



ROCHESTER

Minnesota



NARRATIVE INFORMATION SHEET

1. Applicant Identification

City of Rochester
201 4th Street SE
Rochester, MN 55904

2. Funding Requested

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

3. Location

- a. City: Rochester
- b. County: Olmsted
- c. State: Minnesota

4. Target Area and Priority Site/Property Information

- a. Target Area: Downtown Waterfront district
- b. Census Tracts: 1, 2, and 3
- c. Priority Sites:
 - Associated Milk Producers Inc. (AMPI) Property, 700 1st Avenue SE
 - Civic Center South Property, 401 4th Street SE
 - Rochester City Mill, 11 4th Street SE
 - Former Mr. Muffler Property, 322 3rd Avenue SE
 - Silver Lake Power Plant, 425 West Silver Lake Drive NE

5. Contacts

- a. Project Director
Name: Cindy Steinhauser, ICMA-CM
Phone: (507) 328-2015
Email: csteinhauser@rochestermn.gov
Mailing Address: City of Rochester, 4001 West River Parkway NW, Suite 100,
Rochester, MN 55901
- b. Chief Executive/Highest Ranking Elected Official
Name: Mayor Kim Norton
Phone: (507) 328-2700
Email: knorton@rochestermn.gov
Mailing Address: City of Rochester, 201 4th Street SE, Room 281, Rochester, MN
55904

6. **Population**
121,878

7. **Other Factors**

Other Factors	Page #
Community population is 10,000 or less.	N/A
The applicant is, or will assist, a federally-recognized Indian tribe or United States territory.	N/A
The priority brownfield site(s) is impacted by mine-scarred land.	N/A
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).	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
The priority site(s) is in a federally designated flood plain.	1, 2
The reuse of the priority site(s) will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy.	2, 3, 4
The reuse of the priority site(s) will incorporate energy efficiency measures.	8
The proposed project will improve local climate adaptation/mitigation capacity and resilience to protect residents and community investments.	3
At least 30% of the overall project budget will be spent on eligible reuse/area-wide planning activities, as described in Section I.B., for priority site(s) within the target area(s).	2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10
The target area(s) is located within a community in which a coal-fired power plant has recently closed (2012 or later) or is closing.	1, 2, 6

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

9. **Releasing Copies of Applications**
Not applicable, the application does not include confidential, privileged, or sensitive information

November 9, 2023

VIA EMAIL

Kim Norton, Mayor
City of Rochester
201 4th St SE
Rochester, MN 55904

RE: City of Rochester EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant Application
Letter of Support from the MPCA Brownfield Program

Dear Kim Norton:

On behalf of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), we are writing to acknowledge and support the proposed assessment activities for the City of Rochester in fulfillment of the criteria of the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Fiscal Year 2024 Brownfield Assessment Grant guidelines.

The City of Rochester has informed the MPCA that they intend to perform petroleum and hazardous substances assessment activities through a Community-Wide Assessment Grant. Assessment activities would include assessment and remedial planning at brownfields, including key downtown sites.

The MPCA is supportive of the City of Rochester's application for an EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant. Should this grant be awarded, the MPCA will partner with the City of Rochester to help them improve the environment and build a better future for residents in the region.

If you have any questions, please contact Shanna Schmitt at 651-757-2697 or by email at shanna.schmitt@state.mn.us, or Stacey Hendry-Van Patten at 651-757-2425 or by email at stacey.vanpatten@state.mn.us.

Sincerely,

Shanna Schmitt

This document has been electronically signed.

Shanna Schmitt, PG, CPG
Hydrogeologist
Remediation Division

Stacey Hendry-Van Patten

This document has been electronically signed.

Stacey Hendry-VanPatten
Supervisor
Remediation Division

SS/SVP:svp

cc: Andrew Seth, Sustainable Strategies DC (electronic)
Jerry Minor-Gordon, US EPA (electronic)

I. PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION & PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION

A. Target Area & Brownfields

i. Overview of Brownfield Challenges & Description of Target Area – Rochester (population 121,878), Minnesota’s third largest city, is home to the renowned Mayo Clinic. Mayo Clinic employs 42,500 people and draws over 3 million visitors annually from over 120 countries. Rochester is experiencing tremendous growth associated with its Destination Medical Center (DMC) initiative – a major Mayo Clinic expansion that will transform Rochester into an international hub for medical research, treatment, and innovation.

Brownfields inhibit redevelopment of Rochester’s designated Downtown Waterfront district. This area along the Zumbro River includes Census Tracts 1, 2, and 3 – identified as “disadvantaged” by the CEQ’s Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST) and ranked “high” on the CDC/ATSDR’s Social Vulnerability Index (SVI). The Downtown Waterfront district includes a decommissioned coal utility, former manufacturing plants, garages, and other industrial properties. Environmental contamination in the Downtown Waterfront district threatens the health of nearby residents and impedes revitalization efforts. Health disparities in the surrounding neighborhoods include increased rates of asthma, cancer, and heart disease. The area includes some of the lowest life expectancies in the country (99th percentile in Census Tract 1). These centrally-located sites, some vacant for years, have been overlooked for new growth.

The 20-year DMC initiative seeks to “identify brownfield sites for redevelopment to remove blight and take development pressure off undeveloped land.” EPA funding will enable the City to target DMC revitalization efforts within the Downtown Waterfront district. Brownfields assessment resources will be used to characterize pollution levels at key properties, helping to kick-off remediation activities that will improve health outcomes, propel economic development, and strengthen marginalized neighborhoods.

Brownfields redevelopment will support a community that is ethnically rich (26.5% minority), with significant Black (10.6%), Asian (9.1%), and Hispanic (5.8%) populations. Cleanup efforts will also complement Rochester’s goal to be “America’s City for Health.” As the world’s premier destination for wellness, the City will use brownfield tools to link its growth with healthy living.

ii. Description of the Priority Brownfield Sites – The Zumbro River cleaves downtown Rochester. As the community developed, commercial and industrial uses were sited along the water’s edge. Polluting entities in the area include a decommissioned coal utility, former manufacturing plants, garages, and other industrial properties. As the city grows due to Mayo Clinic’s expansion, it is imperative that the Downtown Waterfront district be assessed and remediated to accommodate DMC development.

Rochester has identified more than a dozen sites to consider for assessments. Catalytic brownfields include:

- Associated Milk Producers Inc. (AMPI) Site at 700 1st Avenue SE – Since 1969, this 12.6-acre riverfront site, located between South Broadway and 3rd Avenue SE, operated as a dairy processing facility. The parcel was previously a grain elevator (built in 1896). Potential contaminants include coal ash, heavy metals, cleaning chemical residues, asbestos, lead, and petroleum/diesel/oil. The site is near a proposed transit mobility hub. The City plans to revitalize this economically-distressed neighborhood with mixed-use development. This brownfield will be transformed into a historic warehouse district with a variety of housing options, thriving local businesses, inviting public spaces, and riverfront activation. Assessment and cleanup of the AMPI site is the City’s top redevelopment priority.
- Civic Center South Property at 401 4th Street SE – Across the Zumbro River from the Mayo Civic Center, this 3.8-acre waterfront site (located in a 500-year floodplain, with a small corner in the 100-year floodplain) currently serves as a surface parking lot. An unused water reservoir and a former auto repair shop are located on the property. The site was previously home to the Rochester Water Works Pumping Station. Expected contaminants include petroleum, coal ash, lead, and asbestos. It is planned for mixed-use development, including retail, office, and multi-family residential.
- Rochester City Mill at 11 4th Street SE – This 2.2-acre prime waterfront site is currently home to a small office/retail building, a garage structure, and surface parking. The property is located along the Riverwalk

and adjacent to the 470,000-square foot Mayo Civic Center. It was formerly the location of the Rochester City Mill (built in 1856). Expected contaminants include coal ash, asbestos, and petroleum. Situated in the Opportunity Zone and with the floodway, it is one of Rochester’s best remaining land assets.

- Former Mr. Muffler Property at 322 3rd Avenue SE – An auto repair shop was previously operated on the 0.48-acre site. Potential pollution includes metals and metal dust, various organic compounds, solvents, and waste oils. It is planned for mixed-use development, including residential and commercial space. The site was the subject of a Mayor’s Institute on City Design study.
- Silver Lake Power Plant at 425 West Silver Lake Drive NE – This coal-operated power plant went online in 1949. The Rochester Public Utilities Board recently decommissioned the utility and demolished its stacks. The 11.7-acre site, located along Silver Lake, is expected to be contaminated with coal ash (arsenic, boron, cadmium, chromium, lead, radium, selenium, and more), and petroleum. The property, within an Opportunity Zone, will be redeveloped as a public park.

Health disparities (asthma, cancer, heart disease) are prevalent in disadvantaged neighborhoods near the targeted brownfields. Exposure pathways may be contributing to these health effects. Contaminants in the floodplain may also migrate due to a high-water table, flash flooding, and Zumbro River overflows. Cleanup of key brownfields on land willfully overlooked due to contamination concerns complements local plans to increase transit-oriented development, encourage sustainable growth (including district energy adoption), promote affordable housing, and prevent gentrification.

iii. Identifying Additional Sites – The City will develop a process with a Steering Committee to select additional sites in the Downtown Waterfront district and beyond. Appropriate properties will be identified with the following criteria: redevelopment potential; protection of public health; possible interested buyer; community support; capacity to unleash further revitalization; ability to create jobs; likeliness to negotiate site access with owners; and potential to leverage state and federal resources for revitalization. Priority will be given to brownfields located in Census Tracts 1, 2, and 3.

B. Revitalization of the Target Area

i. Reuse Strategy & Alignment with Revitalization Plans – Reusing brownfields will help Rochester meet the goals of becoming “America’s City for Health,” spurring infill development to accommodate expected growth (more than 50,000 new residents by 2040) and improving waterfront access. As the downtown core is largely built-out, Rochester’s redevelopment strategy includes reusing vacant and underutilized land for a mix of uses, including residential, retail, commercial, parks, and hospitality.

Brownfields redevelopment aligns with the DMC planning effort. Rochester, Olmsted County, the Rochester-Olmsted County Council of Governments, and Mayo Clinic participated in the development of the *DMC Development Plan* to create a long-term vision for downtown growth. The DMC initiative is one of the largest and most innovative economic development strategies ever undertaken in Minnesota. Its purpose is to secure Rochester’s and Minnesota’s status as a global medical destination. Local, state, and federal investment is intended to incentivize private sector development.

Reusing brownfields will transform Rochester from a perceived medical campus into a vibrant city. The strategy seeks to create a town square, utilizing river/waterfront assets, to create a 365-day destination for residents and visitors alike. By developing this type of space, the plan enhances the viability of the Mayo Civic Center as a regional convention space and will spur mixed-use development downtown. The DMC initiative is estimated to grow the employment base in Rochester by up to 45,000 jobs and more than double visitation from Mayo Clinic patients/companions, business travelers, and convention goers. Downtown brownfields cleanup supports data that shows that Mayo Clinic visitors spend 70% of their time outside the hospital, necessitating the reuse of dormant land to meet consumer needs.

The closure of the AMPI site prompted the creation of a *Downtown Waterfront Southeast Small Area Plan* in 2021. Over 60 acres of brownfields adjacent to the Zumbro River have been envisioned as “a mixed-use

urban district that embraces economic, social, and environmental health.” In 2022, the Rochester City Council also unanimously adopted a *Riverfront Small Area Plan* to transform the area including the former Mr. Muffler site, Rochester City Mill, and Civic Center South property with mixed-use development.

EPA Brownfields Assessment resources also complement the *Planning 2 Succeed: Rochester Comprehensive Plan 2040*, which encourages reuse of vacant and underutilized land along the waterfront. The plan includes strategies to “promote the redevelopment of brownfields and grayfields into compact, mixed-use, and walkable environments.”

ii. Outcomes & Benefits of Reuse Strategy – Key outcomes of DMC redevelopment include the creation up to 6.8 million square feet of hospital/clinic/research space, over 1 million square feet for bio-med-tech businesses, up to 3,100 residential units, 310,000 square feet of office space, approximately 320,000 square feet of retail/dining/entertainment space, and 7 additional hotels. Up to 45,000 new jobs will be created. Brownfields redevelopment supports DMC’s goals. The cleanup of sites adjacent to the Zumbro River will also provide park space and waterfront access. Overall, DMC revitalization efforts will generate over \$270 million in additional City tax revenues, \$218 million in Olmstead County taxes, and up to \$2.2 billion in State tax collections over a 20-year period.

The DMC Downtown Waterfront district is prime for revitalization. As Rochester is anticipated to grow by 50% over the next 20 years, it is essential that brownfields are reclaimed. EPA Brownfields Assessment resources will directly support the creation of a mixed-use warehouse district along the Zumbro River. The City’s *Downtown Waterfront Southeast Small Area Plan* (2020) envisions an area with a mix of housing, retail/commercial development, parks, and other amenities. Redevelopment of the AMPI site will create 750 units of market rate housing and 750 affordable housing units, as well as up to 100,000 square feet of retail, 75,000 square feet of office space, and 140 rooms of hotel lodging.

The project also aligns with Rochester’s 2017 *Energy Action Plan*. The City seeks to mitigate climate change by transitioning to 100% renewable energy by 2030. A key strategy is district energy. District energy systems are networks of buried hot and cold water pipes that efficiently heat and cool connected buildings using thermal energy. District energy will help Rochester to reduce 7,400 metric tons greenhouse gas emissions annually and promote compact urban development. The new warehouse district along the waterfront will tap into district energy infrastructure.

C. Strategy for Leveraging Resources

i. Resources Needed for Site Reuse – Rochester has extensive experience leveraging federal dollars with public and private resources. The City has already secured a major State commitment to support downtown revitalization; Minnesota has pledged \$585 million over 20 years for DMC development. Mayo Clinic has committed \$3.5 billion in downtown investment. These dollars are expected to leverage an additional \$2.1 billion in private resources. State and federal brownfields cleanup resources will help to support remediation of assessed sites. Key funding that has been committed, secured, and anticipated includes:

Source	Purpose	Status	Amount
MN investment	DMC infrastructure improvements	Committed	\$585 million
Mayo Clinic	Downtown medical facilities construction	Committed	\$3.5 billion
MN Main Street Economic Revitalization Program grant	Subgrants of up to \$750,000 to support downtown development	Secured	\$3.1 million
MN cleanup grants	Remediation of EPA-assessed sites	Anticipated	\$1-2 million
DOT RAISE grant	Complete Street/bridge in warehouse district	Secured	\$20 million
FTA Small Starts funding	Bus rapid transit along DMC corridors	Pledged	\$100 million
Additional private investment	DMC business growth (bio-med-tech)	Expected	\$2.1 billion

ii. Use of Existing Infrastructure – Brownfield redevelopment in the Downtown Waterfront district will take advantage of existing roads, sewers, utilities, and transit facilities. Properties are also linked to 110 miles

of bike and pedestrian trails. The City is pursuing Small Starts funds from FTA to develop a \$114 million Bus Rapid Transit line that will connect the downtown waterfront sites to a planned transit-oriented development corridor, providing relief from vehicular congestion. Rochester also won a DOT RAISE grant to build the 6th Street bridge, which will improve connectivity in the target area. The community is seeking funding from the recently passed federal infrastructure bill to support its planned district energy system. Finally, EPA Brownfields Assessment resources are budgeted for an infrastructure needs assessment to help determine what upgrades are necessary to sustain new growth.

II. COMMUNITY NEED & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

A. Community Need

i. The Community’s Need for Funding – Rochester is limited in its ability to assess contaminated sites without EPA assistance. The condition of public infrastructure is declining and the deferred maintenance backlog is increasing. As the City prepares for anticipated growth (more than 50,000 new residents by 2040), Rochester has a desperate need for additional investment in its streets, parks, libraries, and other public facilities. Current revenue is insufficient to fund these vital community assets at a sustainable level.

Mayo Clinic is a major landowner in Rochester. Non-profit organizations like the Mayo Clinic pay no taxes on property classified for education and research. Rochester’s limited tax base presents challenges in providing municipal services. As a regional economic engine, Rochester’s daytime population also swells with out-of-town workers who do not live in the City or pay property taxes, putting an undue strain on the locality. Recent court rulings have also reduced local funding sources available to Minnesota cities.

ii. Threats to Sensitive Populations

1. Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations – Census Tract 1 is significantly older (nearly 50% over the U.S. level) and Census Tracts 3 has a large population under 5 years old. Women aged 15-50 years old in Census Tract 3 also give birth at a level near the national rate. See summary table below (levels higher than state and national levels shown in red):

Vulnerable Populations	Census Tract 1	Census Tract 2	Census Tract 3	MN	U.S.
Seniors 65 and Over	23.4%	16.3%	15.6%	15.9%	16.0%
Children Under 5	0.8%	4.6%	6.5%	6.1%	5.9%
Pregnant Women (per 1,000)	0	26	48	57	51

Considering prior uses, the City expects that targeted brownfields will be contaminated with arsenic, boron, cadmium, chromium, lead, radium, selenium, slag, asbestos, cleaning chemical residues, and petroleum/diesel/oil. EPA has designated some of these substances as priority pollutants, indicating they are carcinogenic, mutagenic, and teratogenic. The existence of these contaminants poses serious concerns to sensitive populations. Contaminated sites exacerbate the risk of cancer and non-cancer mortality for nearby households, including the area’s pregnant women and infants. Contaminants of concern include:

- **Lead (likely at several sites):** Children’s brains and nervous systems are more sensitive to lead’s effects. Pregnant women are also vulnerable to lead exposure, which can result in miscarriage and premature birth.
- **Arsenic (likely at Silver Lake Power Plant site):** Evidence suggests that inhaled or ingested inorganic arsenic can injure pregnant women and their unborn babies.
- **Petroleum (likely at most sites):** Toluene has been shown to cause spontaneous abortion among pregnant women. Xylene inhaled by women can reach developing fetuses and contaminate breast milk.

Brownfields also yield negative psychological impacts as vacant sites and dilapidated areas impact surrounding neighborhoods, resulting in blight and disinvestment, reduced property values and corresponding tax revenue, and higher crime.

Census Tracts 1, 2, and 3 are home to a significant minority population (42.6%, 26.5%, and 27.1% respectively), with low household median incomes (\$23,278, \$43,690, and \$46,711, respectively) and high poverty (41.6%, 15.4%, and 17.2%, respectively). Redevelopment in the Downtown Waterfront district will

benefit historically marginalized communities in Rochester, meeting the Justice40 Initiative’s goals. Revitalization efforts are intentionally designed to prevent gentrification, overcome inequality, and improve quality of life. EPA funding will initiate the cleanup of these contaminants and reduce threats to the health and welfare of sensitive populations. Brownfields assessments of critical sites represent a first step in removing pollution and eliminating exposure pathways for Rochester’s most vulnerable residents.

2. Greater than Normal Incidence of Disease & Adverse Health Conditions – Census Tracts 1, 2, and 3 are all identified as “disadvantaged” by the White House’s CEJST. A CEJST analysis of disparities in the project area finds that Census Tract 1 residents rank in the 96th percentile for diabetes, the 99th percentile for heart disease, and the 99th percentile for low life expectancy. The CDC/ATSDR also ranks the entire area as “high” using its SVI criteria, with significant external stresses on human health.

According to a 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment, the leading cause of death in Olmsted County is heart disease (23.1%), followed by cancer (21.7%). According to the MN Department of Health, the age-adjusted cancer rate was 437.4 per 100,000 people in Olmsted County (between 2015 and 2019). Major local cancer types include breast, melanoma, Non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma, and thyroid.

Over half of Olmsted County adults have at least one chronic condition (physical or mental) and one in four live with multiple chronic conditions. These chronic conditions include asthma, arrhythmia, coronary artery disease, diabetes, and hypertension. According to HealthData.gov, life expectancy is much lower in Census Tracts 1 (65.6 years) and 3 (74.2 years) compared to Olmsted County (83.1 years).

“Downtown residents have a lower life expectancy than the region at-large,” stated former Olmsted County Public Health Director Graham Briggs. “Research suggests this may be connected to adverse health effects which can be linked to the environment where people live, work, and play.”

Exposure to hazardous materials/petroleum is likely a contributor to poor health outcomes. A health monitoring program will be developed with the Olmsted County Health Department and Mayo Clinic to assess high incidence rates (especially with sensitive populations) and correlate the data to existing brownfields. Brownfields cleanup will help mitigate these risks.

3. Promoting Environmental Justice

a. Identification of Environmental Justice Issues – Census Tracts 1, 2, and 3 are identified as “disadvantaged” by the White House’s CEJST tool. The Downtown Waterfront district is an environmental justice area of concern. Using EPA’s EJSCREEN tool, the project zone appears in the top half of the following state and national environmental indicators (shown in red):

Environmental Indicator	Percentile in MN	Percentile in U.S.
Particulate Matter	94	62
Ozone	54	41
Diesel PM	81	61
Air Toxics Cancer Risk	67	40
Air Toxics Respiratory Hazard	86	61
Toxic Releases to Air	57	38
Traffic Proximity and Volume	88	72
Lead Paint	86	74
Risk Management Plan Facility Proximity	93	83
Hazardous Waste Proximity	87	72
Underground Storage Tanks	92	78

Brownfields disproportionately impact minority and low-income residents in Rochester. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the City has significant Black (10.6%), Asian (9.1%), and Hispanic (5.8%) populations. Within Downtown Waterfront district, these minority populations are greater – 14.2%, 29.3%, and 11.8%

Black in Census Tracts 1, 2, and 3, respectively; 16.7% and 10.5% Asian in Census Tracts 1 and 3, respectively; and 8.5% Hispanic in Census Tract 1.

Census Tracts 1, 2, and 3 experience higher poverty rates and lower median household incomes than Minnesota and the United States. Households in the Downtown Waterfront district also strongly depend upon Food Stamp benefits. See summary below (variations from state and/or national levels shown in red):

	Census Tract 1	Census Tract 2	Census Tract 3	MN	U.S.
Minority	42.6%	36.5%	27.1%	21.7%	40.6%
Poverty Rate	42.5%	20.6%	15.9%	9.2%	12.6%
Median Household Income	\$30,075	\$49,722	\$57,073	\$77,706	\$69,021
Food Stamps/SNAP Benefits	24.6%	17.2%	21.2%	7.5%	11.4%

b. Advancing Environmental Justice – Brownfields cleanup will support environmental justice. Redevelopment will remove blight and increase community pride. Revitalization will also provide affordable housing options and create jobs for low-income residents. Rochester’s project meets the Biden Administration’s Executive Order on *Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government* and Justice40 Initiative goals.

Key tenets of the *Downtown Waterfront Southeast Small Area Plan (2020)* include increasing:

- **Economic equity** – Reintroducing retail that serves the surrounding neighborhoods; increasing transportation options to area employment; and creating affordable housing options (750 units of market rate housing and 750 affordable housing units proposed on the AMPI site).
- **Social equity** – Introducing inclusive public spaces where none existed; maximizing accessibility for people of all abilities; and developing commercial areas that can accommodate a variety of start-up businesses.
- **Environmental equity** – Reducing impervious surfaces from 95% to 85%; increasing the tree canopy by over 500%; introducing district-wide stormwater management; encouraging multi-modal use through safer street designs, thus mitigating vehicle emissions; and creating multiple ways to access the Zumbro River and leverage its potential for passive and active recreation.

Mixed-use redevelopment of the former Mr. Muffler site, Rochester City Mill, and Civic Center South sites also supports neighborhood equity concerns, including:

- **Reducing environmental contamination** that threatens the health and welfare of area residents.
- **Supporting business**, including diverse entrepreneurial endeavors.
- **Ensuring universal access** to downtown jobs, transportation modes, and other key destinations.

Finally, creation of a new park on the site of the former coal-fired power plant will create recreational opportunities for Southeast Rochester residents with limited green space options.

B. Community Engagement

i. Project Involvement & ii. Project Roles – Partners have been chosen because their constituents include Rochester’s target areas and sensitive populations. The missions of the following organizations align with redeveloping brownfields. The primary avenue for their meaningful involvement is participation on the project’s Steering Committee, which will guide site selection and community engagement.

Partner Name/Contact	Project Roles & Commitments
RNeighbors (community-based organization): René Halasy, 507.361.1738, rene@rneighbors.org	Steering Committee. Supporting site prioritization & community engagement. Outreach across the community. Site reuse input.
DMC Economic Development Agency: Jamie Rothe, 507.216.9720, jamierothe@dmceda.org	Steering Committee. Supporting site prioritization & community engagement. Reaching out to developers to promote reuse.

Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce: Ryan Parsons, 507.424.5687, rparsons@rochestermnchamber.com	Steering Committee. Supporting site prioritization & community engagement. Conduct outreach to businesses.
Rochester Downtown Alliance: Kathleen Harrington, 507.216.9885, kharrington@rdowntownalliance.com	Steering Committee. Supporting site prioritization & community engagement. Integrating reuse plans with revitalization goals.
Mayo Clinic: Rose Anderson, 507.284.2511, anderson.rose@mayo.edu	Steering Committee. Working with City to share brownfield risks & collect health data.
Olmsted County Public Health Services: Denise Daniels, 507.328.7500, daniels.denise@co.olmsted.mn.us	Information sharing with residents on the safety of remediated brownfields.

iii. Incorporating Community Input – Rochester will build on the efforts of its effective *DMC Development Plan* outreach. Representatives from RNeighbors, DMC Economic Development Agency, Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce, Rochester Downtown Alliance, and Mayo Clinic have already formed a project Steering Committee. Staff will meet regularly with these groups (initially and at least quarterly thereafter). Partners will also help engage residents and businesses.

A Community Engagement Team will develop public involvement strategies. This team will organize a series of meetings over the project period, including virtual sessions as needed. Local outreach activities will target residents of the Downtown and Slattery Park neighborhoods, particularly sensitive populations. The purpose of this engagement is to share information, collect feedback, and describe next steps. Input will also be gathered to shape reuse of assessed properties. Personnel from Olmsted County Public Health Services, Mayo Clinic, and MN Pollution Control Agency will share information on brownfields risks. Engagement activities will occur after work hours, be centrally located, and provide child-care to maximize participation. Comment cards will be provided at meetings to capture and document input.

To engage minority and low-income residents in reuse planning efforts, Rochester will utilize a “community co-design” process. A diverse set of residents with strong connections to the community and deep knowledge of their neighborhoods will be recruited. Co-designers will include: diversity, equity, and inclusion advocates; disability champions; local business owners; neighborhood association representatives; and a designee of the Rochester Downtown Alliance. These participants will be paid for their time (\$25 per hour), with reimbursement for childcare and other expenses. This group will ensure that the proposed site reuses meaningfully address resident needs.

Traditional media, including the newspaper, television, and local radio stations, will be used to disseminate information. Web sites and social media will describe brownfields efforts and promote engagement opportunities. A survey tool will be used to gather feedback. Rochester will also communicate through community newsletters. All written outreach materials will be available in English, Spanish, and Somalian. Rochester has used this outreach process successfully with previous state brownfields grants.

III. TASK DESCRIPTIONS, COST ESTIMATES & MEASURING PROGRESS

A. Description of Tasks/Activities & Outputs

i. Project Implementation – EPA resources will enable Rochester to conduct 11 Phase I and 6 Phase II assessments, as well as robust reuse planning activities. Key residential and business leaders have formed a project Steering Committee. In addition, two project teams will be established to implement the project. A Community Engagement Team will carry out strategies to enhance resident involvement. A Technical Team will support the identification and assessment of brownfields.

Rochester will ensure timely implementation of key activities by:

- **Procuring Contractors:** Environmental/planning contractors will be hired to conduct assessments and develop cleanup/reuse plans. These services will be solicited through a Request for Proposals (RFP) process. Rochester will initiate a competitive qualifications-based selection process in compliance with

state and federal (2 CFR 200.317-326) regulations.

- **Site Access:** The project manager will negotiate with landowners to secure access. This permission will enable Rochester to collect waste, soil, surface water, sediment, and groundwater samples; install groundwater monitoring wells, if necessary; and use equipment, including vehicles and drill rigs, to perform the above activities.

ii. Anticipated Project Schedule

Activity	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Qualified Contractors RFP	X											
Hire Qualified Contractors		X										
Community Meetings		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Negotiate Access		X	X		X	X						
Secondary Site Selection				X	X							
Phase I & Phase II Activities			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Cleanup & Reuse Planning									X	X	X	X

iii. Task/Activity Lead

- **Cooperative Agreement Oversight:** A project manager will be responsible for ensuring compliance with grant requirements (\$12,000 staff time). Tasks include oversight and performance reporting. Travel expenses (\$1,500 per person for airfare and hotel) have been set aside for two people to attend EPA’s national brownfields conference and other regional brownfield events to learn best practices and identify ways to leverage federal resources. *Cost estimate* – \$15,000. *Lead* – Project management will be conducted by Cindy Steinhauser, Rochester’s Deputy City Manager (25+ years of experience).
- **Community Engagement:** City staff will lead the Community Engagement team. Residents will be involved in determining secondary sites and reuse options. Rochester will connect with the community through quarterly meetings, newsletters, web sites, social media, and other outreach tools. The City will also partner with Olmsted County Public Health Services and Mayo Clinic to assess the impact of brownfields on public health. Rochester will use the ATSDR Brownfields/Land Revitalization Action Model to foster dialogue. City staff (\$40/hour for 50 hours) and their contractors (\$21,000) will manage the engagement process. Ten community co-designers will also be convened (25/hour for 80 hours) to support reuse planning. *Cost estimate* – \$25,000. *Lead* – Communications & Engagement Director Jenna Bowman will head engagement efforts, with help from environmental and planning contractors.
- **Assessments:** Rochester will initiate and complete up to 11 Phase I assessments, estimated at \$6,000 each. The City plans to conduct up to 6 Phase II assessments, estimated at \$40,000 each, in the targeted areas. These activities will be conducted by qualified environmental professionals and preceded with approved Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPP). City staff (\$40/hour for 100 hours) will oversee the assessment process. *Cost estimate* – \$310,000. *Lead* – Procured environmental contractors will ensure that all Phase I and Phase II activities meet ATSM standards and comply with the All Appropriate Inquiries Final Rule.
- **Cleanup/Reuse Planning:** Cleanup/reuse plans, at an estimated cost of \$150,000, will be developed by qualified experts, with significant input from the community. Proposed activities include: a charrette to gather input; development of an Analysis of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA) for sites to be remediated; an infrastructure needs assessment to identify upgrades required to support growth; a land use plan that considers cleanup strategies for high priority brownfield sites, green infrastructure, energy efficiency, and Complete Streets; and an implementation strategy with business recruitment approaches, identification of public and private revitalization resources, and a game plan for implementing the land use plan. *Cost estimate* – \$150,000. *Lead* – A planning team familiar with market analysis, infrastructure needs, land use planning, and funding/financing option will be contracted.

iv. Outputs

Task	Outputs
Project Management	Formalization of Steering Committee and teams; quarterly reports; closeout report; and Assessment, Cleanup and Redevelopment Exchange System (ACRES) updates
Community Engagement	Community engagement plan; quarterly meetings with neighborhood groups; and newsletters/fact sheets
Assessments	11 Phase I and 6 Phase II assessments; 1 generic QAPP; and 6 site-specific QAPP addenda
Cleanup/Reuse Planning	1 charrette; ABCAs for cleanup sites; assessment of existing infrastructure assets and upgrades needed to support reuse; sustainable land use plan; and detailed implementation strategy that includes brownfields cleanup priorities, business recruitment approaches, public and private resources that can support revitalization, and land use game plan

B. Cost Estimates – Rochester seeks a \$500,000 EPA Brownfields grant. The proposed budget, developed with input from environmental experts, dedicates 62% of funds for assessments and 30% to planning.

Budget Categories	Project Tasks				Total
	Project Management	Community Engagement	Site Assessments	Cleanup/Reuse Planning	
Personnel	\$12,000	\$2,000	\$4,000	\$0	\$18,000
Fringe	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Travel	\$3,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$3,000
Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Supplies	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Contractual	\$0	\$23,000	\$306,000	150,000	\$479,000
Other	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Direct Costs	\$15,000	\$25,000	\$310,000	\$150,000	\$500,000
Indirect Costs	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTAL BUDGET	\$15,000	\$25,000	\$310,000	\$150,000	\$500,000

C. Plan to Measure and Evaluate Environmental Progress & Results – Rochester will track progress. An established work plan, to be approved by EPA, will help to guide outputs and outcomes. The project manager will evaluate progress based upon milestones identified in the work plan. Internal project management software will be used to help ensure that assessment and reuse planning activities are moving along, and that project outputs and outcomes are being achieved. This will provide safeguards that grant funds are expended in a timely and efficient manner. Data will be regularly entered into ACRES.

IV. PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY & PAST PERFORMANCE

A. Programmatic Capability

i. Organizational Capacity – The City has the staff expertise necessary to manage the project. A project manager will lead all project teams and will be invested with the authority necessary to complete the project. Project management duties will be assigned to Cindy Steinhauser, Deputy City Manager. She will serve as a liaison between EPA Region 5 and Rochester, and will be responsible for assuring compliance with the administrative and reporting requirements of the cooperative agreement.

The City will use a team approach to ensure that work is not dependent on just a few key personnel. A Community Engagement Team will implement strategies to involve downtown residents. The Community Engagement Team will be composed of members of various City departments, as well as members of community associations, the business community, education sector, nonprofit field, and other stakeholders. A second Technical Team will support assessment, cleanup, and reuse planning activities.

ii. Organizational Structure – Rochester has a long track record of successfully managing community

projects. The key to this effort is the development of a detailed work plan with clear milestones and responsibilities. This will be developed at an initial meeting, including participation from the City Manager and other key staff. The meeting will identify goals, and responsibilities within the work plan will be well-defined. Performance measures will help to track progress. To ensure that the project is on schedule, status updates will be incorporated into the City's existing reporting structure. Monthly reports will be provided to the City Manager. In addition, staff will meet regularly with key partners.

iii. Description of Key Staff – The City has the staff expertise to manage the project. Project management will be assigned to Cindy Steinhauser, Rochester's Deputy City Manager. Cindy has extensive local government experience, serving as Assistant City Manager in Dubuque, Iowa and City Manager in Frankfort, Kentucky. She has managed state and federal funding. Cindy also served on a regional host committee for the EPA Brownfields Conference in Chicago. She will liaison with EPA Region 5 and be responsible for assuring compliance with the administrative and reporting requirements of the cooperative agreement, leading all community engagement activities, and hiring and managing contractors. Cindy will be supported by qualified interdepartmental staff, including Strategic Initiatives Director Josh Johnsen and Senior Administrative Analyst Brent Svenby. Josh has over 10 years of property development-related experience, including the oversight of the Discovery Walk, Heart of the City, and Riverfront public infrastructure improvements. Brent has over 20 years of urban planning experience, including working directly on redevelopment, economic, and affordable housing projects.

The City will use a team approach to ensure that the project is not dependent on a few key personnel. Two project teams will be established. A Community Engagement Team, led by Rochester's Communications & Engagement Director Jenna Bowman, will implement strategies to enhance resident involvement. A second Technical Team will be formed to support the identification and assessment of brownfields properties.

iii. Acquiring Additional Resources – Rochester will hire qualified experts to support engagement activities, conduct assessments, and develop cleanup/reuse plans. These services will be solicited in compliance with EPA regulations. The MN Pollution Control Agency will provide technical assistance and review cleanup plans. The City will work with prospective purchasers to enroll sites into the State's Voluntary Investigation and Cleanup Program. Rochester, Olmsted County Public Health Services, and Mayo Clinic will communicate the health risks associated with brownfields. Health professionals will provide technical assistance, identify sensitive populations, and ensure that cleanup reduces exposure pathways. Rochester will also coordinate with EPA technical assistance provider Kansas State University.

B. Past Performance & Accomplishments

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

1. Purpose & Accomplishments – Rochester has never received EPA Brownfields funding. However, the City has secured federal and state resources to support local revitalization, including:

- In 2014, the City received a \$425,550 MN Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) Contamination Cleanup Grant for brownfields remediation, facilitating the construction of a downtown parking facility and 230-room Hilton Hotel.
- In 2017, the City received a \$939,443 MN DEED Contamination Cleanup Grant to clean up a site upon which a 156-unit multi-family residential housing project has been constructed.
- In 2020, the City received a \$853,338 MN DEED Contamination Cleanup Grant to clean up a site upon which a 180-unit affordable multi-family residential housing project has been developed.

2. Compliance with Grant Requirements – The City has a superb record of complying with state and federal grant requirements. Rochester has successfully conducted work with MN agencies as well as DOT, HUD, NEA, EDA, and others. Work plans were created for previous efforts. All obligations were met, including the filing of timely reports. Projects were completed on-budget and on-time. All project results were achieved, as demonstrated in the examples above.

Threshold Criteria

City of Rochester, Minnesota

1) APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

- a. The City of Rochester is a unit of local government, and a political subdivision under the laws of the State of Minnesota. The City is eligible to receive EPA Brownfields funding.
- b. The City of Rochester is exempt from Federal taxation. However, Section 501(c)(4) does not pertain to local governments. The City is registered to lobby the Federal government.

2) COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Rochester will build on the efforts of its effective *DMC Development Plan* outreach. Representatives from RNeighbors, DMC Economic Development Agency, Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce, Rochester Downtown Alliance, and Mayo Clinic have already formed a project Steering Committee. Staff will meet regularly with these groups (initially and at least quarterly thereafter). Partners will also help engage residents and businesses.

A Community Engagement Team will develop public involvement strategies. This team will organize a series of meetings over the project period, including virtual sessions as needed. Local outreach activities will target residents of the Downtown and Slattery Park neighborhoods, particularly sensitive populations. The purpose of this engagement is to share information, collect feedback, and describe next steps. Input will also be gathered to shape reuse of assessed properties. Personnel from Olmsted County Public Health Services, Mayo Clinic, and MN Pollution Control Agency will share information on brownfields risks. Engagement activities will occur after work hours, be centrally located, and provide child-care to maximize participation. Comment cards will be provided at meetings to capture and document input.

To engage minority and low-income residents in reuse planning efforts, Rochester will utilize a “community co-design” process. A diverse set of residents with strong connections to the community and deep knowledge of their neighborhoods will be recruited. Co-designers will include: diversity, equity, and inclusion advocates; disability champions; local business owners; neighborhood association representatives; and a designee of the Rochester Downtown Alliance. These participants will be paid for their time (\$25 per hour), with reimbursement for childcare and other expenses. This group will ensure that the proposed site reuses meaningfully address resident needs.

Traditional media, including the newspaper, television, and local radio stations, will be used to disseminate information. Web sites and social media will describe brownfields efforts and promote engagement opportunities. A survey tool will be used to gather feedback. Rochester will also communicate through community newsletters. All written outreach materials will be available in English, Spanish, and Somalian. Rochester has used this outreach process successfully with previous state brownfields grants.

3) EXPENDITURE OF EXISTING GRANT FUNDS

The City has not received previous EPA Brownfields funding.

4) CONTRACTORS AND NAMED SUBRECIPIENTS

Not applicable. Rochester has not procured any contractors or identified any subrecipients for EPA grant funds. The City will follow the federal fair and open competition requirements in 2 CFR Part 200 and 2 CFR Part 1500 when contracting with environmental and planning specialists.