing Company** into a certified, shovel-ready economic development site that will then be marketed to both commercial and industrial clients. The current CEDS for the Albemarle Commission, which includes the Town of Hertford, defined the goal of creating and maintaining a globally competitive region with the tactic of attracting more industries to the region. Again, preparing the **Hertford Livestock & Supply Company** for reuse as a shovel-ready economic development site for commercial or light industrial aligns with the strategy.

1.b.ii. Outcomes & Benefits of Reuse Strategy:

ElectriCities and our member communities have successfully attracted industries to certified Smart Sites®. For example, BELIEVER Meats, a leading pioneer of the cultivated meat industry, officially broke ground in December on its first U.S. commercial facility in Wilson. BELIEVER is making an initial planned investment of \$123.35 million and includes plans to create over 100 new jobs over the next three years. ElectriCities will work with the Towns to produce similar successes in attracting new industries to the target sites. The assessment and eventual cleanup and redevelopment of the target sites will produce the following initial beneficial outcomes: 1) 39 acres of land and 158,000 SF of building space ready for reuse, 2) identification of potential exposure pathways, mitigation, and reduction of legacy contamination impacting adjacent residential neighborhoods, 3) new businesses and increased economic activity and job creation, and 4) increased public power and tax revenues. The benefits for the disadvantaged communities include: 1) reduced exposure to contamination leading to improved health outcomes, 2) new opportunities for jobs and wage growth, 3) lower levels of poverty through gainful employment, and 4) a better quality of life. In addition, the outcomes and benefits will increase as we expand to additional sites statewide. Since the priority sites are vacant and unused, existing businesses and residents will not be displaced. ElectriCities will encourage and provide technical assistance to developers and new businesses to incorporate energy efficiencies as part of revitalization activities. ElectriCities will also provide all prospects with a climate vulnerability assessment and resiliency recommendations for each of the target sites. The assessments will be completed as part of each target site's comprehensive reuse plan and strategy.

1.c. Strategy for Leveraging Resources:

1.c.i. Resources Needed for Site Reuse:

ElectriCities and our community members are eligible for numerous state and Federal grants that can assist in the assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment of the target sites. For example, ElectriCities recently received grants from the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Economic Development Administration to assist communities with retail and manufacturing recruitment, respectively. Similar grants can be used for recruitment of prospects to the target sites. For site reuse and recruitment, ElectriCities offers member communities technical assistance worth \$25,000 to complete the Smart Sites® program, which can fund required steps not eligible under the EPA grant (engineering and marketing). If remediation is required, the towns may acquire the sites and apply for up to \$5 million in US EPA Brownfield Cleanup Grants. The towns may also apply for Golden LEAF (Tobacco Indemnification Fund) grants for site improvements. The EPA brownfields assessment grant can increase the likelihood of receiving these grants, since the EPA funding serves as leveraged funds. The **Ayden Pickle Plant** and **Robersonville Meat Packing Company** are eligible for Building Reuse Grants from the NC Department of Commerce under the Vacant Building Category, since Pitt and Martin Counties are considered Tier 1, a designation for the most distressed counties in the state. For workforce development at new industries, the towns can apply for a USDA Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant for up to 80% of project costs that can be applied to start-up costs (e.g., buildings, equipment) and to create and retain employment in rural areas. Other state grants include the NC Community Development Block Grant-Economic Development, NC Industrial Development Fund, NC Rural Center- Economic Infrastructure and Building Reuse, NC Community Development Block Grant-Infrastructure, the Clean Water Management Trust Fund, and the NC DOT- Rail Industrial Access Program. ElectriCities and our community members are committed to pursuing and securing the grants and resources necessary to complete the assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment of the target sites.

1.c.ii. Use of Existing Infrastructure:

The lack of infrastructure is one of the largest development constraints in the rural counties of our target areas with many areas without public water and sewer. Existing public water and sewer services are mostly located in the previously developed areas of our member communities, including the Target Areas for this grant. Priority sites and those to be identified through the inventory process are better positioned, because of existing infrastructure. The needed water, sewer, and electric infrastructure already exists on the sites with sufficient capacities for the proposed redevelopments. The sites are located on highways capable of supporting the redevelopments, and the **Ayden Pickle Plant** has rail access. All three sites have structures that can be adapted and reused for new prospects. No additional infrastructure needs are anticipated.

2. COMMUNITY NEED & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

2.a. Community Need:

2.a.i. The Community’s Need for Funding:

ElectriCities depends upon community membership funding and grants to provide services, as we do not have taxing authority. Therefore, we do not have funding available for environmental assessments of brownfields. Each of our three target areas have a **small population** with Ayden at 4,991 residents, Hertford at 2,050 residents, and Robersonville at 1,506 residents, and limited resources and staff capacity. As the following table shows, the Target Areas are noticeably more disadvantaged and have a significantly higher percentage of minority and **low-income** residents. All three target areas’ per capita incomes are 26-33% below the state’s, while their percentages of poverty and families receiving SNAP benefits are significantly higher. The median home value (property taxes are the main source of revenue for the towns) in Robersonville is **70% less** than the state’s, while Ayden and Hertford’s median home values are about 25% less. With a tax base consisting of small, low-income populations, the Target Areas do not have the ability to draw on other initial sources of funding to carry out environmental assessment, remediation, and the subsequent reuse of the priority sites.

Demographic Data (ACS 2021 5-year estimates)	Ayden	Pitt County	Hertford	Perquimans County	Robersonville	Martin County	North Carolina	US
Total Population	4,991	170,600	2,050	13,002	1,506	22,213	10,367,022	329,725,481
% Minority	49.9%	44.7%	49.8%	27.6%	71.8%	46.7%	33.8%	31.8%
% Under 5	5.85	5.7%	10.9%	4.4%	4.2%	5.2%	5.7%	5.9%
% Elderly (>65)	20.3%	13.4%	19.2%	27.5%	28.6%	23.3%	16.3%	16.0%
Median Household Income	\$50,938	\$50,422	\$43,571	\$53,138	\$36,250	\$41,798	\$60,516	\$69,021
Per Capita Income	\$23,154	\$29,696	\$25,399	\$29,209	\$22,862	\$25,389	\$34,209	\$37,638
% Unemployment	7.9%	7.4%	9.7%	5.2%	4.4%	10.4%	5.3%	5.5%
% All In Poverty	23.2%	20.7%	22.7%	13.1%	14.0%	19.8%	13.7%	12.6%
% Families with Children in Poverty	22.9%	20.6%	36.5%	16.5%	24.8%	32.6%	15.7%	13.9%
% with SNAP Benefits	25.9%	14.4%	24.5%	14.3%	17.2%	18.6%	12.1%	11.4%
Median Home Value	\$150,800	\$153,100	\$152,200	\$182,700	\$80,000	\$90,400	\$197,500	\$244,900

2.a.ii. Threats to Sensitive Populations:

(1) Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations:

The Target Area’s sensitive populations include low-income, elderly residents, and impoverished families with young children due to unemployment (see above table). These sensitive populations are more susceptible to the risks of exposure to environmental contamination, including the heavy metals, solvents, petroleum, PAHs, PCBs, ACM, and LBP contaminants suspected on the priority sites. According to data (see following table) from the CDC, all three target area communities report higher percentages of poor health status as compared to the United States.³

³ CDC. Places: Local Data for Better Health. <https://places.cdc.gov/?view=place&locationIds=3702840,3730900,3757100>

Measure (Age-adjusted prevalence %)	Ayden	Hertford	Robersonville	US
Mental health not good for >=14 days among adults aged >=18 years - 2021	17.9	17.5	19.4	15.2
Physical health not good for >=14 days among adults aged >=18 years - 2021	12.8	12.8	15.3	10.3
Fair or poor self-rated health status among adults aged >= 18 years - 2021	19.1	19.0	25.2	15.2

Assessments under this project will allow ElectriCities and the towns to identify the actual risks to the target areas and on the priority sites and take actions or develop plans to mitigate any potential threats. By facilitating the reuse of the priority sites, the project will improve the welfare of the Target Area by attracting new commercial or light industrial business and creating jobs directly in the Target Area – resulting in increased opportunities for living-wage income, improved quality of life, and a reduction of blight. The welfare of the Target Area, particularly a reversal of the unemployment and associated poverty, will finally be improved once new job opportunities are created with the site’s reuse. Left unmitigated, these properties will continue to negatively affect the communities that surround them by dampening property values and impacting the health and well-being of residents.

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

The Target Areas’ sensitive populations are particularly susceptible to chronic health impacts from the suspected contaminants associated with the former brownfields, including heavy metals, PCBs, PAHs, VOCs, SVOCs, petroleum constituents, pesticides, herbicides, ACM, and LBP. As the following table shows, the Ayden and Robersonville Target Areas have an elevated rate of asthma compared to the state, while the Town of Hertford is on par with the state. The census tracts of the priority sites in Ayden and Robersonville also show increased levels of asthma, according to CEJST. Exposure to airborne particulates, such as wind-blown contaminated soils and asbestos, may contribute to and/or complicate asthma and other respiratory diseases.

	Ayden	Hertford	Robersonville	North Carolina
Asthma, Percentage of Individuals ⁴	11.6%	11.2%	12.3%	11.3%
CEJST Asthma Percentile ⁵	82 nd	70 th	90 th	

As the following table shows, Martin County, covering the Robersonville target area, has higher incidences of numerous cancers than the state and US. Pitt County (Ayden) has higher incidences of Lung and Pancreatic cancers, while Perquimans County (Hertford) has a higher rate of Lung cancer and a higher age-adjusted mortality rate than the US. Data was unavailable at the town/city level, so county data is provided. Exposure to heavy metals, such as found at all three target sites, is linked to increases in lung and kidney cancers. Exposure to ACM (found at all three sites) may also lead to increased incidences of lung cancer. Exposure to solvents is linked to Pancreatic cancer; while Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma is linked to benzene and solvents.

National Cancer Institute State Cancer Profiles ⁶	Pitt County (Ayden)	Perquimans County (Hertford)	Martin County (Robersonville)	North Carolina	U.S.
Age-Adjusted Incidence Rate cases per 100,000					
Incidence Rate of Colon & Rectum Cancers	31.8	29.5	41.3	34.9	36.5
Incidence Rate of Kidney & Renal Pelvis Cancer	16.5	n/a	19.3	18.3	17.2
Incidence Rate of Lung Cancers	55.2	57.3	67.4	62.8	54.0
Incidence Rate of Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma	15.1	12.0	18.6	17.6	18.6
Incidence Rate of Pancreas Cancer	12.7	n/a	12.6	10.9	11.1
Incidence Rate of All Cancer Sites	429.8	399.2	469.9	464.4	442.3
Age-Adjusted Mortality Rate (All Cancers)	146.2	152.8	166.2	154.5	149.4

(3) Environmental Justice:

(3).(a) Identification of Environmental Justice Issues

⁴ <http://www.city-data.com>. Accessed October 2023.

⁵ Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool. <https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/>. Accessed October 2023.

⁶ National Cancer Institute. <https://statecancerprofiles.cancer.gov/index.html>. Accessed October 2023.

The impact from our target area brownfields industrial operations and their proximity to the sensitive populations, including low income, impoverished, and mostly minority residents has disproportionately exposed them to environmental contaminants. The CEJST tool shows the census tracts of each of the target areas are disparately impacted by several climate and economic justice factors. In Ayden, CEJST indicates the area is in the **72nd percentile for low income**, 91st percentile for diabetes, **94th percentile for unemployment**, 93rd for expected agricultural loss rate, and 17% of people have less than a high school diploma. In Hertford, CEJST shows the target area in the **69th percentile for low income**, 90th percentile for heart disease, 94th for transportation barriers, **92nd for unemployment**, and 13% with less than a high school diploma. In Robersonville, CEJST indicates the target area in the **87th percentile for low income**, 90th percentile for asthma, 97th percentile for diabetes, 96th percentile for heart disease, 96th percentile for energy cost, 98th percentile for transportation barriers, 93rd percentile for expected agriculture loss rate, 96th percentile for expected building loss rate, **83rd for unemployment**, and 23% with less than a high school diploma. The data from CEJST clearly demonstrates the extent and severity of the environmental justice issues affecting the target areas in these Justice40 disadvantaged census tracts.

(3).(b) Advancing Environmental Justice

While this project cannot reverse all the negative factors impacting the target areas, the assessment and eventual cleanup and redevelopment of the sites can help significantly improve the health, income, and unemployment statistics. Site assessments and cleanup planning under this project will identify potential contaminants, migration pathways, and mitigation and containment measures to help prevent offsite transport and exposure to contaminants. The project will identify methods and funding strategies to remediate sites, when needed. The redevelopment of the properties will provide new job opportunities and help raise property values for local homeowners (one of the biggest factors in wealth creation) for this disproportionately impacted population. In addition, community engagement under the project will provide the target area residents an opportunity to actively participate in site assessment, cleanup, and reuse planning and decision making, as well as provide an opportunity for residents to identify additional sites impacting their communities.

2.b. Community Engagement:

2.b.i. Project Involvement and 2.b.ii. Project Roles:

In 2024, ElectriCities is establishing an Economic Development Advisory Roundtable, which will be comprised of City Managers, Economic Development Directors, Downtown Directors, Utility Directors, and similar professionals. In addition to other missions, the Roundtable will establish a subcommittee to serve as the Brownfields Task Force (BTF) for this project. The following table includes, but is not limited to, our target area BTF members and other community partners that will be invited to join the BTF:

Partner Name	Point of contact (name, email & phone)	Specific role in the project
Town of Ayden	Thomas Denham, Econ Dev Dir (252) 481-5831 tdenham@ayden.com	Serve on BTF, identify and prioritize sites, provide input on cleanup and reuse planning, and directly engage with target area community in Ayden.
Ayden Rotary Club	Paula Loftin, President (252) 717-7006 aydenrotary@aol.com	Civic org dedicated to providing humanitarian service, encouraging high ethical standards in all vocations, and helping build goodwill and peace in the world. Will invite project team to be a guest speaker at regular meeting, support community outreach, and participate in reuse planning activities.
Town of Hertford	Janice Cole, Town Manager (252) 426-1969 hertfordmanager@gmail.com	Serve on BTF, identify and prioritize sites, provide input on cleanup and reuse planning, and directly engage with target area community in Hertford.
Historic Hertford Inc.	Trish Rand, Director (252) 426-5102 trand@townofhertfordnc.com	Nonprofit focused on enhancing the cultural, social and economic opportunities for the residents of Perquimans County. Will support site identification, community outreach, and reuse planning.
Town of Robersonville	Chris Roberson, Town Manager (242) 508-0320	Serve on BTF, identify and prioritize sites, provide input on cleanup and reuse planning, and directly engage with target area community in Robersonville.
Robersonville Ruritan Club	Al Cochran, President (252) 661-2968	Civic org dedicated to improving communities. Will invite project team to regular meeting to present and will participate in site reuse planning.

Partner Name	Point of contact (name, email & phone)	Specific role in the project
Martin County Chamber of Commerce	April Cooper, Exec Director (252) 792-4131 director@martinchamber.com	Org dedicated to supporting businesses in Martin County. Will identify additional sites, support community engagement, invite members to participate in project activities, and help site reuse and recruitment efforts.
Martin County Economic Development Corporation	Steve Biggs, President/CEO (252) 789-4907 sbiggs@martincountyedc.com	The designated local org hat lead business recruitment for Martin County and its municipalities, including Robersonville. Will serve on BTF, help identify and prioritize additional sites, engage Martin County communities, and actively support reuse planning and business recruitment for target site in Robersonville.

2.b.iii. Incorporating Community Input:

ElectriCities’ Economic Development Advisory Roundtable will establish a subcommittee to serve as the Brownfields Task Force (BTF). This subcommittee will focus on identifying and prioritizing sites as well as working with their network of professionals to gain expert advice when planning the next steps for redevelopment. During the assessment project we will engage with potential stakeholders, such as property owners, community organizations, nonprofit leaders, public officials, and business leaders, to inform them of the project activities and the redevelopment potential and funding strategies for the cleanup and reuse of sites.

ElectriCities will also solicit input and provide regular project updates through public meetings to include a kick-off meeting for the new grant, quarterly BTF meetings, and site-specific community meetings in the target areas for each priority site. These meetings will be advertised to the public and will be coordinated and attended by the community partners. Project progress, public services, and community input will be discussed during these meetings. Translators will be available to engage non-English speaking community members, when needed. ElectriCities will also create fact sheets with grant and project specific information, which will be posted on our www.electricities.com website and publicly distributed in the target communities. Press-releases will be published in local newspapers in the target areas and presented during Town Council meetings. Social media and website posts will be used to deliver grant and project specific information to the public and community members. Public feedback will be solicited through social media and surveys.

ElectriCities will maintain sign-in sheets for follow-up communication (if applicable) related to input incorporated into the project. All public comments/inquiries received in meeting or electronically will be addressed by the project team and/or BTF and responded to by the project team in a timely manner.

3. TASK DESCRIPTIONS, COST ESTIMATES & MEASURING PROGRESS:

3.a. Description of Tasks/Activities & Outputs:

3.a.i. Project Implementation, ii. Anticipated Project Schedule, iii. Task/Activity Lead, & iv. Outputs:

ElectriCities is prepared to complete the following tasks within the four years:

Task 1: Project Management & Reporting
i. The ElectriCities Project Manager will oversee the grant management and compliance with EPA grant terms and conditions. He will ensure tasks are completed efficiently and will be responsible for oversight of the Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP), which will be procured prior to October 1, 2024. He will hold monthly project team meetings and lead quarterly Brownfields Task Force (BTF) meetings to review the project and make corrections, as needed, to stay on schedule and meet the project’s goals. With assistance from the QEP, he will complete EPA quarterly reports, Federal Financial Report (FFR) and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) utilization forms, and ACRES database entries/updates. ElectriCities staff and representatives from the Target Areas will also attend national and regional training workshops relevant to brownfields redevelopment. At the end of the project, with assistance from the QEP, he will draft a Final Report to document accomplishments and lessons learned.
iii. Schedule: October 1, 2024 – September 30, 2028
iv. Task/Activity Lead: ElectriCities Project Manager
v. Outputs: 48 Project Team Meetings; 16 Quarterly Reports; 4 FFR and DBE forms; regular ACRES updates; 1 Final Performance Report
Task 2: Community Outreach

i. The ElectriCities Project Manager will lead the community outreach efforts with support from staff and the QEP. Specific tasks include establishing a BTF comprised of community and governmental partners; identifying and prioritizing sites; facilitating community workshops in the Target Areas; and, preparing outreach materials, such as presentations, articles, and web and social media posts. BTF meetings will occur quarterly, while Community Workshops will take place multiple times annually. The project team will also conduct outreach to community groups, property owners, and developers approximately quarterly.
iii. Schedule: Oct 2024 – Sep 2028; BTF meetings in 1 st month of each quarter; Community Workshops about every 3 months; release of project outreach materials begins in the 2 nd quarter and will continue through the end of the project; other meetings anticipated quarterly.
iv. Task/Activity Lead: ElectriCities Project Manager with support from staff and QEP
v. Outputs: 16 BTF Meetings; 16 Community Workshops; 6 print outreach materials; 16 social media/webpage posts; 16 meetings with community groups, site owners, and/or developers.
Task 3: Site Assessments and Cleanup Planning
i. The QEP will complete site assessments on sites identified as priorities for the community. Site Eligibility Forms will be completed for EPA approval, and petroleum determinations will be requested from NCDEQ. Phase I ESAs will be performed by the QEP in accordance with ASTM E1527-21 and the EPA All Appropriate Inquiry Final Rule. Phase II ESAs will be conducted by the consultant in accordance with ASTM E1903-19, after the approval of a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) and site-specific QAPPs (SSQAPPs). The QEP will also develop Health and Safety Plans (HASPs) prior to field work. ACM and LBP surveys will be completed for many of the older buildings on priority sites. Health Monitoring activities will not be conducted under this project. For sites with contamination, Analysis of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives (ABCAs) will be developed to identify applicable remediation alternatives for the site based on potential reuse scenarios.
iii. Schedule: QAPP in the 1 st quarter; Phase I ESAs start the 2 nd quarter and continue as funding allows until the 13 th quarter. ACM&LBP Surveys and Phase II ESAs start in the 3 rd quarter after approval of QAPP and SSQAPPs and will continue as funding allows until the 14 th quarter. ABCAs will be completed after Phase IIs, anticipated to begin in the 5 th quarter and continue through the 15 th quarter.
iv. Task/Activity Lead: QEP with oversight from ElectriCities Project Manager
v. Outputs: 10 Ph I ESAs; 1 QAPP; 6 SSQAPPs, HASPs, & Ph IIs; 6 ACM/LBP Surveys; 6 ABCAs or ACM
Task 4: Redevelopment Planning
i. ElectriCities staff will work with community partners to develop a brownfields strategy for each target area by identifying prioritized brownfield sites, opportunities for redevelopment, and resources needed to achieve specific community goals. With assistance from the QEP, ElectriCities staff will develop comprehensive, site-specific reuse studies to help facilitate redevelopment of priority sites. The studies may include, but not limited to, reuse concepts, market studies, economic impact studies, infrastructure and facility condition assessments, land use studies for highest and best reuse, climate vulnerability assessments, as well as energy efficiency and resiliency recommendations.
iii. Schedule: Reuse plans and market studies start in 5 th quarter and continue through the 15 th quarter.
iv. Task/Activity Lead: ElectriCities Project Manager with support from staff and QEP
v. Outputs: 6 Site-specific Reuse Studies; 6 Market Studies; 6 Climate Vulnerability Assessments

3.b. Cost Estimates:

The following costs (rounded to nearest \$) and anticipated outputs were estimated based on information from other communities that have recently received EPA brownfield grants:

Categories	Task 1	Task 2	Task 3	Task 4	Total
Personnel					\$0
Fringe Benefits					\$0
Travel	\$12,000				\$12,000
Supplies					
Contractual	\$27,100	\$27,000	\$295,300	\$138,600	\$488,000
Total Direct Costs	\$39,100	\$27,000	\$295,300	\$138,600	\$500,000
Total Indirect Costs					\$0
Total	\$39,100	\$27,000	\$295,300	\$138,600	\$500,000

TASK 1: PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING:

Travel: 4 staff attend 3 regional workshops (4x3x\$500/person); 2 staff attend 2 national conferences (2x2x\$1,500/person) = \$12,000

Contractual: 48 project team meetings (48x\$325); 16 Quarterly Reports (16x\$250); 1 final summary report (\$3,500); quarterly ACRES updates (16x\$250) = \$27,100

Total Task 1 = \$44,220

TASK 2: COMMUNITY OUTREACH:

Contractual: BTF meetings (16x\$750); Community Workshops (16x\$500); project outreach materials (6x\$500); owner and developer meetings (16x\$250) = \$27,000

Total Task 2 = \$33,920

TASK 3: SITE ASSESSMENTS AND CLEANUP PLANNING:

Contractual: Phase I ESAs (10x\$4,000); QAPP (\$3,000); SSQAPPs (6x\$4,000); HSPs (6x\$500); Phase II ESAs (6x\$29,300 avg); ACM & LBP surveys (6x\$4,500); ABCAs or ACM Abatement Plans (6x\$3,750) = \$295,300

Total Task 3 = \$295,300

TASK 4: REDEVELOPMENT PLANNING:

Contractual: Reuse strategy plans (\$175/hr x 132 hrs = \$23,100) x 6 = 138,600

Total Task 4 = \$138,600

3.c. Plan to Measure and Evaluate Environmental Progress and Results:

ElectriCities will hold monthly conference calls with the Project Team (including EPA's Region 4 project officer and NCDEQ project manager) to review progress and take corrective actions, when necessary, to ensure the funds are expended in an efficient and timely manner. The BTF will meet quarterly to review community priorities, address any community concerns, and guide the project. ElectriCities will submit Quarterly Reports, detailing the outputs and outcomes of the project, and enter and track site-specific information in the online ACRES database. At a minimum, outputs to be tracked include the number of and attendees present at Community Workshops and Steering Committee meetings, public meetings, environmental assessments, ABCAs, and redevelopment plans; and, the outcomes to be tracked include community participation, acres assessed, acres ready for reuse, redevelopment dollars leveraged, and jobs created.

4. PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY & PAST PERFORMANCE:

4.a. Programmatic Capability:

4.a.i. Organizational Capacity:

ElectriCities of North Carolina, Inc., is the membership organization that provides power supply and related critical services to 51 community-owned electric systems in North Carolina. ElectriCities helps these locally owned and operated public power providers thrive today and in the future by delivering innovative services, including legislative, technical, communications, and economic development expertise. As a member services organization, ElectriCities of North Carolina has more than 50 years of experience in managing annual budgets and power contracts in the hundreds of millions of dollars on behalf of our 51 member towns and cities.

4.a.ii. Organizational Structure:

ElectriCities is governed by a board of directors. Board members are elected by the boards of commissioners of the two North Carolina Power Agencies and the non-Power Agency board. Roy L. Jones is Chief Executive Officer of ElectriCities. He has more than 40 years of experience in the electric power industry. As CEO, Roy is responsible for executive leadership of the organization and staff, including the Economic and Community Development department that will lead this project. This team of economic developers has more than 50 years of combined economic development and grant management experience. The team's work includes provision of technical assistance to our public power communities, assistance to small business owners, and attraction efforts for new business and industry.

4.a.iii. Description of Key Staff:

Carl Rees, CECD, who will serve as the project manager, is a certified economic developer through the International Economic Development Council. He has a 23-year history of federal grant management to include federal Hazard Mitigation grants, EPA Brownfield assessment and RLF grants, CDBG grants, Department of Energy (DOE) energy efficiency grants, USDA Rural Business grants, and US Economic Development Administration (EDA) grants. The total award amount of those grants is in the vicinity of \$100 million, and there has never been a finding with any of the grants during pre-grant or post-grant audits. He will be supported by Jennings Gray, Senior Economic Development – Commercial, who works as an economic developer with a focus on retail and commercial development. He has over 14 years of experience in public and private economic development, local government administration, grants management, and corporate retail site selection consulting. He maintains key relationships with government officials, national commercial real estate brokers, and developers, which will help with this project’s reuse planning and strategy development. Casey Verburg, CECD, Senior Economic Developer – Industrial, will also support Carl with the project, particularly with industrial reuse planning and strategy development. She has worked in economic development and business recruitment since 2008.

4.a.iv. Acquiring Additional Resources:

To assist with programmatic and technical aspects of the project, ElectriCities will procure a QEP experienced in brownfields assessment and redevelopment in accordance with 2 CFR Part 200 and 1500. The ElectriCities’ Purchasing Department procures services efficiently, effectively, and at the best value for project in a timely manner. The QEP will be competitively selected by June 2024 to start project activities upon award. The Project Manager will closely supervise the QEP to ensure all requirements are met within the four-year duration of the project. The procurement department will follow a similar, compliant process, if additional resources are needed. The procurement will be advertised statewide, and our target communities will distribute all requests for proposals to their local contractors and encourage them to apply and/or seek subcontracting opportunities.

4.b. Past Performance & Accomplishments:

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

4.b.ii.(1) Purpose and Accomplishments:

US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG) Grant: This \$80,000 grant was awarded in August of 2022 and has allowed ElectriCities and our contractors to deliver a suite of technical assistance services centered around retail recruitment to ten (10) rural communities across North Carolina. Specifically, ElectriCities and our contractors developed market research, delivered training, and also developed plans and strategies to empower community leaders to recruit new retail small businesses to their rural towns. This grant was closed out in October of 2023.

Economic Development Administration (EDA) Grant: This grant was awarded in January 2022 in the amount of \$160,000 and is focused on strategically positioning 10 economically distressed North Carolina towns and small cities to receive manufacturing investment that is aligned with current advanced manufacturing growth trends. Manufacturing investment will lead to the creation of jobs with pay scales that exceed the local prevailing wage and provide benefits such as health insurance to their employees. This work is being accomplished through a three-pronged approach that includes target sector identification, training to the participating towns and cities, and marketing to companies within the target sectors. This grant will be closed out in the spring of 2024.

4.b.ii.(2) Compliance with Grant Requirements:

ElectriCities of NC met and continues to meet all of the requirements and conditions of the USDA and EDA grant funding described, including constant and open communication with the granting agencies project managers, completing the projects according to the work plans and schedules, achieving and reporting the expected results, and submitting all required reports in a timely manner.

Threshold Criteria for Community-Wide Assessment Grants

FY24 ElectriCities Brownfields Community-wide Assessment Grant Application

1. APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY:

(a) Applicant Type: Government Entity Created by State Legislature

(b) Eligibility: ElectriCities of North Carolina, Inc., was incorporated in 1984, after the Joint Municipal Electric Power and Energy Act of 1975 (NC Chapter 159B) established the right of municipal power communities to form a joint municipal agency to accomplish the purposes of the Act. Therefore, as a “Government Entity Created by State Legislature,” ElectriCities of North Carolina is eligible to receive EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant funding. The articles of incorporation and a copy of the Act are attached.

2. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:

ElectriCities’ Economic Development Advisory Roundtable will establish a subcommittee to serve as the Brownfields Task Force (BTF). This subcommittee will focus on identifying and prioritizing sites as well as working with their network of professionals to gain expert advice when planning the next steps for redevelopment. During the assessment project we will engage with potential stakeholders, such as property owners, community organizations, nonprofit leaders, public officials, and business leaders, to inform them of the project activities and the redevelopment potential and funding strategies for the cleanup and reuse of sites.

ElectriCities will also solicit input and provide regular project updates through public meetings to include a kick-off meeting for the new grant, quarterly BTF meetings, and site-specific community meetings in the target areas for each priority site. These meetings will be advertised to the public and will be coordinated and attended by the community partners. Project progress, public services, and community input will be discussed during these meetings. Translators will be available to engage non-English speaking community members, when needed. ElectriCities will also create fact sheets with grant and project specific information, which will be posted on our www.electricities.com website and publicly distributed in the target communities. Press-releases will be published in local newspapers in the target areas and presented during Town Council meetings. Social media and website posts will be used to deliver grant and project specific information to the public and community members. Public feedback will be solicited through social media and surveys.

ElectriCities will maintain sign-in sheets for follow-up communication (if applicable) related to input incorporated into the project. All public comments/inquiries received in meeting or electronically will be addressed by the project team and/or BTF and responded to by the project team in a timely manner.

3. EXPENDITURE OF EXISTING GRANT FUNDS:

ElectriCities of North Carolina, Inc., does not have an open EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant or Multipurpose Grant.

4. CONTRACTORS AND NAMED SUBRECIPIENTS:

Not Applicable. ElectriCities has not procured a contractor and does plan to award grants to subrecipients.