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Michael S. James, County Manager  
 Adam T. Short, Assistant County Manager  
 Vickie King, Clerk to the Board

## Narrative Information Sheet

1. **Applicant Identification:** Lenoir County, 130 South Queen Street, Kinston, North Carolina 28501
2. **Funding Requested:**
  - a. Assessment Grant Type: Assessment Coalition
  - b. Federal Funds Requested: \$1,000,000.00

**3. Location:**

*Non-lead Member:* Wayne County  
*Address:* Wayne County Courthouse  
 224 E Walnut Street  
 Goldsboro, NC 27530

*Non-Lead Member:* Greene County  
*Address:* 229 Kingold Boulevard  
 Snow Hill, NC 28580

*Non-Lead Member:* Greene Lamp  
*Address:* 309 Summit Ave  
 Kinston, NC 28501

*Geographic Boundaries:* The project will take place within the geographic boundaries of Lenoir County, Greene County, and Wayne County of North Carolina. The project focus will be further defined by target areas within each respective county and is described in the subsequent section.

**4. Coalition Members' Target Areas and Priority Site Information:**

- a. Lenoir County:
  - i. Target Area: La Grange, North Carolina
  - ii. Census Tract: 37079950200
  - iii. Priority Site Addresses:
    1. 102 South Forbes Street, La Grange, NC
- b. Greene County
  - i. Target Area: Snow Hill, North Carolina
  - ii. Census Tract/Block Group: 37079950302/370799503021
  - iii. Priority Site Addresses:
    1. 204 Carolina Drive, Snow Hill, NC (capacitor manufacturing facility)
- c. Wayne County
  - i. Target Area: Mount Olive, North Carolina
  - ii. Census Tracts: 37191000700 & 37191000800
  - iii. Priority Site Addresses:
    1. 300 South Chestnut Street, Mount Olive, NC

**5. Contacts:**

- a. Project Director: Adam Short  
 Phone Number: 252-559-2260  
 Email Address: adam.short@lenoircounty.com  
 Mailing Address: PO Box 3289, Kinston, NC
- b. Chief Executive/Highest Ranking Official: Linda Rouse-Sutton, County Commissioner  
 Phone Number: 252-559-0291  
 Email Address: linda.rousesutton@lenoircountync.gov  
 Mailing Address: 1028 Woodington Road, Kinston, NC 28504

**6. Population:**

- a. La Grange, North Carolina: 2,798
- b. Snow Hill, North Carolina: 1,481
- c. Mount Olive, North Carolina: 4,489

**7. Other Factors:**

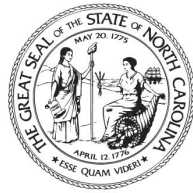
| <b>Other Factor</b>  | <b>Page #</b> |
|--|---------------|
| Community population is 10,000 or less   | 2             |
| The reuse of the priority sites will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy.   | 4, 5          |
| The reuse of the site will incorporate energy efficiency measures  | 4, 5          |
| The proposed project will improve local climate adaptation/mitigation capacity and resilience to protect residents and community investments.                                      | 4, 5          |
| 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 sites within the target areas. | 10, 11        |
| 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.  | 7             |

- 8. Letter from the State or Tribal Environmental Authority (included as Attachment A)**
- 9. Releasing Copies of Applications – Not applicable**

# Attachment A

## Narrative Information Sheet Attachment – State Environmental Authority Letter

ROY COOPER  
*Governor*  
ELIZABETH S. BISER  
*Secretary*  
MICHAEL SCOTT  
*Director*



NORTH CAROLINA  
*Environmental Quality*

November 7, 2023

Adam Short  
Assistant County Manager  
Lenoir County  
130 South Queen Street  
Kinston, NC 28501  
[Adam.Short@lenoircountync.gov](mailto:Adam.Short@lenoircountync.gov)

Re: U.S. EPA Brownfields Community-Wide Assessment Grant  
Green, Lenoir, and Wayne County Coalition

Dear Mr. Short,

The North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Brownfields Redevelopment Section (BRS) acknowledges and supports the Green, Lenoir, and Wayne County Coalition's (Coalition) application for a U.S. EPA Brownfields Community-Wide Assessment Grant. We understand your grant will focus on positioning three large former manufacturing facilities in the towns of La Grange, Snow Hill, and Mt. Olive for redevelopment. Repurposing of these substantive properties would be a tremendous economic development success for the Coalition area.

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 Coalition 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

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

## NARRATIVE/RANKING CRITERIA

### 1. PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION AND PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION

#### a. Coalition Members, Target Areas, and Brownfields

##### i. Coalition Members

Lenoir County of North Carolina, identified as a county government, will serve as the **lead entity** for this Assessment Coalition grant. This project will be managed by Adam Short, Planning Director for Lenoir County. Both Greene County and Wayne County of North Carolina will serve as the **non-lead members** for this project and are identified as county governments which are General Purpose Units of Local Government eligible for funding under this solicitation.

Greene and Wayne counties are experiencing severe capacity constraints as they navigate a myriad of educational, economic, and demographic disparities plaguing their under-populated communities. Population losses are continuing in both counties at a rate of -4.3% annually, resulting in decreasing tax revenue and an inability to fund/staff programs such as brownfields. Similarly, with no capacity to effectively manage economic development, Greene and Wayne County joined Lenoir County as members of the North Carolina Global Transpark Economic Development Region (EDR) in 2020 in order to develop an economic development strategy that would increase the tax bases of all three counties. The EDR has become the region's largest economic development agency and draws on the strengths of each member to "market the region's land and building assets, people, quality of life, military bases and the opportunities they bring"<sup>1</sup>

Greene Lamp, **our final non-lead member and 501c3 nonprofit organization**, will serve as the coalition's community-based organization (CBO) for this project. Greene Lamp serves all three of our coalition member counties by providing services and programs to our low-income residents. With several staff vacancies and no experience applying for or managing a brownfields grant, Greene Lamp does not currently have the capacity to lead a 2023 brownfield grant on their own.

##### ii. Overview of Brownfields Challenges and Description of Target Areas

The limits of Lenoir, Wayne, and Greene counties make up the geographic boundaries for work proposed under this grant and are located at the heart of Eastern North Carolina. Brownfields challenges in this region can be directly linked to globalization and job outsourcing throughout the 1900's, which decimated the tobacco, warehousing, and manufacturing industries that this region relied on. As a result, residents left the area in search of better opportunities and a surplus of abandoned gasoline stations, former industrial sites, and underutilized commercial and retail buildings were left behind and now pose an environmental threat to the remaining populations. Communities that once provided business, retail, and support services for these industries and their workers have become a vacant core.

In an effort to reclaim economic success within these counties, the North Carolina Global Transpark (GTP) was opened in 1992 with a mission to create over 100,000 total jobs by 2010. It was anticipated that communities within Lenoir, Greene, and Wayne counties would help to attract businesses for the 2,500-acre multimodal industrial megapark, which would then create better paying jobs and improved quality of life for current and future residents. But as of 2022 only 2,465 total jobs within the GTP had been generated.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, continued population and business losses have been a detriment to these recruitment efforts. These losses have created our biggest challenge – the undetermined environmental conditions at the multitude of vacant/idle buildings (and sites) in the region and the adverse impact (environmental and economic) these sites have on our residents. The EDR, formed specifically to bolster

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<sup>1</sup> 2022 North Carolina Global Transpark Annual Report

<sup>2</sup> 2022 North Carolina Global Transpark Annual Report

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recruitment and economic development in the region, has indicated that having building space and sites with the environmental status already determined would significantly aid in the overall business processes.

The GTP has recently landed several contracts with aviation tenants, providing renewed opportunity to recreate economic prosperity for Eastern North Carolina. This grant will leverage this opportunity to address our regional challenges by uniting the original mission of GTP with a multifaceted and collaborative redevelopment strategy. The coalition plans to carefully remove these initial environmental barriers and market our brownfields sites to increase the readily available building/site space for the newly attracted and future employees and families. It will also remove blight and improve environmental justice within our most underserved communities. In doing so, these communities will be able to increase visitors, create local jobs, and attract investment for the GTP.

Each target area is strategically selected based on proximity to Highways 70, 258, 58, and the conversion of Highway 117 to I-795 which are identified as the main commuter transportation corridors into the GTP. By focusing our revitalization efforts on communities along the GTP corridor, our goal is to increase the number of high-paying jobs that the population has access to.

### *La Grange, Lenoir County, North Carolina – Census Tract# 37079950200*

The town of La Grange, North Carolina is approximately 2.3 square miles, home to 2,798 residents, and located a mere 15 miles from the GTP on Highway 70. We will target potential brownfield sites along Railroad Street and Caswell Street within the city limits of La Grange. Caswell Street is indicative of a main street, downtown area although few businesses remain open and active. Starting at the southern limits of the city, Caswell Street consists of degrading single-family homes. As you enter the downtown section, the streets are lined with boarded-up or abandoned gas stations and former dry-cleaning facilities. Railroad Street intersects Caswell at the north end of La Grange and has a similar description and appearance, but an active railroad line runs alongside the road.

### *Snow Hill, Greene County, North Carolina – Block Group # 370799503021*

Snow Hill is located along the south banks of Contentnea Creek and is considered one of the most isolated county seats of the North Carolina coastal plain with a population of only 1,481 at the 2020 Decennial Census. The target area for Greene County will focus on Snow Hill, specifically targeting sites along the Highway 258 and 58 corridors and best identified as Block Group 370799503021. By 1931, rail service from Kinston to Snow Hill was discontinued, leaving few shipping and transportation options for businesses. As a result, businesses were abandoned and lots remain vacant as a majority of Snow Hill's population now commutes to neighboring Pitt and Lenoir Counties. Four known toxic release sites exist within the town limits along with two identified redevelopment sites<sup>3</sup>.

### *Mount Olive, Wayne County, North Carolina – Census Tract #37191000700 & 37191000800*

Our third target area is the town of Mount Olive (population 4,489) with a particular focus on the downtown area, a 10 block vacant core on either side of Center Street that includes Breazeale Avenue, the old Highway 117 Business. The target area has a total population of 4,198 residents and is literally centered around the CSX freight rail that runs through the middle of town. To the east and west of the railroad, dilapidated buildings and vacant businesses pockmark the “quaint, boring, vacant, shabby, and unsafe” community as described by residents via a Mount Olive Tribune article after a town meeting this

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<sup>3</sup> Town of Snow Hill, North Carolina Comprehensive Plan 2035, December 2013

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past fall<sup>4</sup>. Our grant will target vacant business locations along Center Street, on either side of the rail line, and extend into the surrounding downtown core bordered by Highway 117 Bypass and Highway 55.

### iii. Description of the Priority Brownfields Sites

There are literally hundreds of brownfield sites in our three-county region. These sites range from ¼-acre to over 50-acres and include abandoned gas stations, shuttered factories, former dry-cleaners, small auto service and machine shops and vacant storefronts in our downtowns.

Based solely on publicly available research material, **La Grange** is home to one hazardous waste site, 2 historic dry cleaners, 3 inactive hazardous waste sites, 5 current/former auto repair stations and 9 UST/AST incidents. The Town Manager has identified at least five brownfields sites that are priorities for redevelopment, including a former fertilizer sales/storage company, a vacant 2.9-acre site that was once home to a harvester manufacturing plant and an abandoned 18,700 square foot manufacturing facility that sits on 2.1 acres directly adjacent to a residential neighborhood. The priority site in La Grange is an abandoned/vacant site on 9.2 acres that was once a metal working facility and later a sawmill. Five buildings totaling 39,600 square feet are present on this site. Assessment of this site is a priority because of its usable structures and because it sits directly across from the elementary school and a senior living facility. Potential environmental issues include storage and use of petroleum and hazardous substances.

**Snow Hill** is home to one hazardous waste site and 7 UST/AST release incidents. It is also home to two manufacturing facilities that will be vacated in early 2024. One is a 75,000 square foot farm production facility that sits on 22-acres. The second is our priority site, a current (and historic) capacitor manufacturing facility that sits right on Highway 58 as you exit Snow Hill headed to the GTP. This two-story, 35,500-square foot facility sits on 5.57 acres and will be vacated in March 2024. This site is a priority for assessment and reuse because of its location and usable structure that can be an asset as we try to recruit support businesses for the GTP. We are concerned about the VOCs, metals, solvents and acids used in this process that may have contaminated soil, groundwater and soil vapor.

The target area in **Mount Olive** is home to 3 former dry cleaners, a pre-regulatory landfill, 15 former gas station/auto repair shops (10 alone on Breazeale Avenue), 5 active UST facilities, 36 UST/AST incidents, a former armory and a 104-acre chloride groundwater contaminant plume from a pickle plant that sits beneath a large section of town. Our priority site is the 0.98-acre former Southern States facility. This facility sold farm chemicals, fertilizers, etc. and stored bulk liquids in three large vertical ASTs. The site is developed with three structures, one approximately 8,700 square foot former operations building, a scale house and an approximately 1,200-square foot storage shed. This site is a priority for assessment and reuse because of its usable structures and location one block off of Center Street and across the railroad tracks from a low-income, minority neighborhood. We are concerned that VOCs, nitrates, and heavy metals from this operation may have contaminated soil, groundwater and soil vapor, in particular soil vapor beneath the nearby residences. Redevelopment of this parcel could be a catalyst for the redevelopment and/or reuse of several other large brownfields just south of downtown along the railroad tracks.

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<sup>4</sup> Herring, Steve. "No Silver Bullet to Fix Downtown Problems - Ways to Chip Away Possible, Some Say." *Mount Olive Tribune*, 8 Oct. 2023, [www.mountolivetribune.com/top-stories/3318/no-silver-bullet-to-fix-downtown-problems-ways-to-chip-away-possible-some-say/](http://www.mountolivetribune.com/top-stories/3318/no-silver-bullet-to-fix-downtown-problems-ways-to-chip-away-possible-some-say/).

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### iv. Identifying Additional Sites

The EDR has already developed an initial list of sites which could be readily assessed under this grant both in the target areas and in other areas of the three-county region. Brownfield scenarios similar to those in all three of our target areas exist in other small communities throughout our region including Pink Hill, Deep Run, Elroy, Fremont, Roseboro, Maury, Hookerton and Walstonburg, just to name a few. Our consultant will also be available to perform more detailed inventory activities should the need arise. To help us prioritize sites, we've developed the following ranking criteria: abandoned or underutilized and meets Site Eligibility requirements; existing buildings/structures and condition for reuse; redevelopment (or potential redevelopment) aligns with EDR/target area goals; site reuse contributes to the revitalization of our target corridors; potential environmental concerns; exposure potential; and "marketability". We will place a higher priority on sites in underserved or disadvantaged communities and will use census data and CEJST to help in that endeavor.

### b. Revitalization of the Target Areas

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

United by a similar mission, Lenoir, Greene and Wayne County joined the NC Global Transpark Economic Development Region (EDR) to take advantage of a regional approach to economic development. The projected reuses of our priority sites are for the recruitment of complementary businesses (manufacturing or commercial) that come along with (or grow out of) the larger companies targeted by the EDR and GTP. These reuses also align perfectly with the priorities of our communities and the EDR. The comprehensive redevelopment plans and initiatives for Lenoir County (a plan does not exist for La Grange), Snow Hill, and Mount Olive (Downtown Revitalization Plan) each prioritize the reuse of "underused/underutilized commercial and industrial structures" as an "essential action" for revitalization. One of the main goals of the EDR aligns with the goals of all our communities - to collaboratively create vibrant physical, social, and economic environments for its citizens and businesses. Finally, the EDR recently adopted three key resolutions that align with our region's plan for revitalization: 1) Through proactive measures, increase the inventory of ready-to-use existing buildings in the region; 2) Remove blight in the GTP's surrounding communities to help attract new residents and support businesses; and 3) Use available funding sources to reposition our region's brownfield properties for reuse and/or redevelopment.

#### ii. Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategy

The potential impact of our proposed project on economic development in the region is enormous. Increasing our inventory of sites with the environmental issues identified and/or addressed will send a strong message to the leadership of the companies being recruited by the GTP and EDR – "We have sites, buildings and infrastructure ready to be occupied by your employees, their families, and your ancillary businesses." We anticipate this will enhance recruitment of businesses to the GTP, resulting in thousands of jobs. A recent study conducted by Economic Modeling Specialists International for a similar industrial park located in the Piedmont region of NC estimated that the creation of one manufacturing job creates one additional job elsewhere in the region. These other businesses that create these jobs need places to reside. Our project will also have a significant impact on our region's tax base as idle properties are put back into use. *Plan Kinston*, a Lenoir County community's comprehensive land use plan, references a property that showed a 2,500% increase in tax value per acre (\$217,300 to \$5,432,500) after the site was redeveloped.

We anticipate our project to have other beneficial outcomes. Reusing existing structures will eliminate the larger carbon footprint associated with a new build (or a tear down and rebuild). Our experience has shown that the type businesses being recruited to the GTP are typically large entities with strong corporate responsibility programs, and this "self-regulation" is also an expectation of their suppliers, etc. This will



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result in developments and operations that contribute to the well-being of our communities, including reducing impacts to the environment and production of greenhouse gases. These companies typically incorporate renewable energy (primarily solar) into their operations along with energy efficient lighting and low flow toilets. Finally, as new residents and employees come to the area, we anticipate our increased tax revenue will help pay for the greenspace, parks, etc. that will be needed.

### c. Strategy for Leveraging Resources

#### i. Resources Needed for Site Reuse

Leveraging is constantly pursued in our region and the staffs at EDR and each of our counties are well versed in finding resources for site reuse. We will aggressively pursue funds through NCDOT, HUD, the Golden Leaf Foundation, USEDA, and the NC Department of Commerce, just to name a few, to advance our sites towards reuse. Greene Lamp is also well versed in applying for funds that will help develop our youth and workforce in general. The programs and resources we use will be site/project specific and selected based on the contaminants that need to be addressed and the needs of the specific site reuse. We plan to use funding available through the NC Dry Cleaning Solvent Cleanup Act program and NC LUST Trust Fund to help fund additional assessment and cleanup at abandoned dry cleaners and sites with leaking USTs. We will pursue EPA Brownfields Cleanup or Multipurpose Grants for sites that require additional assessment and/or extensive remediation. We will also strategically use the NC Brownfields Redevelopment Section (NCBRS), which provides excellent liability protection and tax incentives to prospective developers. We will pursue CBDG grants and assist developers with Historic Tax Credits available to select properties. The NC Department of Commerce also offers building reuse grants, workforce training grants and community housing grants to name a few. We also plan to tap into non-grant sources of assistance such as EPA's Smart Growth Program and non-profit Groundworks USA and the Brownfields Technical Assistance Programs. Additionally, our three counties are part of the Eastern Carolina Council of Governments (ECCOG), which helps communities with development and land-use coordination, sustainability and regional economic development strategies. We have the experience and knowledge to pursue numerous funding options depending on each sites' need.

#### ii. Use of Existing Infrastructure

Each of our priority sites, target areas, and most of the sites the EDR has inventoried have existing infrastructure present (water, sewer, electricity, natural gas, telecommunications and sufficient roadways). As such, the majority, if not all, of our redevelopments have utilities present with no upgrades required for our anticipated reuses. If additional infrastructure is needed, our communities will provide upgrades through their general budgets and/or we will pursue funding from the Golden Leaf Foundation and the resources noted in the previous section.

## 2. Community Need and Community Engagement

### a. Community Need

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

Each county is designated as a Tier 1 county by the NC Department of Commerce (NCDOC). Our Target Areas – La Grange, Snow Hill, and Mount Olive - are recognized as some of the most marginalized communities throughout the state and support far less than 10,000 residents. Our grant includes target area census tracts that are designated as low-income and measure well-above the state poverty rate (12.8%) by 9 percentage points or more<sup>5</sup>. Due to declining populations, the tax bases of our target areas are shrinking, and the communities are struggling to provide basic services to their residents at an affordable rate due to

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<sup>5</sup> "2021 American Community Surveys", US Census Bureau, <https://data.census.gov/profile>

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a lack of economies of scale. As such, additional funds to carry out the needed environmental assessment/remediation activities to develop reuse strategies are not available.

This grant will meet the needs of our communities by removing environmental barriers that have led to sites remaining vacant and deteriorating. Aligning revitalization efforts with the strategic goals and initiatives of the GTP and the EDR and using a community engagement framework based on previous experience and the successes of Greene Lamp’s programming, will help recruit businesses, train our residents, fill our vacant buildings with new jobs, and reverse the exodus of residents. Our strategically selected Target Areas are located along the main commuter corridors to GTP, providing a unique opportunity to create the greatest economic impact for sustainable long-term development of both small and larger scale businesses.

### ii. Threats to Sensitive Populations

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

##### La Grange

La Grange is identified as a Justice40 and EPA IRA disadvantaged community whose leading causes of death include heart disease, stroke, and cancer<sup>6</sup>. La Grange’s sensitive population consists of low-income (46%), minority-dominated (52%) residents (34% Black and 15% Hispanic ethnicities). La Grange, like the rest of Lenoir County, has experienced steady population decline over the past two decades (-9.8% from 2000-2020). The Lenoir County Community Health Needs Assessment attributed this decline to inadequate living conditions, unhoused persons, job opportunities, low birth rates, an aging population, and safety concerns which all hit sensitive populations the hardest. Furthermore, La Grange has a crime rate that is 59% higher than the North Carolina average leaving residents at high risk for violent crimes such as armed robbery, aggravated assault, or burglary.<sup>7</sup>

##### Snow Hill

Snow Hill is also a disadvantaged community according to CJEST and is low-income (69%) and minority dominated (55%). The Black population is the dominant ethnic group in the area and represents 1.12x more than any other ethnic group in Snow Hill. The poverty rate within Snow Hill is significantly higher than the State average (21.9% versus 12.8% statewide) and women of child-bearing age make up the largest subgroup in poverty.<sup>8</sup> The health and welfare of this community was compromised in early 2023 when the main health clinic in Snow Hill closed as a result of a \$46M loss encountered by the Eastern Carolina University (ECU) Health Care System. ECU was cited as stating the primary reason for the closure was due to the disproportionate amount of underinsured or uninsured patients in the region.

##### Mount Olive

The Mount Olive downtown contains a Justice40 CEJST disadvantaged community and an EPA IRA disadvantaged community. It is bisected by the CSX freight line that runs through the center of downtown. This target area is a minority dominated (54%), low-income (41%) area with many children (23%) and women of child-bearing age (38%)<sup>9</sup>. In 2015, NC DEQ issued a sewer moratorium that prevented any new or expanded sewer connections necessary for new businesses. Mount Olive has recently received grant funding for wastewater treatment plant upgrades that will lift the moratorium, but the town has been unable to focus on economic development planning until this past year. The health and welfare of these

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<sup>6</sup> 2021-2022 Lenoir County Community Health Needs Assessment

<sup>7</sup> “La Grange, NC Crime Rates”. *Neighborhood Scout Security Gauge*. 2003. <https://www.neighborhoodscout.com/nc/la-grange/crime#description>

<sup>8</sup> DataUSA, Snow Hill, NC, <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/snow-hill-nc>

<sup>9</sup> US Census Bureau American Community Survey 2021, Mount Olive, NC

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residents have suffered as a result of the closure of many operating facilities and lack of investment in the area. Furthermore, residents of Mount Olive are located within a food desert, possess limited transportation access, and 15% of the population lacks access to health insurance.

Our project will address the aforementioned health and welfare issues by strengthening each community's economy through the reuse of our brownfield sites. This grant aims to accelerate these efforts by filling the vacant buildings in each target area with new businesses (retail, healthcare, food, etc.) that will support our communities and the GTP. These new job opportunities will reverse the trend of population decrease and increase the tax base of the target areas. The increased tax base will allow communities to acquire resources to address homelessness, healthcare, food insecurity, and safety concerns, thereby improving the overall welfare of the community.

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

Our target communities suffer from a greater-than-normal incidence of cancer AND asthma. According to EJScreen, La Grange, Mount Olive and Snow Hill rank in the 79<sup>th</sup>, 81<sup>st</sup> and 71<sup>st</sup> percentiles, respectively, for asthma and the 57<sup>th</sup>, 67<sup>th</sup> and 62<sup>nd</sup> percentiles, respectively, for cancer. Regionally, Lenoir County's asthma rates in the Medicare population and the overall rate of hospitalizations due to asthma are higher (10% and 167.6 per 10,000) than the state average (8.4% and 90.9). Similarly, the leading cause of death in Greene County is cancer with a death rate that is 46.98 points higher than North Carolina according to the 2021 Community Health Needs Assessment. Respiratory disease among older adults and males within Wayne County are an area of concern according to the 2021 Community Health Assessment. Being among the top 5 leading causes of death, respiratory diseases are commonly due to occupational/lifestyle exposures and air pollutants.<sup>10</sup>

Asthma and cancer have been shown to be directly related to contaminants (asbestos, VOCs, SVOCs, metals) suspected at our priority brownfields sites. Our Phase I and Phase II ESAs will identify the presence of contaminants (threats) at our sites. During the subsequent reuse of our sites, these contaminants will be removed or mitigated, reducing or eliminating the threats associated with them.

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

As stated earlier, our research has uncovered a plethora of current and former site uses in our target areas that have exposed our sensitive populations to a higher degree of environmental and health hazards. In addition to these former uses, railroad lines run directly through our target areas in La Grange and Mount Olive, further exposing these communities to noise and pollution. A 104-acre groundwater contaminant plume sits below much of Mount Olive. The H.F. Lee power plant in Wayne County closed three coal fired units in October 2012. According to EJScreen, La Grange, Mount Olive and Snow Hill rank in the 73<sup>rd</sup>, 78<sup>th</sup> and 73<sup>rd</sup> percentiles, respectively, for the Air Toxics Respiratory Environmental Justice Index (EJI) and the 83<sup>rd</sup>, 97<sup>th</sup> and 92<sup>nd</sup> percentiles for the UST EJI. Finally, each of our Target Areas are identified as containing a disadvantaged community by CJEST due to their low-income socioeconomic status and historic overburdening in areas of climate change, energy, health, and transportation.

### *(3)(b) Advancing Environmental Justice*

The collaborative structure of the EDR allows for Lenoir, Greene, and Wayne counties to tackle environmental justice issues across an entire region, rather than a singular site or community, delivering the greatest socio-economic impacts for marginalized communities. This grant project will identify and assess contaminated sites as a result of former industrial and commercial activities and develop multi-faceted clean-up/reuse plans to improve the environmental quality of life for underserved populations. By

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<sup>10</sup> COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT, Wayne County 2021, Wayne County Health Department

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attracting new GTP support businesses to our brownfield sites, we'll eliminate the displacement of current residents and businesses. In fact, it will supply new opportunities for employment for our current residents and synergy for our current businesses. In doing so, La Grange, Snow Hill, and Mount Olive will become attractive neighborhoods for families and businesses. Finally, by creating a healthier and more sustainable living environment for residents and aligning the scope of this grant with the revitalization strategies of each county and the EDR, the NC Global Transpark will have the ability to recruit higher-paying jobs for residents furthering the quality of life throughout the Eastern North Carolina region.

### b. Community Engagement

#### i. Project Involvement

Greene Lamp and the EDR will lead public outreach activities for this grant. Greene Lamp is dedicated to providing services to the residents of Eastern North Carolina through head start programming, community services block grants, and emergency solutions grant programming and therefore has a deep understanding of the challenges each of our communities face. Due to capacity constraints and lack of CBOs throughout our region, EDR will support Greene Lamp as a crucial component for community engagement by identifying and coordinating community outreach activities in these areas. EDR was developed in 2020 to create a regional approach to economic development through contractual partnerships with Lenoir, Greene, and Wayne counties. In doing so, EDR works to understand the demographic health and welfare issues plaguing its communities to facilitate strategic campaigns that will attract and retain businesses in eastern NC. A large part of these efforts is engaging the region's communities for input on economic development projects, such as this brownfields initiative.

#### ii. Project Roles

The following partners were chosen to strategically reach our broader region, target areas, and our residents. The approach, proven effective since the formation of the EDR in 2000, allows us to effectively communicate with and solicit input from our residents. This has proven particularly effective in our smaller communities, where CBOs do not exist. Through regularly scheduled Project Partner meetings, each coalition member will stay informed and be able to provide meaningful input on the selection, cleanup, and future reuse option for our brownfield sites.

#### iii. Project Partners

| Partner                            | Point of Contact   | Additional Specific Roles in Project   |
|------------------------------------|--|--|
| Lenoir County, Greene County & EDR | Trey Cash<br>trey.cash@ncgtpedr.com<br>252-747-3446              | Represents Greene & Lenoir Counties and the <u>Snow Hill target area</u> . Guidance on reuse options; developers contact; disseminate information to downtown property owners; coordinate community engagement activities among each coalition member. |
| Wayne County & EDR                 | Craig Foucht<br>Craig.foucht@ncgtpedr.com<br>252-775-6189        | Represents Wayne County Economic Development. Assist with reuse options; recruit developers, and disseminating information to property owners.   |
| Town of Mount Olive                | Jammie Royall<br>J_royall@townofmountolivenc.com<br>919-658-9539 | Will support Trey Cash in community outreach strategies and lead dissemination of information to our target areas, including public presentations to target area communities as sites are identified.  |
| Town of La Grange                  | Shawn Condon<br>smcondon@lagrangenc.com<br>252-566-3186          | La Grange Town Manager. Consult with property owners on potential sites; assist with community engagement activities within La Grange.   |

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|             |  |  |
|-------------|--|--|
| Greene Lamp | Angela Bates<br><a href="mailto:abates@greenelamp.org">abates@greenelamp.org</a><br>252-523-7770 | Assist and help lead community outreach efforts. Job training. Liaison to all resident in their programs across our three county region. |
|-------------|--|--|

### iv. Incorporating Community Input

In our region, we have learned that the best mechanism for soliciting input from and disseminating information to our small communities is at regularly scheduled commissioner/council meetings. As such, a formal project update (including solicitation of input) will take place semi-annually at each target community’s council/board meeting. We will also conduct semi-annual Project Partner meetings to communicate project progress and solicit input. These meetings will be open to the public with an option to attend virtually. Notification of each of the meetings referenced above will be placed on a project website which we will develop, coalition member’s websites, Greene Lamp’s website, and websites of our target communities. Experience has shown us that we will also need to have numerous small group and one-on-one meetings with residents, business owners, property owners etc. to get the meaningful input we’ll need to be successful.

Within 3 months of grant award, our coalition will prepare a Community Involvement Plan (CIP). At the present time we anticipate the CIP to include: developing a general flyer/factsheet on the program and its overall objectives to have present at all community/public meeting; conducting a community outreach session in each of the target areas to introduce our project, discuss how citizens can participate, distribute our initial inventory of sites for comment, and solicit community input (we plan to conduct at least one outreach session per year in our target areas); preparing a semi-annual newsletter to communicate the activities conducted by our program, the projects progress, and avenues to provide input (newsletters will be distributed by mail (as appropriate), available at coalition member’s and community offices, and posted on the project website, Greene Lamp and EDR’s websites, and websites of our communities.

### 3. Task Descriptions, Cost Estimates, and Measuring Progress

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

|   |
|---|
| <b>Task 1: Public Involvement</b>   |
| i. Project Implementation - Anticipated activities include 8 Project Partner meetings (minimum), 3 public outreach sessions (minimum) conducted annually, many one-on-one and/or small group sessions, distribution of approximately 1,000 project flyer/factsheets, 5-6 semi-annual newsletters, and a project website. These activities will relate to both priority and the non-priority sites in our target areas and will not require non-EPA grant resources.   |
| ii. Anticipated Schedule: Throughout the grant cycle on the schedule outlined above.  |
| iii. Task Lead: Coalition Lead Adam Short with assistance from our chosen consultant.   |
| iv. Outputs: Community involvement plan, 8 Project Partner meetings, at least three community meetings, and project flyer/factsheet, and a project website.   |
| <b>Task 2: Site Inventory</b>   |
| i. Project Implementation – The EDR already has a preliminary inventory of sites based on the following criteria: existing buildings/structures and condition for reuse; redevelopment (or potential redevelopment) aligns with EDR goals; site reuse contributes to the revitalization of our target corridors; potential environmental concerns; exposure potential; “marketability”; and the potential for positive impact in or near underserved or disadvantaged communities. Project activities include presenting our initial inventory at our initial community meetings to gather input and then our Project Partners will |

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|   |
|---|
| begin site prioritization (primarily for the non-priority sites). These activities will relate to both priority and the non-priority sites in our target area and will not require non-EPA grant resources. Our consultant will also conduct a detailed inventory of the target and non-target areas within 9 months of grant award, logging all sites into our system using GIS.   |
| ii. Anticipated Schedule: To be completed within 12 months of grant award.  |
| iii. Task Lead: Coalition Lead Adam Short with assistance from our chosen consultant.   |
| iv. Outputs: Completed inventory, completed site prioritization.  |
| <b>Task 3: Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs)</b>  |
| i. Project Implementation - Complete 35 Phase I ESAs on eligible sites in accordance with ASTM 1527-05/21 and 40 CFR Part 312 (3 on priority sites and 32 on non-priority sites). Complete 15 Phase II ESAs in accordance with ASTM 1903-11 (3 on priority sites and 12 on non-priority sites). Before initiation of a Phase II ESA, Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPPs) will be submitted to EPA and NCDEQ for review and approval. QAPPs will relate to both priority and the non-priority sites. Task 3 activities will not require non-EPA grant resources.   |
| ii. Anticipated Schedule: Phase I ESAs completed by month 24 with Phase II ESAs completed between months 16 and 36.   |
| iii. Task Lead: Our chosen consultant as they have the required expertise to conduct these activities. Adam Short will be closely involved in oversight and review.   |
| iv. Outputs: # of Phase I & II ESAs; # of sites in the NC Brownfields Program.  |
| <b>Task 4: Cleanup and Reuse Planning (CUP)</b>   |
| i. Project Implementation – We anticipate 5 Analysis of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA) or other equivalent document will be prepared for sites needing cleanup to include cleanup costs. We anticipate 7 asbestos/LBP removal designs to be prepared and 10 property condition assessments as buildings are evaluating and put back into reuse. We will create reuse plans for the targeted properties, potentially using charrettes or visioning sessions at community meetings. We will assist developers with negotiating brownfield agreements. The remaining portions of our budget will be used for reuse planning efforts. The type and scope of these efforts will depend on the sites and expertise needed. |
| ii. Anticipated Schedule: To be completed between months 24 and 48.   |
| iii. Task Lead: Our chosen consultant as they will have the required expertise to conduct these activities. Adam Short will be closely involved in oversight and review.  |
| iv. Outputs: # of ABCAs completed; # of asbestos/LBP designs; # PCAs completed; # of reuse/concept plans; and # of remedial or mitigation measures implemented.   |

In Kind Services– The EDR and each of our coalition members will contribute their own resources for programmatic oversight activities, community outreach and leadership/participation in the tasks above. This includes targeted, one-on-one or small group outreach events/sessions. Based on experience, we anticipate approximately 650 hours at \$53.25 per hour (\$34,613). We will also donate the postage costs associated with mailing brochures, etc., estimated between \$1,000 and \$2,000.

### a. Cost Estimates

We are requesting \$1,000,000 with over 78% of total grant funds allocated to ESAs!

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| Budget Category | Project Tasks      |                 |                  |                  |                    |
|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------|
|                 | Public Involvement | Inventory       | ESAs             | CUP              | Total              |
| Personnel       |                    |                 |                  |                  |                    |
| Fringe Ben      |                    |                 |                  |                  |                    |
| Travel          | \$15,000           |                 |                  |                  | \$15,000           |
| Equipment       |                    |                 |                  |                  |                    |
| Supplies        | \$2,000            |                 |                  |                  | \$2,000            |
| Contractual     | \$48,000           | \$13,000        | \$789,500        | \$132,500        | \$983,000          |
| Other           |                    |                 |                  |                  |                    |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>\$65,000</b>    | <b>\$13,000</b> | <b>\$789,500</b> | <b>\$132,500</b> | <b>\$1,000,000</b> |

Task 1 - Public Involvement: **Total Budget** - \$65,000 *Travel-\$15,000*: Three coalition members will attend relevant conferences and training, including the National and Regional Brownfields conferences, Regional Grantees Workshop, and any other relevant training such as workshops sponsored by NCDEQ. *Supplies-\$2,000*: Printing costs, meeting supplies and technology costs for Project Partner and public meetings. *Contractual-\$23,000*: For our hired firm's assistance in public outreach. This includes developing our website (40 hrs @ \$185 & 6 hrs @ \$205), creation of materials and our community involvement plan (14 hrs @ \$185 & 3 hrs @ \$205), preparing for and presenting at public/Project Partner meetings (80 hrs @ \$185; 20 hrs @ \$205; \$900 travel expenses), and meeting with residents, property owners, and purchasers to discuss the benefits of the project (40 hrs @ \$185; 40 hrs @ \$205; \$765 travel expenses).

Task 2 – Site Inventory: **Total Budget** - \$13,000 (25 hrs @ \$185; 50 hrs @ \$150; \$875 travel).

Task 3 – Site Characterization: **Total Budget** - \$789,500 (35 Phase I ESAs at \$4,000 each; Generic QAPP at \$8,500; 15 SSQAPPs at \$3,750 each; 15 Phase II ESAs (many including asbestos and LBP testing) at \$38,950 each); and \$500 for miscellaneous expenses.

Task 4 - Cleanup and Reuse Planning: **Total Budget** - \$132,500 (5 asbestos/LBP designs @ \$5,000 each; 5 PCAs @ \$10,000 each; 5 ABCAs at \$4,500 each, and \$35,000 for targeted cleanup/reuse planning).

### b. Measuring Environmental Results

Progress will be tracked, measured, and reported by Adam Short using EPA's Assessment, Cleanup, and Redevelopment Exchange System (ACRES). He will evaluate progress at least monthly in conjunction with our chosen contractor to ensure that we are achieving our outputs, results, and eventual outcomes and that funds are expended in a timely and efficient manner. This includes timely scheduling and completion of public outreach activities, completion of inventory activities by month 12, completion of Phase I ESAs by month 24, Phase II ESAs completed by month 36, and ABCAs, PCAs and reuse planning completed between months 20-48. Adam will communicate frequently with the EPA Project Manager and submit quarterly reports to EPA, which will also be a mechanism to measure/track results.

## 4. Programmatic Capability and Past Performance

### a. Programmatic Capability

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

Lenoir County, identified as a county government, will serve as the **lead entity** for this Assessment Coalition grant and will be responsible for managing the programmatic, administrative, and financial requirements of the project. Lenoir County has the staff and capacity to manage this grant on behalf of the coalition. As with all of grants managed by Lenoir County, this project will be managed by a dedicated

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project director (PD). The PD, Mr. Adam Short – Assistant County Manager, will be supported by an assistant PD, our Special Projects Manager (Mr. Nicholas Boyd), a qualified environmental firm, and our Project Partners. Mr. Short has over 15 years of experience managing grants, including two EPA assessment grants and a cleanup grant while with another organization. Mr. Boyd also has experience working with EPA Brownfield grants and has been working with Lenoir County on special projects for more than three years, resulting in a proven record of success. Mr. Short will be supported by Mrs. Sandra Barss, Finance Director for the County. Ms. Barss has extensive experience working with all of the County’s grant projects including responsibilities related to budgeting for expenditures, dispersal requests, grant reconciliation, and preparation of interim, final, and closeout reports. This team will ensure the timely and successful completion of all technical, administrative, and financial requirements.

iv. Acquiring Additional Resources

Our lead entity, Lenoir County, will procure a consultant that has expertise in all aspects of brownfield assessment, cleanup and reuse, grant management and reporting. They will be selected prior to grant start up in accordance with the County’s standard procurement process and the procurement procedures contained in 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR Part 1500. Mr. Short has successfully secured consultants in the past in accordance with these procedures. To provide this opportunity in a meaningful and equitable way, each county will post this opportunity on their website. It will also be posted in the NC Vendor Registry, the NC Department of Administration Historically Underutilized Businesses webpage, and the NC Interactive Purchasing System. We will also work with each county and target area to ensure that local firms are given opportunities to work on these projects. Our project webpage will also include an area where firms working on this project (i.e. consultant, drillers, laboratories, surveyors, removal contactors) can post job openings. Our project website will be linked to each county website along with websites for the GTP, Greene Lamp, and EDR.

b.ii. Past Performance and Accomplishments - Lenoir County has not previously received an EPA Brownfields Grant but has received other federal and non-federal assistance agreements.

1) Purpose and Accomplishments

| Awarding Agency                                     | Amount      | Purpose/Accomplishments  |
|---|-------------|--|
| NC Emergency Management – FEMA closed               | \$7,925,908 | Acquisition and demolition of 83 residences located in a special flood hazard area / Project conserved/converted areas to open green space   |
| NC Department of Agricultural and Consumer Services | \$500,000   | Removal of woody debris to improve stormwater drainage along streams / Project resulted in miles of cleaned and partially restored streams and channels                                |
| NC Emergency Management – FEMA closed               | \$1,000,000 | Disaster recovery for single-family home rehabilitation, reconstruction, and housing repair reimbursement / Over 75 homes repaired and reconstructed in many low-income neighborhoods. |

2) Compliance with Grant Requirements

For projects listed above, all applicable site information, required reports, design documentation and final inspections were submitted in a timely manner and approved by funding and regulatory agencies with purview. The FEMA projects were completed in compliance with the project workplan, schedule and terms and conditions and successfully closed to FEMA’s satisfaction. The NCDACS stream restoration project is currently undergoing its second task order for implementation and is also expected to be fully expended and closed out within the next 6 months in accordance with all grant requirements.



### III.B. Threshold Criteria for Assessment Grants

#### III.B.1 Applicant Eligibility

Lenoir County is the **lead member** for this application and is a County Government Unit of Local Government as defined by Section III.A in the Submission Guidelines. Because of this, Lenoir County is eligible to receive this Assessment Coalition Grant.

#### III.B.2. Number and Eligibility of Non-Lead Coalition Members

There are **3 non-lead** members associated with this grant application. Greene County and Wayne County are the **non-lead members** for this application and are both defined as General Purpose Units of Local Government as defined by 2 CFR 200.1. Because both counties are listed as General-Purpose Units of Local Government, they are both eligible to receive this EPA Coalition Assessment Grant.

Greene Lamp is a **non-lead member and the designated community-based organization (CBO)** for this application and is defined as a non-profit organization with tax exempt status under the section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and is therefore an eligible entity for this Assessment Grant. Tax exempt status for Greene Lamp is included as **Attachment B** with this application.

#### III.B.3. Target Areas

The target area for Lenoir, Greene, and Wayne Counties are **La Grange, Snow Hill, and Mount Olive** respectively. A description of our target areas are provided in the Narrative Information Sheet.

#### III.B.4 Existing Brownfields Grants to Non-lead Members

Neither Greene County, Wayne County, or Greene Lamp are the recipients of open cooperative agreement for MARC Grant funding or a MARC Grant that closed in 2016 or later.

#### III.B.5. Coalition Agreement

Each non-lead member has submitted a signed letter to Lenoir County in which they have agreed to be a part of the coalition. These signed letters are included as **Attachment C** with our application.

#### III.B.6. Community Involvement

Greene Lamp is designated as our CBO and will key in our community involvement activities in partnership with our other lead and non-lead members for this Assessment Grant. A formal project update (including solicitation of input) will take place semi-annually at each target community's council/board meeting. We will also conduct semi-annual Project Partner meetings to communicate project progress and solicit input. These meetings will be open to the public with an option to attend virtually. Notification of each of the meetings referenced above will be placed on a project website which we will develop, coalition member's websites, and websites of our target communities. Experience has shown us that we will also need to have numerous small group and one-on-one meetings with residents, business owners, property owners etc. to get the meaningful input we'll need to be successful.

Within 3 months of grant award, our coalition will prepare a Community Involvement Plan (CIP). At the present time we anticipate the CIP to include: developing a general flyer/factsheet on the program and its overall objectives to have present at all community/public meeting; conducting a community outreach session in each of the target areas to introduce our project, discuss how citizens can participate, distribute our initial inventory of sites for comment, and solicit community input (we plan to conduct at least one outreach session per year in our target areas); preparing a semi-annual newsletter to communicate the

activities conducted by our program, the projects progress, and avenues to provide input (newsletters will be distributed by mail (as appropriate), available at coalition member's and community offices, and posted on the project website, Greene Lamp and EDR's websites, and websites of our communities.

III.B.7 Expenditure of Existing Grant Funds

Lenoir County, **the applicant and lead-member for this application**, does not have an open EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant or Multipurpose Grant.

III.B.8. Contractors and Named Subrecipients

Not Applicable. Lenoir County will procure its consultant and contractor in compliance with 2 CFR Part 200, 2 CFR Part 1500, and/or 40 CFR Part 33.