



City of Balcones Heights

R06-24-A-011

1. Applicant Identification

City of Balcones Heights
3300 Hillcrest Drive
Balcones Heights, TX 78201

2. Funding Requested

- a. Assessment Grant Type: Community-wide
- b. Federal Funds Requested: \$450,000

3. Location

a) City of Balcones Heights b) Bexar County c) Texas

4. Target Area and Priority Site Information

Target Area: City limits of Balcones Heights, 0.66 square miles (CT48029180800)

Priority Site 1: Trio Investments Tract, 4421–4437 Fredericksburg Road, Balcones Heights, TX 78201

Priority Site 2: Nicholson Tract, 200 Crossroads Boulevard, Balcones Heights, TX 78201

5. Contacts

a. Project Director

Name: Albert Lara

Phone number: (210) 957-3545

Email address: alara@bhtx.gov

Mailing address: 3300 Hillcrest Dr., Balcones Heights, TX 78201

b. Chief Executive/Highest Ranking Elected Official

Name: Mayor Suzanne de Leon

Phone number: (210) 825-2018

Email: sdeleon@balconesheights.org

Mailing address: 3300 Hillcrest Dr., Balcones Heights, TX 78201

6. Population: 2,743 (US Census: 2017–2021 American Community Survey)



City of Balcones Heights

7. Other Factors

Other Factors	Page #
Community population is 10,000 or less.	1
The applicant is, or will assist, a federally recognized Indian tribe or United States territory.	NA
The priority site(s) is impacted by mine-scarred land.	NA
The priority site(s) is adjacent to a body of water (i.e., the border of the priority site(s) is contiguous or partially contiguous to the body of water, or would be contiguous or partially contiguous with a body of water but for a street, road, or other public thoroughfare separating them).	NA
The priority site(s) is in a federally designated flood plain.	NA
The reuse of the priority site(s) will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy.	3
The reuse of the priority site(s) will incorporate energy efficiency measures.	3
The proposed project will improve local climate adaptation/mitigation capacity and resilience to protect residents and community investments.	3
At least 30% or more of the overall project budget will be spent on eligible reuse/area-wide planning activities, as described in Section I.B., for priority site(s) within the target area.	8, 9
The target area(s) is located within a community in which a coal-fired power plant has recently closed (2013 or later) or is closing.	5

8. Letter from the State or Tribal Environmental Authority

See attached.

9. Releasing Copies of Applications

Not Applicable.

Jon Niermann, *Chairman*
Emily Lindley, *Commissioner*
Bobby Janecka, *Commissioner*
Kelly Keel, *Interim Executive Director*



TEXAS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Protecting Texas by Reducing and Preventing Pollution

October 10, 2023

Janet Thelen, Director of Community Development
City of Balcones Heights
3300 Hillcrest Drive
Balcones Heights, Texas 78201

Re: City of Balcones Heights Proposal for a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency FY24
Brownfields Community-Wide Assessment Grant

Dear Ms. Thelen:

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) is pleased to offer this letter of support for the City of Balcones Heights proposal for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency FY24 Brownfields Community-Wide Assessment Grant. The TCEQ believes the work completed under the grant will significantly impact the enhancement of this community and supports the grant proposal. You may contact me at 512-239-2252 or Kristian.livingston@tceq.texas.gov if you have any questions or if you would like additional information.

Sincerely,

Kristy Livingston

Kristy Mauricio Livingston
Team Leader
Remediation Division

KML/dl



City of Balcones Heights, TX

FY24 Brownfields Assessment Grant

Narrative



1. PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION AND PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION

a. Target Area and Brownfields i. Overview of Brownfield Challenges and Description of

Target Area: The City of Balcones Heights, “City,” incorporated in 1948, is a small “diamond in the rough” community surrounded by the city of San Antonio, Texas, in central Bexar County. Throughout its history, the Balcones Heights community has seized opportunities, taken risks, and been a pioneer of change. In 1765, Spanish Explorer Bernardo de Miranda y Flores encountered a rising series of hills outside of San Antonio. He named them Los Balcones. In the mid-20th century, developers drew on the area’s history, proclaiming the settlement Balcones Heights. Single family subdivisions sprouted in Balcones Heights following World War II, largely driven by government loans to veterans who had proudly served their county. By 1948, residents fearing annexation by San Antonio, incorporated the City. Balcones Heights’ main thoroughfares are Fredericksburg Road and Crossroads Boulevard. Fredericksburg Road started as a stagecoach route and is now a major roadway leading out of downtown San Antonio. Over the years lodging, restaurants, shopping, and related services were established along this throughfare. The City grew as a diverse community striving to maintain its unique identity while San Antonio’s commercial development along Interstate Highway I-10 and Loop 410 slowly encroached into the city limits. Due to this heavily trafficked area, brownfield challenges emerged as commercial buildings in poor condition along Fredericksburg Road and Crossroads Boulevard became neglected and abandoned.

The City is approximately 0.66 square miles with a population of 2,743.¹ Based on this limited area, the entire city limits has been identified as **the geographic boundary and target area** (CT48029180800) of this grant application. The target area, which is a designated as a **Justice 40 disadvantaged census tract**, needs brownfield revitalization due to its **underserved minority and low-income population** and a desire to provide more affordable housing and modern, **energy efficient** commercial/retail buildings for the community. The City believes that through a collaborative planning effort with project partner organizations, and supported by EPA’s assistance, brownfield funding will allow for a site inventory and refined prioritization, assessment, and cleanup planning to push redevelopment of abandoned brownfields, bringing prosperity back to the community and providing opportunities for the **underserved** population.

ii. Description of the Priority Brownfield Site(s): Because the City is a low-income area, multiple properties have been either abandoned or are underused because potential investors lack confidence in a good return on investment. A windshield survey of the target area identified **ten** potential brownfield sites that include abandoned commercial/industrial sites, dry cleaners, vacant lots, and dilapidated old apartment complexes. In addition, the TCEQ database identified 13 leaking petroleum storage tanks. Through the grant-funded site inventory process, additional target-area sites will be identified and prioritized with the help of project partners and community residents. Two priority sites have been identified as catalysts for redevelopment: **Trio Investments Site and the Nicholson Site.**

The first priority site, referred to as the **Trio Investments Site** (4421–4437 Fredericksburg Road), is a 2.22-acre tract bound on the north by Fredericksburg Road and on the south by Gentleman Road. The site is near the Wonderland of the Americas (WOTA), the crowning jewel of the City and the most desirable destination for City residents. Many residents and visitors to the City encounter this priority site during their travel to the WOTA. The northern portion of the tract is developed with three aging and dilapidated commercial buildings that were built in the 1960s. One of the buildings is occupied by 5 Star Cleaners, another building is occupied by a Cricket store, and the third building is occupied by Amtex Auto Insurance Agency and Neyra Pavement

¹ US Census: 2017–2021 American Community Survey



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Products. The southern half of the tract is a vacant storage/warehouse building that was used in the past for automotive maintenance for a car rental business. The southern portion of the site is fenced; however, portions of the fence are unsecure and in need of repair. There are multiple apartments and a mobile home park in the vicinity of this property, which increases the likelihood that residents, especially children, can access this portion of the site. Potential contaminants identified for soil and groundwater at the site include **volatile organic compounds (VOCs)**, including **chlorinated VOCs** associated with the dry cleaner, **total petroleum hydrocarbons (TPH)**, **polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs)**, and **Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) metals**. In addition, based on the age of the on-site buildings, it is likely that **asbestos and lead-based paints** are present at the site. The City has contacted the property owner, who has expressed a desire to redevelop the property and will provide access for the performance of assessment activities. Redevelopment is expected to include mixed-use commercial with an affordable housing component, with the existing businesses to occupy the new development.

The second priority site, referred to as the **Nicholson Site** (200 Crossroads Boulevard), has been a Firestone store since the early 1990s. The 0.585-acre site is located east and within walking distance of the WOTA. Mrs. Nicholson has been working with the City to create a vision for the redevelopment of the site based on current land use plans that will benefit this underserved community. The desired redevelopment of the Nicholson priority site into a multilevel commercial/retail building will generate **job opportunities**. Based on the land use as a Firestone store, **contaminants that are likely present at the site include VOCs, TPH, PAHs, and RCRA metals**. It is anticipated that Firestone will develop a new store on vacant parcels within the City.

iii. Identifying Additional Sites: The target area and geographic boundary of the city limits are one and the same for Balcones Heights as it is only 0.66 square miles. The City will work with project partners and residents to identify abandoned and underused properties. Those properties will be researched by City staff using the property assessor's website. The evaluation ranking tool created during the Site Inventory Budget Task will be used to determine the order in which assessment funding is spent on all sites added into the Inventory. Priority will be assigned by considering greatest need and most underserved population. This "need" will be determined by using the US Census Data and the Climate Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST).

b. Revitalization of the Target Area i. Reuse Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans: In 2008, the City of Balcones Heights established a Steering Committee comprised of leaders of the community and developed a future planning document titled *Balcones Heights...forging a new urban frontier*. Through community meetings, participants stated they believed the most significant issue facing Balcones Heights was that the City did not currently exhibit a positive or desirable physical character, either internally or to the outside world, due to visual clutter characterized by an abundance of asphalt, concrete, and signage. In addition, community residents expressed that the city lacks a "city center," a "sense of place." Public meeting participants conveyed the importance of developing parks and a comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian trail system to link the city internally and to other regional destinations. The **Plan** focuses on building on the City's future by assessing brownfield sites and cleaning up decaying buildings and commercial sites to improve the appearance or physical features of the target area. To further the redevelopment of City parks and trail, the City adopted the **City Plan 2040** in September 2023.

The City has a strong desire to increase the number of livable, affordable, and attractive apartment units and to create community parks and greenspaces for the enjoyment and well-being of residents. There are multiple Class D apartments along Gentlemen Road and Fredericksburg Road, and the City intends to provide new affordable housing similar to Balcones Lofts that was



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developed in 2015 in a teaming agreement with local developer, The NRP Group. The City envisions creating spaces inside the new apartments to facilitate a “Bibliotech,” or library, where digital resources can be provided to encourage the education of young residents and job skills can be learned online, providing new opportunities for employment and higher income for residents. The City is landlocked, making vertical development crucial for attracting new businesses to the area. New businesses will create much-needed new jobs and economic opportunity for residents. The **two priority sites** are located not only in high-traffic areas of the City but are desirable for the development of properties envisioned in the City’s **Community Revitalization Plan**, specifically for the development of affordable housing that provides a safe, welcoming community environment. The City desires to develop new retail and commercial space that can attract new business owners to move to the City and provide new jobs and opportunities for career growth, especially for the linguistically isolated or those who have achieved limited educational success.

ii. Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategy: Balcones Heights’s historical prosperity was based on being a major thoroughfare to the city of San Antonio and providing lodging, restaurants, shopping, and related services. The City seeks to capitalize on the target-area connectivity provided by its existing transportation networks along Fredericksburg Road, I-10, and Loop 410.

The redevelopment of the **Trio Investment priority site** will focus on affordable housing along with a green space. Improving the livability of the community with new affordable housing and removing blight will bring **noneconomic** benefits by creating a **high quality of life and improved health** for residents. The construction phase of the affordable housing project will create jobs (**economic benefit**). The City will strongly encourage the developer to **incorporate energy efficient measures** into the redevelopment such as solar panels and energy efficient appliances, with the potential for renewable energy sources within the green space.

The desired redevelopment of the **Nicholson priority site** into a multilevel commercial/retail building will generate varying skill level **job opportunities** and **raise property values (economic benefits)**. The new development will provide new businesses an inviting place to flourish and will attract talent to the area by providing higher paying jobs. In addition, creating new workspaces with **contemporary and energy-efficient design** will improve the appearance of the community.

The City will work with developers to ensure all redevelopment within the target area considers **energy-efficient designs and incorporates renewable energy options when possible**. The City will work with developers to consider local **climate adaptation/mitigation strategies** in their designs to ensure future developments are resilient, long-term investments in the community.

c. Strategy for Leveraging Resources i. Resources Needed for Site Reuse: The City as a local unit of government is eligible to apply for county, state, and federal grant funding. The City is currently pursuing and has already discussed the following funding opportunities with agency representatives. The City will utilize the additional funds to complete the assessment and subsequent reuse strategies for both priority sites.

	Agency	Funding Purpose
Federal	Federal Highway Administration	Provides funding for preliminary engineering, surveying, land acquisition, and construction design.
Federal	US Housing and Urban Development: Community Development Block Grant	Removal of blight throughout the city limits and infrastructure repairs/upgrades.
Federal	US EPA Brownfield Cleanup Grant	Remediation of sites.
State	Alamo Area Metropolitan Planning Organization Funds	Funding has been awarded for the following purposes, which will assist with mitigating environmental justice concerns: Congestion Mitigation



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		and Air Quality Improvement Program; Surface Transportation Block Grant; and Transportation Alternatives.
State	Texas Water Development Board	Funding to mitigate flooding issues as it relates to redevelopment at the priority sites and throughout the target area.

ii. Use of Existing Infrastructure: Within the last five years, to meet the existing need, the City was awarded nearly \$6.25 million dollars in grant funding for infrastructure improvements (sewer, water, streets) from state and federal agencies to improve the target area. The City’s plans for target-area redevelopment include the use of existing infrastructure, including water, sewer, electricity, gas, and transportation. Therefore, infrastructure within the target area and at the two priority sites is sufficient for immediate redevelopment.

2. COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

a. **Community Need** i. The Community’s Need for Funding: The City’s existing budget provides basic community services and maintains existing infrastructure, such as police, fire, streets, and sewer, leaving no additional funds for brownfield assessment and remediation. Current inflationary economic drivers along with a lack of additional commercial investment in the area to generate additional tax base have impacted the City’s ability to provide services. Therefore, the City needs additional funding to provide resources and solutions to community brownfield problems. **The low population residing in the target area is 2,743.² Residents suffer from low income as shown by the target area’s median household income of \$27,431 and per capita income of \$24,639, significantly less than the national averages (\$69,021 and \$37,638).² The City is in the 92nd percentile for low median and the 90th percentile for poverty, where the household income is at or below 100% of the federal poverty level.³ Within the City, the percentage of all families below the poverty level in the target area is 38% (US 9%) and all individuals below the poverty level is 43% (US 13%).² With a high-poverty population, additional revenue streams to fund projects are impossible, but funding assistance from an EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant can pave the way for prosperity, improving the quality of life for city residents.**

ii. Threats to Sensitive Populations (1) Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations: According to the **Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST)**, the target area is a **Justice 40 disadvantaged census tract** (48029180800). Sensitive populations includes **minorities** and those who are **impoverished**. The target area has a high percentage of **Hispanic minorities** (72%; US 18%), all people living below the **poverty level** at 43% (US 13%) and those under the age of 18 living below the poverty level at 52% (US 17%).² In addition, **30%** of the population receive **food stamps or SNAP** to be able to sustain their families (US 11%).² Despite being located in an area near San Antonio, which is experiencing tremendous growth, the City has prevalent **welfare issues, such as low educational attainment, linguistic isolation, dependence on government assistance, crime, and lack of affordable housing.**

The City remains below state and national high school graduation rates, with the target area in the 15th percentile of people ages 25 years or older whose education level is less than a high school diploma.³ In addition, the City is in the **91st percentile for percent of households where no one over age 14 speaks English.**³ Low education levels can equate to higher crime rates. The city has a crime rate that is **267% higher** than the national average and a violent crime rate that is **274% higher** than the national average.⁴ Within the city, an individual has a 1 in 69 chance of becoming a victim of violent crime.⁴

² US Census: 2017–2021 American Community Survey

³ Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool

⁴ <https://www.areavibes.com/balcones+heights-tx/crime/>



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Providing **affordable housing** is necessary for this underserved community to thrive. The City's average monthly rent is \$819 (US \$1,163), with the average median home value at \$162,500 (US \$244,900).⁵ Even with the low cost of monthly rent and low home values, residents are suffering as a significant portion of their annual income goes to cover housing, with **83% of low-income households spending more than 30% of their income on housing**.⁶ To make matters worse, existing target-area housing is aged and falling apart, with 49% of all homes being constructed prior to 1969, creating an environmental concern of asbestos and lead.⁵ The Environmental Justice (EJ) Screen Report **Lead Paint Indicator** shows the target area is in the **70th percentile** in the state. The City believes the Brownfield Community-wide Assessment Grant will help identify contaminants, allowing for assessment, and promoting redevelopment such as new commercial space and affordable housing along its major thoroughfare. Connectivity will increase throughout the **target area**, reducing health and welfare threats by providing increased access to community assets, increasing walkability/bikeability, and provide local job opportunities to help the sensitive and underserved populations transition out of the cycle of poverty.

(2) Greater Than Normal Incidence of Disease and Adverse Health Conditions: As the City transitioned into a largely commercial community and heavy transportation corridor, it introduced the community to new sources of contaminants polluting its surrounding air, water, and soil. Traffic-related air pollution is a major cause of unhealthy air quality, especially in urban areas, and several health problems have been linked to exposure to traffic-related air pollution. Furthermore, hazardous substances such as heavy metals, PAHs, lead-based paint, asbestos, and PCBs that are present within the priority sites are a cause for concern, especially considering potential effects on sensitive populations in the area and the potential for **cancer and asthma**-related illnesses.

The City's **second leading causes of death is cancer, with chronic lower respiratory diseases as the sixth leading cause of death**.⁷ Specifically, **cancer** caused significantly higher mortality rates in males (167.7 per 100k) than females (112.7 per 100k).⁷ This was also true for deaths attributed to **chronic lower repository diseases**, with 35.3 per 100k for males and 29.5 per 100k for females.⁷ Bexar County's overall **asthma hospitalization rate is consistently higher than that of Texas overall**. Among Bexar County's pediatric population, male children are hospitalized for asthma at higher rates than female children.⁸ Among adults, however, females are hospitalized for asthma at considerably higher rates than males.⁸ Housing problems are also strongly correlated with asthma in Bexar County: census tracts that have a higher percentage of households with housing problems also have higher levels of asthma reported.⁸ These breathing problems and asthma-related illnesses are further exacerbated by air quality issues. Based on the **EJ Screening Tool**, the target area's **Particulate Matter is in the 81st percentile in the US and the Traffic Proximity in the 96th percentile in the state**. Furthering the problem of air quality, the City has three coal fire plants surrounding the target area located in neighboring San Antonio; **with one that closed in 2018**, one will be converted to natural gas in 2027, and the last is set to close in 2028. The assessment and future remediation of the potential contaminants will reduce the threats of adverse health conditions and ensure the future health and safety of the sensitive population living in this underserved community. In addition, by creating a more walkable/bikeable and connected community, fewer vehicles will be used within the City, decreasing the amount of vehicle traffic and air pollutants.

⁵ US Census: 2017–2021 American Community Survey

⁶ Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool

⁷ <https://www.sanantonio.gov/Portals/0/Files/health/News/Reports/Mortality/2019MortalityReport.pdf>

⁸ <https://www.sanantonio.gov/Portals/0/Files/health/News/Reports/Asthma/AsthmaReport2018-2019.pdf>



(3) Environmental Justice (a) Identification of Environmental Justice Issues: The **target area and geographic boundary** of Balcones Heights is designated a Justice 40 disadvantaged census tract (48029180800), confirming the environmental justice issues. The City is a prime example of an **underserved community** as residents are burdened with high rates of poverty and extremely low-income levels. The potential brownfield sites throughout the City have been at the core of negative consequences for this **distressed community** by introducing a **disproportionate environmental stressor burden** and **high cumulative impacts to the residents**. Sensitive and underserved populations, such as the **impoverished, minorities**, and the **linguistically isolated** residing within the City, are not experiencing the economic growth and vitality of the nearby community of San Antonio due to the **low-income levels and persistent poverty** that has deterred potential investors.

(b) Advancing Environmental Justice: Residents will greatly benefit from the **Biden Administration’s Justice40** Initiative goal of 40% of the overall benefits of federal investments flowing to underserved communities. The City’s planned redevelopment to create new **affordable housing** and new **commercial/retail opportunities** will address several of the EJ issues negatively affecting this community, allowing residents the opportunity to break free from years of environmental and socioeconomic hardships that have overwhelmed them. The overall redevelopment of the priority sites will reduce EJ issues affecting sensitive populations by removing old housing littered with **asbestos and lead**, removing the existing public safety hazards of blighted dilapidated structures, and increasing engagement with the community’s sensitive populations. The planned redevelopment of affordable housing **promotes EJ by increasing access to affordable living spaces and fixing distressed neighborhoods**. Also, by increasing walkability/bikeability, local job opportunities, and connecting the community, the City’s residents will finally have the opportunity to turn the corner from poverty and have a higher quality health and wellness. Community assets and businesses will replace blighted sites, ushering in employment opportunities and a more prosperous future for the community while promoting EJ.

Redevelopment of the priority sites will not displace any residents but instead create new affordable housing options. While there is a current tenant in a portion of a priority site, due to the dilapidated structures and need for redevelopment, the City and the property owners will work together to find a new location for the current business operations. The tenants and all parties involved know that to create a safe and productive community for now and into the future, the City must work to address the dilapidation of the brownfield sites.

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

Name of Org.	Point of Contact	Specific involvement in the project or assistance provided
Balcones Heights The Miracle Mile	Lorenzo Nastasi (210) 957-2991	The Balcones Heights Miracle Mile is located in downtown Balcones Heights, where the team promotes a growing economy essential to growth and revitalization within the community. They will assist with site identification, future site reuse planning, and site inventory assistance .
San Antonio Birth Doulas	Morgan Thurmond (210) 222-0988	San Antonio Birth Doulas is located in the WOTA and provides new and expecting parents with support in an effort to prevent infant/child abuse and neglect. They will assist with community outreach and education activities .
Merced Housing Texas	Kristin L. Davila, (210) 281-0234	Merced Housing Texas’s goal is to provide safe and affordable shelter and to build communities where opportunities for education, employment, financial literacy, and health are enhanced and encouraged. They will assist with community outreach and education activities .

iii. Incorporating Community Input: The City knows the importance of keeping the community involved, especially those residents directly impacted by the project including those most underserved, in planning the future. A Community Involvement Plan (CIP) will be created to



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outline the planned community-engagement activities, schedule, project background, and key players. Through City meeting minutes, a record of community input and suggestions given during target-area community meetings and City Council meetings will be evaluated and responded to within a week of the meeting. All suggestions and input will be addressed on an individual basis within a week and promptly posted to the City’s brownfield website for further public review. Sites and feedback suggested by the community will be added to the site inventory, and the project team will prioritize each site based on need and the overall Brownfield Project goals. Community members will be contacted individually to provide further details regarding their suggestions.

The City will employ a wide array of communication forms to ensure all residents are familiar with the multiple forms of available communication so that the widest reach of information through the community is fulfilled, and remains constant. The City will use various social media platforms, in Spanish and English, to advertise the project at various stages of completion and success as well as to educate and increase project transparency. The City will operate a dedicated brownfields information page on its website and will provide newspaper press releases, postings at City Hall, public outreach at community meetings, and presentations at local civic clubs to disseminate vital Brownfield Project information.

The City will use informational brochures, press releases, and local media outlets to increase information access and share information with community members. All print material and press releases will be in Spanish and English. City staff will provide project updates and information during monthly Council meetings. City leaders understand the crucial role community members play in successfully implementing Brownfield Assessment activities. A translator will be used at every community meeting due the large Hispanic population within the target area.

3. TASK DESCRIPTIONS, COST ESTIMATES, AND MEASURING PROGRESS

Description of Tasks/Activities and Outputs:

Task 1: Outreach	
i.	<i>Project Implementation:</i> The City’s Brownfield Project Manager will develop a Community Involvement Plan (CIP), outreach materials, Brownfield Project website, and social media posts with the assistance of the environmental contractor (EC). City staff will lead the community meetings to keep the public informed about project plans and updates. All print materials will be in Spanish and English. A translator will be at all community meetings. Supplies are budgeted for the printing of outreach materials (brochures/handouts) and office supplies to support the project.
ii.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> CIP created within three months of award. Community Meetings will be held in quarters 1, 3, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14. Website and Outreach Materials, in Spanish and English, will be created in the 2 nd quarter and updates posted quarterly throughout the grant project.
iii.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> City: Albert Lara, Director of Community Development, Brownfield Project Manager
iv.	<i>Outputs:</i> CIP, Brownfield Website, 7 Community Meetings, 16 Brochures/Handouts/Social Media Posts, Summary of Community Meetings in EPA required Quarterly Reports.
Task 2: Site Inventory	
i.	<i>Project Implementation:</i> The City’s Brownfield Project Manager will work with residents during community meetings to create a thorough site inventory for assessment. Once a list is compiled, the EC will work with City staff to create an evaluation ranking tool to determine the order in which the sites will be addressed based on the criteria that helps assist those residents most in need and redevelopment plans found to be most important by city leaders, project partners, and underserved and sensitive populations living in the city.
ii.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> Community meeting held in 1 st quarter will continue the preliminary inventory process that began with this application with the evaluation ranking process taking place in the 3 rd quarter and continuing throughout the close of the grant project.
iii.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> City: Albert Lara, Director of Community Development, Brownfield Project Manager
iv.	<i>Outputs:</i> Evaluation Ranking Tool, Site Inventory List.



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Task 3: Assessment	
i.	<i>Project Implementation:</i> The EC will conduct Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) activities at sites selected and ranked through the Site Inventory Task, starting first with the two priority sites listed in this application. ASTM-AAI compliant Phase Is; Generic Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP); Phase IIs with SS-QAPP. Prior to assessment, site access agreements and property eligibility determinations approval obtained.
ii.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> Assessment activities begin the 2 nd quarter and continue throughout the grant.
iii.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> The EC will implement the technical aspects of the project with oversight from the City: Albert Lara, Director of Community Development, Brownfield Project Manager.
iv.	<i>Outputs:</i> 14 Phase I ESAs; 1 Generic QAPP; 7 Phase II ESAs, including SS-QAPP, Site Access Agreements, and Property Eligibility Determinations.
Task 4: Remediation/Reuse Planning	
i.	<i>Project Implementation:</i> For projects identified for cleanup, the EC will prepare the Analysis for Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA) and/or Cleanup Plans. Cleanup planning will include evaluating cleanup alternatives, calculating cleanup costs, and determining site appropriate remediation and/or reuse planning to reduce health/environmental risks. The EC will assist the City in hosting charrettes/visioning sessions (virtual depending on COVID restrictions) to be held for key properties. The planner will prepare a comprehensive Brownfield Revitalization Plan and Site Reuse Assessments (EPA Approved Planning Activities).
ii.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> Plans & Charrettes to begin in the 6 th quarter and will continue throughout the grant project. Site Reuse Assessments and Brownfield Revitalization Plan to begin in 3 rd quarter.
iii.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> The EC will implement the technical aspects of the project with oversight from the City: Albert Lara, Director of Community Development, Brownfield Project Manager.
iv.	<i>Outputs:</i> 2 ABCAs, 2 Vision Sessions/Charrettes, 2 Site Reuse Assessments, 1 Brownfield Redevelopment Plan.
Task 5: Programmatic Support	
i.	<i>Project Implementation:</i> The City’s Brownfield Project Director will oversee grant implementation and administration to ensure compliance with the EPA Cooperative Agreement Work Plan, schedule, and terms and conditions. The EC will assist the City in completing ACRES Database Reporting, Yearly Financial Reporting, Quarterly Reporting, MBE/WBE Forms, and all additional Programmatic Support for the four-year term of the grant. The City staff travel budget allows for two staff to attend three national/regional/grantee brownfield training conferences/workshops.
ii.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> ACRES & Quarterly Reporting begins in the 1 st quarter and continues throughout the grant project. Annual Reporting/Forms created in 5 th , 9 th , and 13 th quarters and final closeout.
iii.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> City: Lorenzo Nastasi, Director, Economic Development, Brownfield Project Director
iv.	<i>Outputs:</i> ACRES Database Reporting, 4 Annual Financial Reports, 16 Quarterly Reports, 4 MBE/WBE Forms, Programmatic Support for the four-year grant period. Two staff to attend three conferences.

b. Cost Estimates: Below are the anticipated cost estimates for this project *based on past Brownfield Projects as determined by local market standards discussed with local environmental consultants with contractual hourly rates based on the skills needed for the specific tasks.* The budget for this project includes travel, supplies, and contractual costs only. **Fifty-three (53)% of the budget will be spent on site specific work** through the Assessment Task and **33% will be spent on area-wide planning** through the Remediation/Reuse Planning Task.

Task 1 Outreach: Contractual: Community Involvement Plan \$4,000 (32hrs x \$125); Brownfield Website, Outreach Brochure/Handouts, Social Media Posts \$3,000 (24hrs x \$125); 7 Community Education Meetings \$10,500 (12hrs x \$125; \$1,500/meeting). Supplies: Outreach Supplies \$2,000 (printed brochures \$1,000 [1,000 x \$1.00], printed display boards \$500 [5 x \$100], notebooks, paper, pens, other miscellaneous office supplies \$500). **Task 2 Site Inventory:** Contractual: Brownfield Site Inventory and Evaluation Ranking Tool Creation \$10,000 (80hrs x \$125). **Task 3 Assessment:** Contractual: 14 Phase I ESAs \$3,500 each for a total of \$49,000; 1 Generic QAPP \$5,500; 7 Phase II ESAs, which will include a SS-QAPP, \$26,000 each (for both documents) for



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a total of \$182,000. **Task 4 Remediation/Reuse Planning:** Contractual: 2 ABCAs \$7,000 for a total of \$14,000; 2 Vision Sessions/Charrettes \$8,000 (\$4,000/meeting); 1 Brownfields Revitalization Plan at \$75,000 (Planner: 200hrs x \$150; Market Analysts: 160hrs x \$125, Environmental Professional: 200hrs x \$125); 2 Site Reuse Plans \$50,000 (Planner: 200hrs x \$125; \$25,000/plan). **Task 5 Programmatic Support:** Contractual: ACRES Database Reporting, Yearly Financial Reporting, Quarterly Reporting, MBE/WBE Forms, Programmatic Support for the four-year grant period \$25,000 (200hrs x \$125). Travel: Two staff to attend three training events/conferences \$12,000 (flights at \$800, 3 nights in hotel at \$300/night, incidentals and per diem at \$75 per day [4 days] x 2 attendees x 3 events).

Category	Tasks					Totals
	<i>Outreach</i>	<i>Site Inventory</i>	<i>Assessment</i>	<i>Remediation/Reuse Planning</i>	<i>Programmatic Support</i>	
Travel					\$12,000	\$12,000
Supplies	\$2,000					\$2,000
Contractual	\$17,500	\$10,000	\$236,500	\$147,000	\$25,000	\$436,000
Total Budget	\$19,500	\$10,000	\$236,500	\$147,000	\$37,000	\$450,000

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

4. PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE

a. Programmatic Capability i. Organizational Capacity, ii. Organizational Structure, & iii. Description of Key Staff: The Balcones Heights Economic Development Department is familiar with successfully managing federal- and state-funded grant projects. The team and their supporting staff are well versed in managing successful grant projects. The City will provide any additional resources necessary to the Brownfield Team to ensure the grant is executed successfully. **Mr. Lorenzo Nastasi**, Director of Economic Development and Public Affairs, has served the city in various capacities since 2004. He is responsible for overseeing the City’s Public Information and Community Relations functions and implementing the City’s economic development and master planning initiatives. He will serve as the **Brownfield Project Director** and will oversee the entire project and ensure successful expenditure of funds and completion of administrative and financial requirements of the project. He will be assisted by **Mr. Albert Lara**, Director of Community Development, who will serve as the **Brownfield Project Manager** and will handle the day-to-day tasks involved with this project. He has over 30 years of project management experience and has worked in local government for the past four years. He has served in his current position of Community Development Director for the last year and is responsible for preparing and managing



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the annual budgets for the following departments: Code Enforcement, Permitting, Inspections, Public Works, and Animal Control. Mr. Lara and Mr. Nastasi will be assisted by **Mr. Floyd Messick**, City Finance Director, who will serve as the **Brownfield Finance Director**. He has been working in local government finance for the past 10 years and is well versed in handling federal and state financial grant requirements. He will be responsible for managing the finances of this grant and drawdowns through ASAP.gov. An EC will handle the technical portions of this project.

iv. Acquiring Additional Resources: On May 9, 2022, the City advertised a solicitation on their website and the *San Antonio Express News* (newspaper) to comply with competitive procurement requirements outlined in 2 CFR § 200 and 2 CFR § 1500 that are applicable to the hiring of consulting firms to assist communities with grants awarded by the EPA. Respondents to the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) were specifically directed not to contact any member of the City of Balcones Heights's City Council and to direct questions to the Director of Community Development. Qualifications were to be submitted to the City as a PDF version on a USB flash drive. This is the City's second grant application; therefore, contractor selection was first completed to apply for FY23 funding which included reapplying in the event funds were not awarded during that cycle. In response to the solicitation, The City received three responses to the solicitation that were reviewed by a selection committee comprised of the Director of Community Development, the Director of Economic Development and Public Affairs, the City Engineer, the Mayor, the City Manager, and select members of the City Council. Upon review, three firms were short-listed, and an interview was conducted by several members of the selection committee to further evaluate the respondents. Upon completion of the interviews, a firm was recommended and presented to the City Council for approval on June 27, 2022. Upon approval, the firm was awarded the contract to assist the City with the preparation of the US EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant and implementation of the Grant if awarded to the City. The City will focus on promoting locally for labor practices, hiring/procurement, and link local residents to new employment opportunities related to the project/grant in a meaningful and equitable way.

b. Past Performance and Accomplishments ii. Has Not Received an EPA Brownfields Grant but has Received Other Federal or Non-Federal Assistance Agreements (1) Purpose and Accomplishments: In 2022, the City was awarded \$425,000 in **US Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)** funding for the Crestview Drive Project. The purpose of this project is to upgrade infrastructure such as street reconstruction due to pavement failures and utility and sidewalk reconstruction that will meet the objectives of neighborhood revitalization benefiting its **underserved community** while preventing urban blight. The project is under way and is scheduled to be completed in 2024. In 2022, the City was awarded \$4,196,000 in grant funding from the **Texas Department of Transportation/Alamo Area Metropolitan Planning Organization** for the Hillcrest Drive Project. The project is scheduled to begin in 2023 and will fund construction design, construction of new roadways to ensure the slowing of traffic, improving walkability with unobstructed sidewalks, and enhancing safety to vehicles, pedestrians, and mass transit. The project will replace all utilities, and create of a 10-foot-wide multimodal trail, regional mobility project and additional lane capacity. The project is scheduled to be completed in summer 2025. (2) Compliance with Grant Requirements: The City has a history of compliance with grant work plans, schedules, and terms and conditions and has an excellent history of timely reporting with all award agencies. The City is on schedule with all active grants. Mr. Lara is skilled in project management and is personally monitoring all grant activities to ensure compliance with all financial reporting requirements.



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Threshold Criteria



Threshold Criteria

1. Applicant Eligibility

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

2. Community Involvement

A Community Involvement Plan (CIP) will be created to outline the planned community-engagement activities, schedule, project background, and key players. Through City meeting minutes, a record of community input and suggestions given during target-area community meetings and City Council meetings will be evaluated and responded to within a week of the meeting. All suggestions and input will be addressed on an individual basis within a week and promptly posted to the City's brownfield website for further public review. Sites and feedback suggested by the community will be added to the site inventory, and the project team will prioritize each site based on need and the overall Brownfield Project goals. Community members will be contacted individually to provide further details regarding suggestions on implementation.

The City will employ a wide array of communication to ensure all residents are familiar with the multiple forms of available communication so that the widest reach of information through the community is fulfilled. The City will use various social media platforms to advertise the project at various stages of completion and success as well as to educate and increase project transparency. The City will operate a dedicated brownfields information page on its website and will provide newspaper press releases, postings at City Hall, public outreach at community meetings, and presentations at local civic clubs to disseminate vital Brownfield Project information.

The City will also use informational brochures, press releases, and local media outlets to increase information access and share information with community members. City staff will provide project updates and information during monthly Council meetings. City leaders understand the crucial role community members play in successfully implementing Brownfield Assessment activities. A translator will be used at every community meeting due to the large Hispanic population within the target area.

3. Expenditure of Existing Grant Funds

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

4. Contractors and Named Subrecipients

On May 9, 2022, the City advertised a solicitation on their website and the *San Antonio Express News* (newspaper) to comply with competitive procurement requirements outlined in 2 CFR § 200 and 2 CFR § 1500 that are applicable to the hiring of consulting firms to assist communities with grants awarded by the EPA. Respondents to the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) were specifically directed not to contact any member of the City of Balcones Heights's City Council and to direct questions to the Director of Community Development. Qualifications were to be



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submitted to the City as a PDF version on a USB flash drive. The solicitation was posted for 28 days, the length of posting was determined based on the date contractor selection was required in order to be included on the regular session City Council meeting for approval. This approval was required to move forward with the grant application. This is the City's second grant application; therefore, contractor selection was first completed to apply for FY 2023 funding which included reapplying in the event funds were not awarded during that cycle. In response to the solicitation, the City received **three** responses to the solicitation that were reviewed by a selection committee comprised of the Director of Community Development, the Director of Economic Development and Public Affairs, the City Engineer, the Mayor, the City Manager, and select members of the City Council. Each response was reviewed at length, scored, and ranked based on the City's established formal RFP review process using a score based ranking criterion. In addition, with this RFP request, the City included a fee proposal and cost criteria which was also considered in the weighted evaluation ranking criteria. Upon review, **three firms** were short-listed, and an interview was conducted by several members of the selection committee to further evaluate the respondents. Upon completion of the interviews, **Terracon Consultants** was recommended and presented to the City Council for approval on June 27, 2022. Upon approval, Terracon was notified of their selection to assist the City with the preparation of the US EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant and implementation of the Grant if awarded to the City.

The City of Balcones Heights affirms that it does not have subrecipients associated with this grant application.

See attached RFP solicitation.

Upon an award of EPA Brownfields grant funding, the City and their selected contractor would enter into a formal executed contract for project implementation at that time. In the interim, there is not a contract available to attach.