

NARRATIVE INFORMATION SHEET

Applicant Identification	Houston Land Bank (HLB) P.O. Box 131106 Houston, Texas 77252	
Funding Requested	Grant Type: Community-Wide Assessment	
	Federal Funds Requested: \$500,000	
Location	Houston, Harris County, Texas	
Target Area <i>(CT = Census Tracts)</i>	<p>Target Area #1 – Northeast (Population 50,461) Census Tracts: 48201211101, 48201211102, 48201211200, 48201211700, 48201211000, 48201210900, 48201230100, 48201230200, 48201230800, 48201231300, 48201231200, 48201231100, 48201231000, 48201230900</p> <p>Target Area #2 – East End (Population 36,365), Census Tracts: 48201310101, 48201310102, 48201310400, 48201310500, 48201310900, 48201311100, 48201311300, 48201311400, 48201324200</p>	
Priority Sites	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 0 Manton Street, Houston, TX 77028 2. 0 N. Velasco St, Houston, TX 77003 3. 0 Navigation Blvd, Houston, TX 77003 4. 4815 Harrisburg Blvd, Houston, TX <p><u>Kashmere Gardens Portfolio</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. 0 Des Chaumes, Houston, TX 77026 6. 0 Leffingwell, Houston, TX 77026 7. 0 Lucille #2, Houston, TX 77026 8. 0 Stamp, Houston, TX 77026 9. 3016 Cactus, Houston, TX 77026 10. 3027 Cactus, Houston, TX 77026 11. 3101 Kirk St, Houston, TX 77026 12. 3102 Kirk St, Houston, TX 77026 13. 3115 Brill, Houston, TX 77026 14. 3202 Cactus, Houston, TX 77026 15. 3204 Lelia, Houston, TX 77026 16. 3210 Roland, Houston, TX 77026 17. 3306 Wayne St, Houston, TX 77026 18. 3711 Lelia, Houston, TX 77026 19. 3714 Lucille, Houston, TX 77026 20. 0 Lucille, Houston, TX 77026 21. 3307 Brewster, Houston, TX 77026 	
Contacts	Project Director	Chief Executive Officer
Name	Christa Stoneham	Christa Stoneham
Phone Number	281-655-4600	281-655-4600
Mailing Address	P.O. Box 131106	P.O. Box 131106



	Houston, Texas 77252	Houston, Texas 77252
Population	Population of Houston, Texas: 2,920,003 Population of Target Area #1: 50,461 Population of Target Area #2: 36,365	
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 proposed brownfield site(s) is impacted by mine-scarred land.		N/A
Secured firm leveraging commitment ties directly to the project and will facilitate completion of the remediation/reuse; secured resource is identified in the Narrative and substantiated in the attached documentation.		3
The proposed site(s) is adjacent to a body of water (i.e., the border of the proposed site(s) is contiguous or partially contiguous to the body of water, or would be contiguous or partially contiguous with a body of water but for a street, road, or other public thoroughfare separating them).		2
The proposed site(s) is in a federally designated flood plain.		N/A
The reuse of the proposed cleanup site(s) will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy.		N/A
The reuse of the proposed cleanup site(s) will incorporate energy efficiency measures.		N/A
The proposed project will improve local climate adaptation/mitigation capacity and resilience to protect residents and community investments.		3
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.		N/A

Releasing Copies of Applications

Please redact the following information from public record, as it is considered confidential, privileged, or sensitive:

- All Point of Contact information on Page 7 **Section b. Community Engagement i. Project Involvement/ii. Project Roles** are considered sensitive.

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 20, 2023

Ms. Christa Stoneham, President & CEO
Houston Land Bank
P.O. Box 131106
Houston, Texas 77219

Re: Houston Land Bank Proposal for a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency FY24 Brownfields Community-Wide Assessment Grant

Dear Ms. Stoneham:

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) is pleased to offer this letter of support for the Houston Land Bank proposal to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for a FY24 Brownfields Community-Wide Assessment Grant. The TCEQ believes that the grant will significantly benefit the City of Houston, Texas and the surrounding area by enhancing the local economy, increasing the tax base and improving the environment. You may contact me at 512-239-2252 or Kristian.livingston@tceq.texas.gov if you have any questions or would like additional information.

Sincerely,

Kristian Livingston

Kristy Mauricio Livingston
Team Leader
Remediation Division

KL/cw

1. PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION & PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION

a. Target Area & Brownfields i. Overview of Brownfield Challenges & Description of Target Area: The City of Houston (City) (pop. 2,920,003^a), located in Harris County (HC), Texas, was founded in 1836 on the banks of the Buffalo Bayou, fifty (50) miles west of the Gulf of Mexico. Houston was originally established as a port city with an early economy built on shipping cotton, lumber, and other manufactured goods produced on nearby plantations, or made domestically by enslaved African Americans and Mexican immigrants. In 1901, oil was discovered in Texas, propelling Houston, with its extensive oil and gas infrastructure comprised of several thousand miles of pipeline connecting chemical manufacturers, refineries, and fractionation plants along the Gulf Coast, to become the petrochemical capital of the United State. Houston's growing freight economy and an oil boom in the early-mid 1900s coincided with the now-illegal Jim Crow laws restricting where African Americans and Hispanics could live and work. By the mid-1900s, factors, including public disinvestment, environmental degradation, interstate expansion projects, redlining, and the boom-and-bust cycle of the oil and gas industry, caused economic decline which disproportionately impacted neighborhoods in the Northeast and Eastern sides of the city. Houston had and continues to have **no zoning regulations or land use restrictions, which has allowed for incompatible development patterns**, where railyards, processing plants, manufacturing and industrial facilities, concrete crushers, and city incinerators infiltrate residential areas, leaving residents limited access to green space, parks, recreational facilities, and other community amenities. Economic decline has resulted in the decay and abandonment of many of these commercial and industrial properties, making way for decades of blight and persistent poverty that compounds inequities (including environmental racism, access to fresh food, climate vulnerability, and housing insecurity) and disproportionately impacts people of color.

With a mission to strategically acquire, dispose, and steward vacant, abandoned, and damaged properties into productive use and to catalyze transformative community and economic development in the City of Houston, the Houston Land Bank (HLB) is applying for an EPA Community-Wide Assessment grant targeting two areas selected based on 1) community needs and 2) the viability of redeveloping priority sites to advance equitable and just community revitalization objectives. **All target area (TA) census tracts (CTs) are defined as “disadvantaged” by the White House’s Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST).**

TA #1 - Northeast (pop. 50,461^b) comprises four contiguous neighborhoods northeast of downtown: Kashmere Gardens, Trinity Gardens, Settegast, and East Houston (CTs 2109, 2110, 2111.01, 2111.22, 2112, 2117, 2301, 2302, 2308, 2309, 2310, 2311, 2312, 2313). These neighborhoods share rich and complex histories of African-American culture, racial segregation, and environmental injustice. In the 1930s, development in TA #1 sought to resettle urban residents through the New Deal’s Suburban Resettlement Administration program to alleviate urban congestion and help families out of poverty. TA #1 is bound by Tidwell Road to the north, Greens Bayou to the east, Interstate 69 to the west, and **Englewood Railyard** to the south. TA #1 is bisected to the north-south by **Settegast Railyard** and is intersected by a network of rail lines serving these two major railyards and the nearby Port of Houston. Brownfields in TA#1 exacerbate blight, crime (an index of 182 or 13% higher than Houston), and illegal dumping. Area residents have also expressed concerns that because of the lack of investments into these brownfields, they become used as truck yards where industrial trucking companies park and perform maintenance, worsening air quality and stormwater runoff issues.

TA #2 - East End (pop. 36,365^c) consists of two contiguous neighborhoods—Second Ward and Magnolia Park (one of Houston’s oldest Hispanic neighborhoods)—bound by downtown to the west, Buffalo Bayou to the north, the Harrisburg light rail line to the south, and the Port of Houston to the east (CTs 3101.01, 3101.02, 3104, 3105, 3109, 3111, 3113, 3114, 3242). TA #2 has a long history of industrial development along the Buffalo Bayou waterfront, adjacent to residential areas lacking greenspace and local amenities. Over a century of heavy industrial activity on or near potential redevelopment sites has led community-supported projects for affordable housing, park, and small

^a American Community Survey 2019 5-Year Estimates.

^b American Community Survey 2019 5-Year Estimates.

^c US Census (2000, 2010, 2020), ACS (2017-2021).

business development across TA #2 to be deemed infeasible due to known environmental issues from its industrial past.

ii. Description of Priority Brownfields: HLB has inventoried over 75 potential brownfields, identified through illegal dumping and property complaint records (311), community members using HLB’s “Hidden Gems” GIS-based mobile app, or partners seeking assistance with their redevelopment projects. Of these brownfields, HLB has prioritized **21 sites** based on their potential to immediately address community concerns and advance objectives related to environmental justice, climate resiliency, and affordable housing near jobs, schools, parks, transportation, and essential services.

Site & Size	Historical/Current Use	Env. Risks	Funding Needs	Reuse Plan/Why a Priority
0 Manton St (TA #1): 100 acres, CT 2309	Large, overgrown wooded area in a dense residential area. This site has never been developed, but it has been used for illegal dumping for years.	Solid waste, sVOCs, heavy metals	Phase I, Phase II, Reuse planning, Community engagement	This site is large enough for an affordable, single-family housing community.
Kashmere Portfolio (TA #1): ~0.25 acres each, CT 2111.01 & .02	17 vacant lots (historically residential or vacant) downgradient and upwind from the former Houston Wood Preserving Works site (owned by Union Pacific). Community has expressed concerns about wide-spread contamination in shallow soil distributed from the railyard through flooding and aerial deposition. EPA has approved eligibility of the portfolio under HLB’s FY21 grant.	VOCs, sVOCs, dioxin, furans, heavy metals	Phase IIs (<i>QAPPs prepared under FY21 EPA Grant</i>) Phase IIs include only 1-2 hand borings per site.	These properties are owned by HLB and have been set aside as an option for development as housing specific for residents who chose to relocate due to their current proximity to the former Houston Wood Preserving Works site.
Railyard at 0 N. Velasco St (TA #2): ~12 acres, CT 3101	Historically used as a small railyard by Union Pacific to serve local industry/warehouses. Currently, it’s inactive with rail infrastructure remaining. Located adjacent (east) to the former City of Houston Velasco Incinerator.	VOCs, sVOCs, Dioxin/Furan s, heavy metals	Phase I, Phase II, Cleanup planning, Site disposition strategy	Part of the transition of industrial waterfront to parks and community amenities. Potential for solar and/or urban farm.
0 Navigation Blvd (TA #2): 4.45 acres, CT 3105	Vacant waterfront portion of a larger industrial manufacturing site formerly owned and operated by Baker Oil Tools (BOT) from 1936 to 2020. Currently wooded and vacant. Recent Phase II investigations showed soil and groundwater impacts coming from upgradient sources.	Solid waste (tires, scrap metal, drums, etc.), VOCs, sVOCs, and heavy metals	Supplemental Phase II, Cleanup and Reuse planning	Park development to aid larger 400-acre waterfront (Buffalo Bayou) transformation from industrial to parks, green space, and recreational trails.
Harrisburg & Burr 4815 Harrisburg (TA #2): 1.77 acres, CT 3105	Property operated as auto service facility from 1921-1998. Today property is mostly vacant with an abandoned and blighted building suspected to contain asbestos and lead-based paint.	TPH, VOCs, sVOCs, heavy metals, asbestos	Phase II (incl. asbestos survey), Cleanup planning	Affordable, “missing middle” housing; transit-oriented development along Harrisburg light rail

VOCs = volatile organic compounds, SVOCs= semi-volatile organic compounds, TPH = total petroleum hydrocarbons

iii. Identifying Additional Sites: HLB maintains a live-updated, GIS-based brownfield inventory (called “Hidden Gems”) made up of sites identified by community members, development partners, various stakeholders (including city, county, and nonprofit collaborators), and HLB staff. By design, and in alignment with HLB’s mission, HLB works almost exclusively in CTs defined as disadvantaged by CEJST and EJScreen and implements and supports projects that directly benefit underserved communities and vulnerable populations, advance community revitalization, address climate and EJ actions, and leverage other resources for public good.

b. Revitalization of the Target Areas i. Reuse Strategy & Alignment with Revitalization Plans: The proposed reuse strategy for the 21 priority brownfield sites directly aligns with local revitalization plans, developed in concert with residents and community-based organizations. Planning efforts to address socio-economic inequities and improve infrastructure, neighborhood livability, and the City’s environment are guided by *Resilient Houston* (2020), *Climate Action Plan* (2020), *Buffalo Bayou East Master Plan* (2022), *Community Action Plan for Health Equity - Settegast* (2022), *Neighborhood Resilience Plan – East Houston* (2023), *Complete Communities* (2017-2020), and *One Clean Houston* (2023). Each plan includes innovative strategies and recommendations for increasing and improving city greenspaces, from city right-of-way to the expansive bayou network, as well as raising building standards and practices so that homes, particularly affordable multi-family

developments, are energy efficient and more resilient to flooding and other climate shocks and stresses.

Site & Size	Plan Alignment	Alignment
0 Manton St	Community Action Plan for Health Equity; One Clean Houston, Neighborhood Resilience Plan	Address illegal dumping and expansion of affordable, resilient housing. Upgrade area infrastructure and drainage.
Kashmere Portfolio	Kashmere Gardens Complete Communities Action Plan (2020)	Environmental injustice for residents near the Former Wood Preserving Works and expansion of affordable housing.
Railyard at 0 N. Velasco St.	2 nd Ward Complete Communities (CC) Action Plan (2018), Buffalo Bayou East Master Plan, One Clean Houston, Resilient Houston, Climate Action	Expand parks (see below objective), investments in renewable energy with potential solar project, addressing food insecurity with potential urban farming reuse
0 Navigation Blvd	2 nd Ward Complete Communities Action Plan, Buffalo Bayou East Master Plan, One Clean Houston, Resilient Houston, Climate Action	CC Objective: "Create and expand linear park space along Buffalo Bayou, including acquiring and redeveloping industrial properties into parks as part of the Buffalo Bayou."
Harrisburg & Burr 4815 Harrisburg	2 nd Ward Complete Communities Action Plan, One Clean Houston, Resilient Houston, Climate Action	Expansion of "missing middle" housing and transit-oriented development along the relatively new Harrisburg light rail.

ii. **Outcomes & Benefits of Reuse Strategy: Economic Benefits:** Redevelopment of priority sites will spur economic growth across 23 CEJST-defined disadvantaged CTs, located within the two TAs. It's estimated that more than a hundred new permanent (non-construction) jobs could be generated. The reuse projects will also generate thousands of dollars in tax-based revenue. With the addition of new, well-paid jobs in the area, it is also projected that the average resident could see a significant yearly increase in income. HLB affirms the City's commitment to supporting strong labor practices and equitable workforce pathways. Reuse projects will emphasize the Department of Labor's Good Jobs Principles when selecting contractors and partners, requiring a goal to include 31.6% certified Minority and Women Business Enterprises, setting a \$20 living wage for employees and contractors, and establishing an equity office to include marginalized voices across all planning and civil activities. **Non-Economic Benefits:** HLB is eager to support brownfields projects that result in workforce development, climate action, resilience strategies, and inclusive economic growth. Redevelopment will result in significant non-economic benefits, including: (1) **Quality Affordable Housing:** Reuse of priority brownfields alone will create up to 75 affordable housing units. The grant is also anticipated to support up to ten additional affordable housing projects by nonprofit affordable housing developers. This aids in Houston's goal of strategically using brownfields to "protect and strengthen neighborhoods through appropriate infill development."^d (2) **Preventing Displacement:** Enabling long-term residents to remain safely in their neighborhoods and maintain community bonds built over decades. (3) **Climate Adaptation & Energy Efficiency:** Affordable housing developments will be built to higher energy efficiency standards under today's building codes, and will elect to use solar energy, heat pumps, robust site-greening, and passive solar design. Reuse for parks and greenspace will also help mitigate climate threats, including extreme heat, which is imperative as Houston was ranked as one of the worst cities in the US for urban heat island. Additionally, evidence from a study of 301 major U.S. cities demonstrated that, on average, areas with more greenspace have lower rates of property and violent crime.^e (4) **Parks/Recreation:** According to the Kinder Institute of Urban Research, parks provide crucial health, environmental, and economic benefits. Recent studies by Kinder have concluded that "*more and better parks would thus mean better lives for all Houstonians.*"^f Reuse plans for Buffalo Bayou Park will create 263 acres of new and improved parks, 44.3 miles of new and improved trails and bikeways, 7 new pedestrian bridges, 4 miles of accessible waterfront, 7 new water access points, and 341 acres of expanded and enhanced tree canopy.^g Using nature-based solutions for urban heat island mitigation and stormwater management reduces the extent and frequency of heat events and nuisance flooding.

c. **Strategy for Leveraging Resources** i. **Resources Needed for Site Reuse:** HLB is the only state and federal non-profit in Texas to transform vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated properties into opportunities for deserving families and small businesses. This significant responsibility allows HLB to pioneer innovative approaches and strategies to stabilize neighborhoods, promote economic development, and provide affordable housing options. HLB is a critical member of the Mayor's

^d Resilient Houston: 92.

^e Ogletree, Scott, Urban greenspace linked to lower crime risk across 301 major U.S. Cities, Science Direct, December 2022

^f <https://kinder.rice.edu/urbanedge/houston-parks-green-space-health-climate>

^g Buffalo Bayou East Master Plan: 22.

Task Force to relocate residents in Kashmere Gardens and has direct access to the \$5M and future leveraged funding dedicated for this effort. HLB's external sources of funding to further support brownfields redevelopment include: (1) Houston-based foundations like the Kinder Foundation and Houston Endowment, which have made generous donations of over \$100 million to fund community-asset projects like park development along the Buffalo Bayou; (2) the Houston chapter of the Local Initiative Support Corporation (LISC) has invested \$395M into Houston projects since 1989; (3) the City of Houston's \$1M Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund to cleanup priority brownfields; (4) Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones (TIRZ) are established in TA #1 (\$712K annual budget) and #2 (\$26.9M annual budget) to help finance redevelopment and promote growth in areas that would otherwise not attract sufficient and timely market development; (5) Other federal funding: HLB has the ability to take advantage of unprecedented levels of funding made available through the Biden Administration's Infrastructure Reinvestment Act, including opportunities with the US Economic Development Agency, US Department of Agriculture, National Parks Service, US Department of Energy, and EPA EJ grants.

ii. Use of Existing Infrastructure: Existing site improvements (buildings and infrastructure) will be reused on many priority sites to preserve the architecture of these historic neighborhoods. Properties in the TAs are served by utilities (electricity, water, sewer, natural gas, and high-speed internet) and public infrastructure. Improvements to stormwater and drainage infrastructure is a priority of the Mayor's Office to alleviate flooding and reduce contaminated stormwater runoff into bayous, like Hunting Bayou, White Oak Bayou, and Buffalo Bayou, which join downtown and east of downtown, continuing into the Gulf of Mexico. Necessary updates to public infrastructure, are included in the TIRZ annual capital improvement budgets for each of the TA's. Drainage improvements are of critical importance in TA#1 with neighborhoods particularly vulnerable to frequent pluvial flooding.

2. COMMUNITY NEED & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

a. **Community Need** i. The Community's Need for Funding: Over the past seven (7) years, Houston has suffered unprecedented economic impacts from catastrophic climate events, including the Memorial Day Flood (2015; damages of \$460M), Tax Day Flood (2016; damages of \$65M), Hurricane Harvey (2017; damages of \$125B), Tropical Storm Imelda (2019; damages of \$5B), and Winter Storm Uri (2021; \$295B state-wide). In 2020, Houston suffered the worst economic loss from the COVID-19 pandemic compared to any other major US metropolitan areas and is significantly lagging in recovery compared to other major Texas cities.⁶ Since March 2020, Houston has lost 367,000 jobs to the initial lockdown period and **only 57.4 percent of jobs returned as of July 2021** (compared to 98.9% in Dallas, 74.9% state-wide). HLB's operating, program, and project funding relies heavily on restricted funding granted to the organization through the Houston, Harris County, philanthropy, and other resources. Recently, philanthropic resources have been scarce and, when available, restricted for use to address the City's affordable housing crisis, disaster recovery, critical infrastructure, and other urgent needs. Consequently, **HLB is limited in its ability to raise private funds for environmental assessment activities without EPA assistance.**

The TAs' tax bases are also not sufficient to meet community needs with poverty rates as high as 31.5% (12% higher than Houston, and more than double the state and nation rates). In TA#1, U.S. Census data shows 71% low-income in priority CTs 2309 and 2111, per capita annual income as low as \$13,464 (CT 2111) (>60% less than the city's \$36,784), and unemployment rate of 19% (CT 2111) (where Houston is 21%, TX 16%, and US 12%). In TA#2, pockets of persistent poverty remain; however, area statistics are skewed due to gentrification and do not reflect the needs of vulnerable populations. That said, U.S. Census data shows 61% low-income in priority site CTs 3105, per capita annual income as low as \$ 25,340 (CT 3105) (>30% less than the city's \$36,784), and high unemployment rates of 15% (CT 3105).

ii. Threats to Sensitive Populations: (1) *Health/Welfare of Sensitive Populations*: The compounding effects of inequities in these minority-majority TAs (85%-99% people of color, up to 68% Black and 89% Hispanic)^h translate into significantly disparate outcomes by neighborhood, with residents experiencing increased socioeconomic vulnerabilities when compared to residents in other

^h All data were downloaded from EJScreen (<https://ejscreen.epa.gov/mapper/>) on October 22, 2023.

neighborhoods. Sensitive populations in the TAs include children in poverty, people 65 years of age or older who live in poverty (23.2% in TA #1 and 27.3% in TA#2), and unhoused individuals. Rates of children in poverty are nearly double in TA CTs (40-61%) as compared to 32% in Houston, 23% in TX, and 17% nationally). Poverty rates in homes with children are strongly associated with environmental and social determinants of health. Children are at higher risk of exposure to hazardous chemicals, as evidenced by Houston's high rates of childhood lead poisoning and asthma.ⁱ Another sensitive population is unhoused individuals who are known to take shelter at priority brownfields sites. In 2023, the Coalition for the Homeless counted 1,242 people living unsheltered in Houston.^j The unhoused individuals occupying the brownfield site are potentially at risk to various site hazards (overgrowth, dangerous buildings, and illegal dumping).

Climate change adds another layer of complexity to how vulnerable Houstonians experience these injustices. Long-established policies and systems have made Houstonians of color more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, including widespread flooding and extreme heat. For example, during Hurricane Harvey, 79% of homes in Kashmere Gardens flooded.^k Many residents throughout TA#1 have not fully recovered six years later and have not been prepared for subsequent climate events, like Winter Storm Uri in 2020, which left 69% of Texans without electricity for an average of 42 hours and 49% without running water for an average of more than two days.^l

The highway and rail infrastructure surrounding and bisecting both TAs has isolated these already vulnerable populations by creating physical barriers that limit their access to essential resources, like food, schools, and emergency services. Data analyzed from the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food Access Research Atlas shows that the “half-mile low food access rate” of people without access to a car is twice as high in both TAs compared to Harris County and Texas as a whole. In the Kashmere Gardens neighborhood of TA#1, 30% of the population is considered “low income and low access” (compared to 20% at the county and state level). With 15% of the population not having access to a vehicle (compared to 5-8% in TX/Harris/Houston), residents of the TA are living in food and nutrition deserts. Food insecurity has been exacerbated over recent years due to financial burdens faced during the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) and extreme climate events. After Hurricane Harvey, TA #1 residents were forced to travel more than seven miles to the closest grocery store because the one major store in the area was flooded for months and only one food pantry was active.

Various studies have demonstrated that disproportionate exposure to contamination, economic distress, neighborhood blight, low access to resources, and the feeling of hopelessness, result in adverse public health and welfare outcomes. For example, according to compiled data from 2019-2022 by the Houston Police Department, TA #1 neighborhoods have higher crime rates than anywhere else in the city in every category except for one.³ The same data shows that rates of homicide are **double** in the community as compared to the rest of the city. Similar trends apply to rates of assault and burglary. Furthermore, recent investigations by grassroots organizers have demonstrated a disproportionate burden of illegal dumping in both TAs. The Houston Police Department report over 2,000 cases of illegal dumping annually, and just since September 2022, the City has abated more than 2,170 dumpsites totaling 28,057 tons.ⁿ Area residents expressed that **“This is one of our main, top, number one issues that we’ve had throughout the community.”^o**

(2) *Greater Than Normal Incidence of Disease & Adverse Health Conditions*: Each TA is considered a high-risk area by the Houston Health Department (HHD), which classifies them as **environmentally disadvantaged and severe-needs communities**. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) also defines the TAs as at risk, reporting greater than normal rates of indicator disease in

ⁱ Interview with Houston Health Department (11/18/2021).

^j <https://www.homelesshouston.org/2023-pit-results>

^k Torres, Luis B. & Miller, Wesley. Texas A&M University, Texas Real Estate Research Center. “Imperfect Storm”. (2018, Mar 06). <https://www.recenter.tamu.edu/articles/tierra-grande/Imperfect-Storm>

^l <https://dallas.culturemap.com/news/city-life/03-29-21-winter-storm-damage-no-power-texas-university-of-houston/#:~:text=More%20than%20two%20out%20of,water%20damage%20in%20their%20home>

^m Current version 2019: <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/download-the-data/>

ⁿ <https://houston.tx.gov/onecleanhouston/documents/OneCleanHouston-StrategicPlan.pdf>

^o <https://www.khou.com/article/news/local/houston-illegal-dumping/285-3d78d82f-f78d-45f2-9f07-ec6306f3c00b>

these areas. The CDC finds that the TAs’ populations rank significantly higher than TX and most major US cities in every category measured, including lack of health insurance, high blood pressure, asthma, diagnosed diabetes, high cholesterol, kidney disease, no leisure time/physical activity, obesity, and poor physical health.^p Similarly, HHD has also identified the TAs as high-risk zones for having upper quartile risk for asthma (6 times higher than Houston), cardiac arrest (double that of Houston), and risk of lead poisoning.^q Contributing to asthma risk, according to the 2019 American Lung Association *State of the Air Report*, Houston’s air quality has declined now ranking 9th (from 11th in 2018) among the top 25 most ozone-polluted cities in the United States, and Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) reports over 250 high-ozone days so far in 2023.^r Additionally, HHD has found lead as the leading environmental poison among children in Houston.^s Exposure to lead is associated with a range of serious health effects in children, including anemia, impaired hearing, and detrimental effects on cognitive and behavioral development with serious personal and social consequences that may persist throughout their lifetime.

In 2019, the Texas Department of State Health Services conducted a study in CTs in and around TA #1-Kashmere Gardens in response to community concerns over potential environmental exposure to creosote and other contaminants downgradient of Union Pacific—a large railyard defining the TA’s entire southern border. The study found that **liver, esophagus, larynx, liver, and lung and bronchus cancers were statistically significantly greater** than typical in adults (ages 20 or older) compared to state-wide data. HHD’s follow-up health surveys in the area in 2020 found 43% of households surveyed reported some type of cancer, and households with cancer experienced financial stress, including depleted savings, debt, unpaid medical bills, and utility services being cut off for not paying bills. **Of households interviewed by HHD in TA #1-Kashmere Gardens, 93% reported that they are concerned about the environmental contamination in and around their neighborhood.**

(3) Environmental Justice (a) Identification of EJ Issues:

Data downloaded from EPA’s EJScreen tool demonstrates significant disparities in EJ indicators for the TAs – with CTs predominately rank in the 90th or greater percentiles, with only five entries in the 80th percentiles, and the lowest ranking at 84th in all EJ categories. Similarly, review of CEJEST reveals all of the TAs’ CTs are found to be disadvantaged, overburdened, and underserved. In varying distributions across the TAs, residents experience energy cost burden, low income, asthma, diabetes, heart disease, low life expectancy, historic underinvestment, lack of green space, lack of indoor plumbing, proximity to RMP and Superfund, diesel PM, transportation barriers, poverty, unemployment, high school education, and linguistic isolation. All CTs experience most of these factors, with CT 2309 being the least burdened, and CT 2111 the most.

	Priority Sites in TA #1		Priority Sites in TA #2	
	CT 2309	CT 2111	CT3101	CT3105
EJ Index				
Particulate Matter	99	99	97	98
Ozone	99	99	97	98
Diesel PM	99	99	96	97
Air Toxics Cancer Risk	99	95	91	99
Air Toxics Respiratory	97	97	93	95
Toxic Release to Air	99	99	98	99
Traffic Proximity	89	96	97	85
Lead Paint Indicators	95	93	87	97
Superfund Proximity	97	99	98	98
RMP Proximity	97	98	93	93
Hazardous Waste Proximity	96	97	93	97
Underground Storage Tanks	86	96	84	97
Wastewater Discharge	95	90	96	96

Today, these TAs have become a focus of efforts to improve quality of life; however, new public and private investments have created rapid increases in property values, which has and continues to threaten displacement of long-time, low-income residents who can no longer afford property taxes and the higher costs of living. The Kinder Institute’s study “Neighborhood Gentrification across Harris County: 1990 to 2016” identifies CTs in both TAs as susceptible to gentrification, based on a variety of factors including household income, education, race, and rates of rental housing units.^t With close proximity to downtown, the East End TA has been undergoing rapid population and housing changes since 1990, with eight of nine CTs identified as “gentrifying” between 1990 and 2016, and three CTs identified as having greater than 75% susceptibility to gentrification.^u Despite

^p All data were downloaded from Center for Disease Control and Prevention <https://www.cdc.gov/places/about/500-cities-2016-2019/index.html> on October 22, 2023 for the TA #1-Kashmere Gardens and TA #2-East End target areas.

^q The Houston Health Department reported high risk upper quartile for East Houston, Kashmere Gardens, Magnolia Park, Second Ward, Settegast, and Trinity / Houston Gardens.

^r https://www.tceq.texas.gov/cgi-bin/compliance/monops/8hr_exceed.pl

^s <https://www.houstontx.gov/health/Environmental/Documents/Strategic-Plan-for-Childhood-Lead-Elimination-by-2020-Final.pdf>

^t <https://kinder.rice.edu/research/neighborhood-gentrification-across-harris-county-1990-2016>

^u <https://kinder.rice.edu/research/neighborhood-gentrification-across-harris-county-1990-2016>

the increase in housing stock (5,739 units in 2010 to 6,587 units in 2020), many affordable housing units are no longer affordable, with the 2021 median house price at \$256,422 compared to \$201,667 for Harris County, up from \$117,066 in 2014.¹⁰ Where median household incomes range between \$44,944 and \$84,778 in 2023, the majority of long-time residents can no longer afford housing in the TA. Similarly, the Northeast TA is also identified as “gentrifying”, with eleven of the fourteen CTs gentrifying since 1900 and two additional CTs gentrifying since 2000, and seven CTs identified as having greater than 75% susceptibility to gentrification. With less than 200 new dwelling units added to the existing housing stock since 2000, existing affordable housing units are increasingly unaffordable, with the 2021 median house price at \$89,983 compared to \$201,667 for Harris County, up from \$92,322 in 2014 combined with a median household income ranging between \$16,634 and \$39,630 in 2023, meaning long-time residents are currently struggling to afford housing in the TA. If current trends in these TAs continue, most long-time residents will no longer be able to afford housing in their communities.

(b) *Advancing Environmental Justice:* HLB is committed to promoting EJ and ensuring project outcomes benefit marginalized and sensitive populations. The organization is uniquely positioned to and capable of approaching project development holistically. Acting in the role of developer, HLB develops affordable, leading-edge housing solutions, not just by working with resilience- and equity-focused affordable housing partners, but also with other trade professionals like urban planners, architects, landscape architects, urban designers, etc. HLB synthesizes innovative and alternative approaches from all development perspectives into a single development project. Further, HLB has built strong partnerships with environmental justice advocacy organizations, community groups, and research institutions, demonstrating disciplined focus on aligning EPA resources with community-supported projects and anti-displacement efforts to preserve cultural heritage and community assets, create inclusive economic opportunities, and expand safe, affordable housing. Brownfields cleanup and reuse will also eliminate hazardous substances and petroleum from these communities, reducing the cumulative impacts of environmental contamination on vulnerable populations.

b. Community Engagement i. Project Involvement / ii Project Roles: HLB will continue to work closely with community-based organizations and the nonprofit stakeholders and community advisory committees established through various planning efforts to connect with stakeholders throughout the TAs and facilitate a cohesive process that includes collective community interests. HLB offers brownfield expertise and incentives and will serve as an important connector with other City departments and developers on near-term projects. Each project partner is committed to assisting with community engagement efforts and participating in the site identification, prioritization, and selection process.

Name	Point of Contact	Specific Involvement
TCEQ (State Reg. Agency)	[REDACTED]	Provide additional technical assistance on sites ineligible for this funding or supplemental assessments on complex sites
Harris County Public Health	[REDACTED]	Community-wide Health Assessments
Greater East End Management District	[REDACTED]	Community engagement support by invitations of project team to speak at public meetings, disbursement of information, and collection of community insights to influence decision making.
Houston Health Department	[REDACTED]	Public health communication and education; technical assistance services to ensure compliance with public health standards.
Buffalo Bayou Partnership	[REDACTED]	Environmental advocacy and redevelopment of waterfront parks along Buffalo Bayou
Super Neighborhoods	[REDACTED]	Assist with communication for community engagement with Hispanic residents & Spanish translation
Black United Fund of Texas	[REDACTED]	Community engagement guidance, collaborative problem solving, environmental justice strategies
Coalition of Community Organizations	[REDACTED]	Environmental justice advocacy and support with ensuring community feedback is considered with project decision.
Air Alliance Houston	[REDACTED]	Technical guidance and third-party opinion relative to community concerns of air quality during construction.
Houston Housing Collaborative	[REDACTED]	Cohosting affordable housing workshops and events, engagement and outreach support, affordable housing strategies

iii. Incorporating Community Input: Community engagement, integrity of ethics and transparency, and meaningful partnerships with community stakeholders will be paramount to the success of

brownfields inventories, planning, assessment, and reuse. With FY21 EPA CWA grant, HLB established a dedicated website (<https://houstonlandbank.org/brownfields-program/>) for the brownfields program to regularly communicate program objectives, status updates, and other critical information, as well as to solicit feedback and applications for assistance from community stakeholders. HLB has also created a Community Engagement Plan (CEP) that sets guiding principles for engagement, values for equity and EJ, and presents strategies for communication and engagement. With FY24 EPA CWA funding, HLB will update the CEP to customize strategies for the proposed TAs. Engagement will continue to include the following key strategies: (1) host in-person brownfields activation committee meetings, which have evolved into an open-stakeholder breakfast series called “Juice and Justice”, held once a quarter to give program updates and solicit critical community feedback on projects and program decisions; (2) engage the community “where they are,” accepting invitations to speak at civic club and grassroots events to actively listen and provide project information; and (3) hire a total of two dedicated Community Liaisons, each representing a TA, who can offer deeper insights into community feedback on the projects. Program and site-specific communication are offered in English and Spanish, with virtual options for participation via Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Facebook Live, or other platforms. Feedback received for the brownfields program and projects is seriously considered in project design and decision-making. For example, HLB relies on community members to inventory brownfields in their community and has created a GIS dashboard (“Hidden Gems”) with a mobile application.

3. TASK DESCRIPTIONS, COST ESTIMATES & MEASURING PROGRESS:

a. Description of Tasks/Activities/Outputs: HLB is requesting \$500,000 of Community-Wide Assessment funding to assess and plan the cleanup/ reuse of priority brownfields and future-identified sites in the two TAs.

Task 1 – Community Engagement
<i>i. Project Implementation:</i> Community engagement will include (1) project communications and updates through HLB’s website, social media, HLB and Councilmember newsletters, and civic and community-based organizations; (2) public meetings; (3) invited speaking engagements at other community meetings and events; (4) community visioning workshops; (5) educational materials; (6) Spanish translation and interpretation; and (7) hiring two community liaisons.
<i>ii. Schedule:</i> Continuous updates on various communication channels (website, social media, etc.); regular Community Liaison meetings; and quarterly public meetings (Juice & Justice), the first in December 2024.
<i>iii. Task Lead:</i> HLB
<i>iv. Output(s):</i> (1) Communication materials (factsheets, flyers, website updates, etc.); (2) meeting summaries and materials (handouts, meeting notes, presentations, sign-in sheets); (3) summary of community feedback and response to comments; (4) Community Liaison notes and activity summaries.
Task 2 – Environmental Site Assessment & Cleanup Planning
<i>i. Project Implementation:</i> HLB will engage one or more Qualified Environmental Professionals (via a competitive procurement process per 2 CFR Part 200) to conduct Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs), as well as cleanup plans (including Analysis of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives and Remedy Action Plans (ABCA/RAP). Phase IIs will include Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPP)/Sample Analysis Plans (SAP).
<i>ii. Schedule:</i> Oct. 2024 – Sept. 2028; first assessment in Nov. 2024, avg. assessments/year
<i>iii. Task Lead:</i> HLB & Qualified Environmental Professional(s)
<i>iv. Output(s):</i> 3-7 Phase I ESAs, 9 Phase II ESAs, 7 QAPP/SAPs, 2 ABCAs/Remedy Action Plans
Task 3 – Brownfields Inventory & Reuse Planning
<i>i. Project Implementation:</i> HLB will contract an Environmental Professional and GIS Specialist to continually maintain and update its brownfields inventory. HLB will also contract professionals to assist with at least one reuse plan and one site disposition strategy.
<i>ii. Schedule:</i> Inventory from Oct. 2024- Sept 2028. Reuse plan by Dec 2025. Site Disposition by Dec. 2026
<i>iii. Task Lead:</i> HLB, Environmental Professional, & Construction Contractor
<i>iv. Output(s):</i> (1) Quarterly report updates on inventory – expect 10 sites per quarter; (2) one reuse plan Q; and (3) one site disposition strategy
Task 4 – Cooperative Agreement (CA) Compliance & Project Management (PM)
<i>i. Project Implementation:</i> HLB will hire a specialized contractor to managing grant requirements

established in the EPA’s Cooperative Agreement, including ACRES reporting, contractor procurement, quality assurance, budget, and schedule. Grant funds will also be used to pay for travel costs for one HLB staff member to attend two regional or national brownfield conferences to share lessons learned and project successes. HLB staff time will be considered an in-kind contribution to the grant.
<i>ii. Schedule:</i> Oct 2024 – Sept. 2028 with quarterly and annual reporting
<i>iii. Task Lead:</i> HLB
<i>iv. Output(s):</i> (1) Quarterly progress reports; (2) annual DBE reports; (3) final closeout report; (4) ACRES updates (as needed); (5) all associated documentation and reporting to be provided to EPA.

b. Cost Estimates: The overall budget is summarized in the following table. HLB staff and Board of Directors time for grant administration and reporting will be considered in-kind contributions to the grant program.

Budget Categories		Project Tasks (\$)				
		Community Engagement	Env. Assessment & Cleanup Planning	Brownfields Inventory & Reuse Planning	CA Compliance & PM	Total
Direct Costs	Personnel	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	Fringe Benefits	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	Travel	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000
	Equipment	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	Supplies	\$ 3,500	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3,500
	Contractual	\$ 72,000	\$ 323,500	\$ 53,200	\$ -	\$ 448,700
	Other	\$ 12,800	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 12,800
Total Direct Costs		\$ 88,300	\$ 323,500	\$ 53,200	\$ 10,000	\$ 475,000
Indirect Costs					\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000
Total Budget		\$ 88,300	\$ 323,500	\$ 53,200	\$ 35,000	\$ 500,000

Task 1 – Community Engagement [Total Budget = \$88,300]
Supplies [\$4,000]: Estimate of \$875/year (x4yrs) for public meeting supplies, like pens, markers, ink for printing, name tags, and poster board. Contractual [\$72,000]: Average monthly cost of \$1,500 (\$150/hr @ 10hrs/mo) for 48 months (4yrs) for an outreach, engagement, and communications consultant. Other [\$12,800]: Two Community Liaisons hired (one per TA) at \$50/hour @ 8 hr/quarter for 16 quarters.
Task 2 – Environmental Site Assessment & Cleanup Planning [Total Budget = \$323,500]
Contractual [\$323,500]: Includes 7 Phase I ESAs (7 x \$3,500 = \$24,500), 7 QAPP/SAPs (7 x \$2,000 = \$14,000), 9 Phase II ESAs (9 x \$30,000 = \$270,000), 2 ABCA/RAPs (2 x \$7,500 = \$15,000).
Task 3 –Brownfields Inventory & Reuse Planning [Total Budget = \$53,200]
Contractual [\$53,200]: GIS Specialist to update brownfields inventory monthly at \$150/hour x 6 hrs/mo x 48 months; 1 Reuse Plan at \$5,000 each; 1 Site Disposition Strategy at \$5,00 each.
Task 4 – CA Compliance & PM [Total Budget = \$35,000]
Travel [\$10,000]: Travel Costs of \$5,000/year for up to two HLB members to attend EPA/state brownfield conferences; costs are estimated at \$2,500/person/conference based on recent conference costs of approximately \$750 airfare, \$1000 hotel, \$250 ground transportation, and \$500 incidentals per 5-day event. Indirect [\$25,000]: 5% administrative fee for HLB to cover overhead expenses for grant administration.

c. Measure and Evaluate Environmental Progress and Results: Outputs, and short- and long-term outcomes will be tracked in ACRES, reported through Quarterly Progress Reports (QPRs), and the Grant Closeout Report. QPRs will list goals accomplished and upcoming activities. Significant Work Plan deviations will be discussed with the EPA Project Officer to develop corrective actions. Between meetings and QPRs, outputs will be tracked including: (1) # of brownfields identified/prioritized; (2) # of Phase I ESAs; (3) # of Phase II ESAs; (4) # of Analysis of Brownfield Cleanup Alternatives (ABCAs) and/or Remedial Action Plans (RAPs) and/or Reuse Plans; and (5) # of community meetings and success stories. The following short- and long-term outcomes will be tracked: (1) # of sites/acres ready for reuse; (2) # of sites/acres of land redeveloped; (3) # of acres of greenspace created; (4) \$ of private investment/leveraged funding; (5) # of jobs created or retained; and (6) # of affordable housing units created. HLB will refine the project schedule/milestones as part of the Work Plan to ensure activities are completed within the three-year period. HLB will continue to update ACRES beyond the project end date to ensure outcomes continue to be captured.

4. PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY & PAST PERFORMANCE:

a. Programmatic Capability i. Organizational Structure: HLB has the systems, processes, procedures, and staff in place to effectively manage this grant, as demonstrated by the successful management of past brownfields grants. HLB has a 13-member board of directors and dedicated, full-time staff, including a president, legal counsel, directors, real estate professionals, and administrative staff.

ii. Description of Key Staff: HLB will oversee all aspects of the project to ensure the timely completion of key milestones. The following staff have direct experience managing HLB's current FY21 EPA brownfields grant. **Christa Stoneham**, CEO/President (*Role: Project Director, Experience: 15+ years, Education: Bachelor of Architecture (B.Arch), Master of Architecture (M.Arch), Master of Community Development from Prairie View A&M Univ.*), will oversee the overall management of the project. Prior to her appointment at HLB in 2021, Christa fundraised over thirty million dollars (\$30M), directed six hundred (600) community development projects and programs, and impacted over twenty thousand (20,000) residents in Houston's most vulnerable and disadvantaged communities. **Lindsey Williams, AIA, NOMA**, Director of Community Development (*Role: Project Manager/QAQC Officer, Experience: 15+ years, Edu: B.Arch, M.Arch*), will manage projects and ensure quality control, including meaningful community engagement and incorporation of community feedback into clean-up and reuse plans. Lindsey has a diverse project management background with direct experience in architecture and construction, including her experience as a Senior Planner for Mayor Sylvester Turner's Complete Communities Initiative. **Isai Mendez**, Director of Finance (*Role: Grant Finance Manager, Experience: 10 years, Edu: B.S. Accounting & Nonprofit Management Certificate*), will oversee the finance and accounting of the grant. With over 8 years of experience as an auditor and finance controller for non-profit and government organizations, Isai currently leads HLB's accounting and finance department. **LaTosha Okoiron**, Counsel (*Role: Compliance Manager, Experience: 15+ years, Edu: Juris Doctorate, B.S. Political Science*), will ensure compliance with EPA's CA, HLB bylaws, Texas state statutes, and any other applicable regulations governing the administration of this grant and projects.

iii. Acquiring Additional Resources: HLB has significant resources available to ensure project success, including technical and support staff to assist with implementation activities. HLB has proactive succession plans for if staff changes are required to eliminate project delays and ensure staff who are reassigned to the project have the appropriate qualifications and experience. HLB routinely contracts with consultants and has established equal opportunity procedures to ensure a fair bidding process. Utilizing HLB's procurement policy, and in conformance with 2 CFR 200.317-200.326, HLB has procured multiple consultants to assist with EPA funding under multi-year contracts. Advanced procurement positions HLB to expedite grant activities upon execution of the cooperative agreement. HLB has also engaged with Kansas State University's (KSU) Technical Assistance to Brownfields (TAB) program to support its various projects with community engagement efforts, resource road-mapping, community visioning, and general program advisory services in support of grant administration and management.

b. Past Performance and Accomplishments: i. Currently Has or Previously Received an EPA Brownfields Grant: HLB will draw upon its experience in successfully managing a **FY21 Community-wide Coalition Assessment Grant (Active):** *1. Accomplishments:* Although still active, just over seventy percent (70%) of this grant has been spent on community engagement, brownfields inventory activities, Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessments, and site reuse and cleanup planning. Accomplishments include (a) creating a GIS-based brownfields inventory to collect information about community-identified brownfields (20 sites identified to date); (b) 1 Infrastructure Evaluation/Plan; (c) 1 reuse vision and rendering; (d) 6 Phase I ESAs; (e) 2 Phase II ESAs; (f) 1 large Phase II ESA; (g) 33 Property Eligibility Determination (PED) forms submitted; (h) 4 QAPPs approved (17 pending); (i) 2 National Brownfields Conferences (with speaker session in Detroit 2023); and (j) over 100 of community members and stakeholders engaged. *2. Compliance with Grant Requirements:* All ongoing, quarterly, and annual reporting requirements for past and current funding agreements have been submitted to the EPA per the CA in a timely manner. Each project has met or exceeded the programmatic goals stated in the work plans. Outputs and outcomes associated with all EPA-funded projects have been, and will continue to be, entered into the ACRES database upon project completion.

THRESHOLD CRITERIA

THRESHOLD CRITERIA RESPONSE

1. Applicant Eligibility

The Houston Land Bank (HLB) is a quasi-governmental, nonprofit organization and therefore eligible to receive federal funding. Detailed documents of HLB's eligibility are provided in Attachment A.

2. Community Involvement

Community engagement, integrity of ethics and transparency, and meaningful partnerships with community stakeholders will be paramount to the success of brownfields inventories, planning, assessment, and reuse. With FY21 EPA CWA grant, HLB established a dedicated website (<https://houstonlandbank.org/brownfields-program/>) for the brownfields program to regularly communicate program objectives, status updates, and other critical information, as well as to solicit feedback and applications for assistance from community stakeholders. HLB has also created a Community Engagement Plan (CEP) that sets guiding principles for engagement, values for equity and EJ, and presents strategies for communication and engagement. With FY24 EPA CWA funding, HLB will update the CEP to customize strategies for the proposed TAs. Engagement will continue to include the following key strategies: (1) host in-person brownfields activation committee meetings, which have evolved into an open-stakeholder breakfast series called "Juice and Justice", held once a quarter to give program updates and solicit critical community feedback on projects and program decisions; (2) engage the community "where they are," accepting invitations to speak at civic club and grassroots events to actively listen and provide project information; and (3) hire a total of two dedicated Community Liaisons, each representing a TA, who can offer deeper insights into community feedback on the projects. Program and site-specific communication are offered in English and Spanish, with virtual options for participation via Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Facebook Live, or other platforms. Feedback received for the brownfields program and projects is seriously considered in project design and decision-making. For example, HLB relies on community members to inventory brownfields in their community and has created a GIS dashboard ("Hidden Gems") with a mobile application.

3. Expenditure of Existing Funds

A budget drawdown was made on September 29, 2023, expending 71% of FY21 EPA Brownfields Coalition Grant (BF 01F95901). A copy of the report from the Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP) is included as Attachment B.

4. Contractor and Named Recipients

Not Applicable. Upon award, HLB will select a contractor(s) in full compliance with the procurement standards at 2 CFR Part 200, 2 CFR Part 1500, and 40 CFR Part 33 and including, but not limited to Chapter 431 of the Texas Transportation Code, and the Texas Non-profit Corporation Law, Chapters 20 and 22 of the Texas Business Organization Code, and the Uniform Grant Guidance. Additionally, Houston Land Bank will also follow any procurement methods as outlined in the corporation Bylaws and other organizational charters.