

Application Information Sheet
U.S. EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant Application

R01-26-A-003

1. Applicant Identification

Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments (RiverCOG)
145 Dennison Rd.
Essex, CT 06426

2. Website URL: www.rivercog.org

3. Funding Requested

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

4. Location

Towns: Portland, Cromwell and Middletown
County Equivalent: RiverCOG Planning Region
State: Connecticut

5. Target Area and Priority Site/Property Information

Target Area Name	Census Tract (CT) Numbers	Priority Site Address(es)
Portland	09130560200	198 Main Street, Portland, CT 06480
Cromwell	09130570300	61 River Road, Cromwell, CT 06416
Middletown	09130541402	91 Beverly Heights, Middletown, CT 06457

6. Contacts

- a. Project Director and b. Chief Executive

Project Director	Executive Director
Susie Beckman	Sam Gold
(860) 581-8554	(860) 581-8554
sbeckman@rivercog.org	sgold@rivercog.org
145 Dennison Rd. Essex, CT 06426	145 Dennison Rd. Essex, CT 06426

7. Population

- a. Portland = 9,421
- b. Cromwell = 14,301
- c. Middletown = 47,717
- d. RiverCOG Planning Region = 176,215

8. Other Factors

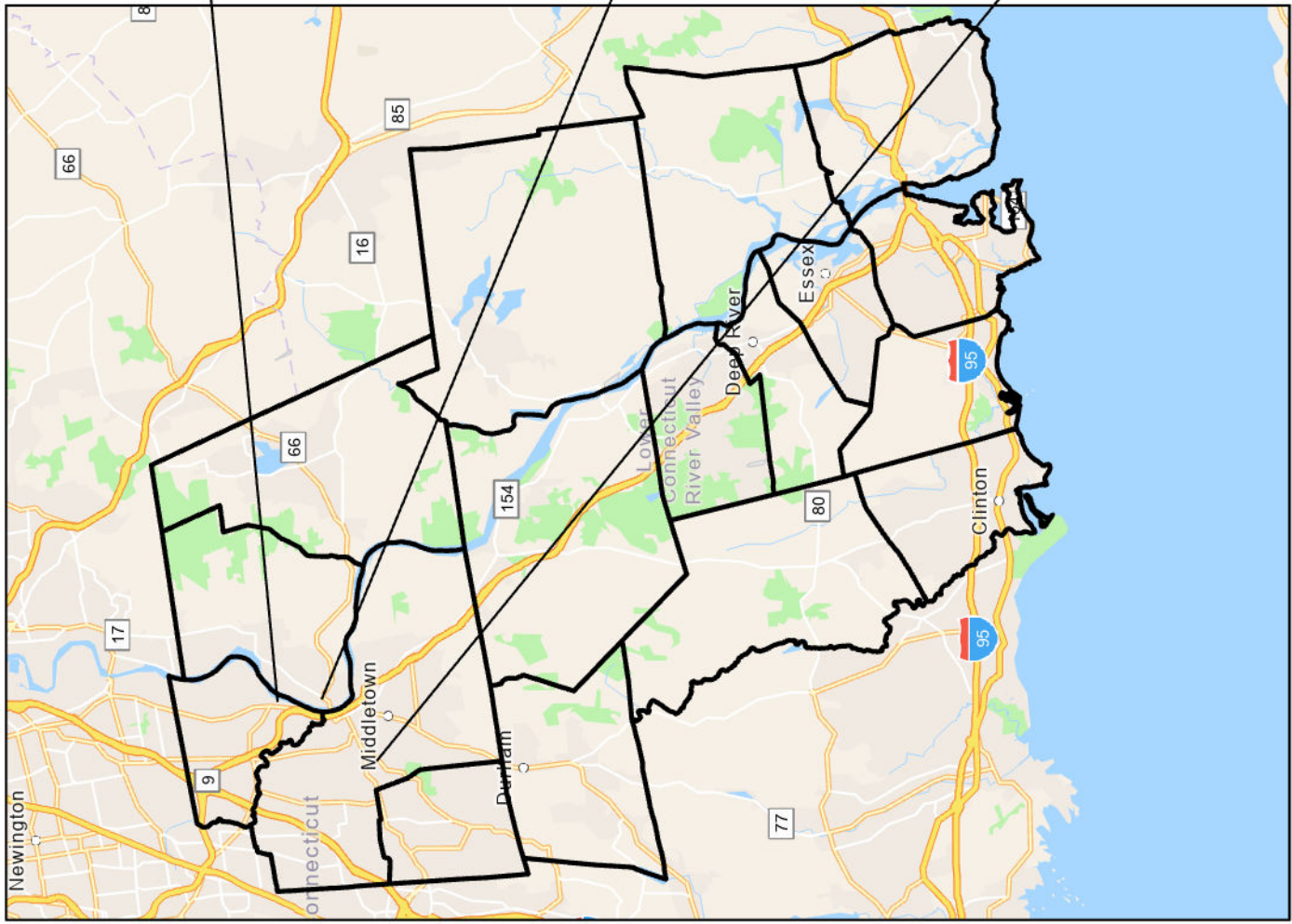
Other Factors	Page #
Community Population is 15,000 or less	1
The applicant is, or will assist, a federally recognized Indian tribe or United States territory.	
The proposed brownfield site(s) is impacted by mine-scarred land	NA
The priority site(s) is adjacent to a body of water (i.e., the border of the priority site 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	2
The reuse of priority site(s) will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy.	NA
The reuse of the priority site(s) will incorporate energy efficiency measures.	3
The proposed project will improve local resilience to the impacts of extreme weather events and natural disasters.	3 & 4
At least 30% of the proposed budget will be spent on eligible reuse/area-wide planning activities as described in Section 3.A.(2) for priority sites within the target areas.	NA
The target area(s) is impacted by a coal-fired power plant has recently closed (2015 or later) or is closing.	NA

9. Letter from the State or Tribal Environmental Authority (not included in the three-page limit)
 Letter from Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection attached.

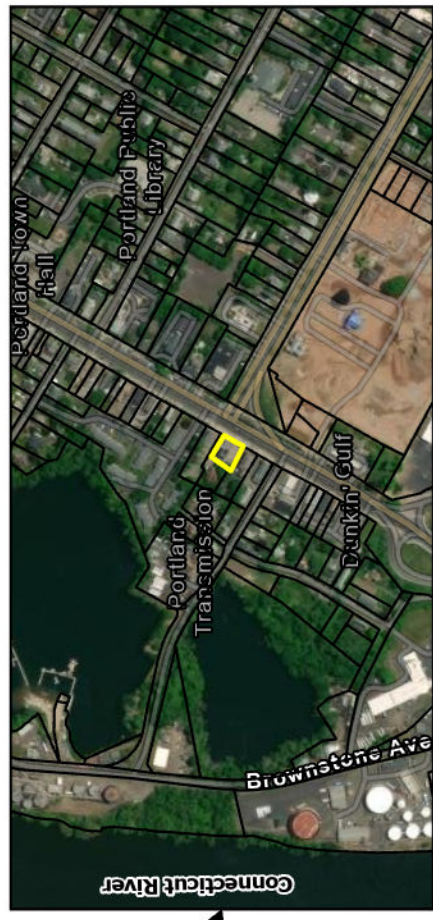
10. Releasing Copies of Applications

RiverCOG has no CBI claims and is not opposed to having this application posted on EPA's website.

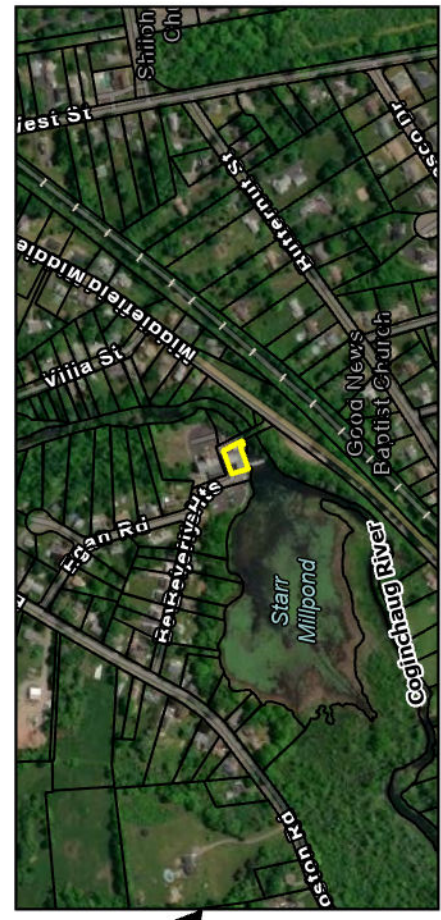
EPA Community-wide Assessment Grant FY26 RiverCOG Region Properties



61 River Road, Cromwell



198 Main Street, Portland



91 Beverly Heights, Middletown

This map is for assessment and planning purposes only. It is not intended to be used for description, conveyance, authoritative definition of legal boundary, or property title. This is not a survey product.

December 19, 2025

Susie Beckman
Regional Planner
Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments (RiverCOG)
145 Dennison Road
Essex, CT 06426

Re: State Acknowledgement Letter for EPA's Community-wide Assessment Grant for FY26

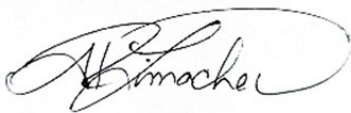
Dear Ms. Beckman:

The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) acknowledges that the Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments intends to apply to the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for a Community-wide Assessment Grant for Federal Fiscal Year 2026. DEEP understands that the Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments plans to use the grant funding to conduct assessments at various properties contaminated with hazardous substances and/or petroleum in the communities served by your organization.

If EPA awards grant funds, DEEP or EPA must determine the eligibility of each site before any site-specific assessment activity is undertaken using petroleum assessment grant funds.

If you have any questions about this letter, please contact me at (860) 424-3351 or by e-mail at Amanda.Limacher@ct.gov. Good luck with your application.

Sincerely,



Amanda Limacher
Brownfields Coordinator

c: Ms. Katy Deng, EPA (via e- mail)

EPA Community-wide Assessment Proposal Narrative

1) PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION AND PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION

Target Area and Brownfields

a. Overview of Brownfield Challenges and Description of Target Areas

Brownfields blight the landscape, economies and communities of the 17 small towns in the Lower Connecticut River Valley. As the Industrial Revolution declined, it left at least 75 contaminated, abandoned and deteriorating buildings that threaten human and ecological health throughout the region near neighborhoods, in community centers, along riverfronts and in floodplains. Communities still struggle to recover from the job losses, reduced commercial activity, and shrinking commercial tax bases that increase the residential tax burden and housing costs in communities reliant on property taxes to provide public services. Assessing, cleaning up and redeveloping these brownfields is crucial to reversing these trends of threatening the health of sensitive populations, economic disinvestment and loss of working age population.

More frequent and severe storms and flooding mobilizes legacy contaminants from brownfield sites into local waterways, the Connecticut River, and ultimately Long Island Sound, increasing risks to human and ecological health. Local Hazard Mitigation Plans provide strategies to mitigate these impacts but cleanup of brownfield properties is essential to reduce these vulnerabilities. RiverCOG and its member towns have prioritized brownfield redevelopment to protect environmental health, preserve historic and cultural assets, support economic revitalization, and expand housing opportunities. Although all towns identify brownfield redevelopment as a key goal, limited resources constrain and delay progress. RiverCOG seeks a \$500,000 EPA Community-Wide Assessment Grant to address gaps in town funding and capacity so we can move brownfield remediation and redevelopment efforts more quickly. For this grant, RiverCOG identified Portland, Cromwell and Middletown as the target areas for initial assessment work.

Portland is a micro community of 9,421 residents on the east bank of the Connecticut River with six Superfund sites, two state listed brownfields, and additional suspected sites, including the priority site. Census Tract 09130560200 includes the Central Village District and riverfront, historically shaped by brownstone quarrying, shipbuilding, and manufacturing that declined after the early 1900s. The population is declining and aging: a large percentage of residents are over 65 (many depending on SNAP benefits) and struggling to pay an increasingly larger share of the tax burden due to the shrinking commercial tax base. A large percentage of children under 5 in the TA live in poverty with an increased risk to lead exposure. Residents exhibit greater than normal incidents of asthma, birth defects and cancer. To reverse the negative human and environmental impact of brownfield sites as well as the economic and population decline, Portland's POCD prioritizes strengthening the Central Village District by leveraging the region's leisure and tourism economy. Planned redevelopment of riverfront and Village Center brownfields will support a visitor center, museums, fishing piers, restaurants, expanded recreation and mixed-use developments with housing.

Cromwell is a small community of 14,301 residents on the west bank of the Connecticut River. The town has two Superfund sites, one state listed brownfield, and four additional known or suspected brownfield sites. The priority site, 61 River Rd., is located in Census Tract 09130570300 which includes the Downtown Cromwell District and neighborhood. Historically dependent on maritime and later manufacturing industries, the area experienced economic and population decline following factory closures that also left brownfields. The population has higher rates of cancer, birth defects and increased risk of child lead exposure. The population of those over age 65 has increased and those choosing to age in place shoulder a greater tax burden due to the shrinking commercial tax base. Cromwell's POCD identifies waterfront revitalization as a key strategy to protect natural resources, reduce negative health impacts and attract residents and investment by redeveloping underutilized riverfront properties for a mix of commercial and public recreational uses.

Middletown, located on the west bank of the Connecticut River, developed as a shipping and manufacturing center during the Industrial Revolution, leaving a legacy of 9 Superfund sites, 29 state listed brownfields, and additional suspected sites, including the priority site at 91 Beverly Heights in Census Tract

09130541402. With a population of 47,717, Middletown is the region's largest municipality, yet 28% of its property is tax exempt due to nonprofit ownership. These exemptions shift a greater property tax burden onto residential property owners and renters exacerbating the financial challenges faced by Middletown's residents, especially those over 65. Residents exhibit greater than normal incidents of cancer and children are at greater risk of lead exposure. Remediating and restoring the priority site as mixed-use development will improve public and environmental health, preserve an historic asset and add to the commercial tax base.

b. Description of the Priority Brownfield Site(s)

198 Main Street, Portland, CT (Census Tract 09130560200) is a vacant 0.21-acre in the heart of the town's downtown area – the Town Center Village District. On the property sits a 1,846sf building built in 1962 that served as an auto repair garage. The site is highly visible on Main Street with its single structure vacant and deteriorating. Its former use raises concerns about contamination of petroleum hydrocarbons, heavy metals, VOCs, and solvents. The Site is only 1,450ft from the Connecticut River, and less than 500ft from CT DEEP-designated protected open space and an endangered species zone (CT DEEP Natural Diversity Database). With schools and residential neighborhoods within a half-mile of the site, high populations of residents in sensitive age categories of over age 65 and under age 5, and high populations of persons with disabilities, cleanup and redevelopment of this property is essential to protect the health of sensitive populations and ecosystems while revitalizing the struggling downtown core of the town. The site requires assessment to determine the existence and extent of contamination with cleanup alternatives to inform redevelopment planning.

61 River Road, Cromwell, CT (Census Tract 09130570300) is a 0.98-acre former Naval Reserve Training Station located on the town's riverfront corridor. Historic uses of the site include machine shops, an indoor shooting range, and storage of fuel, raising concerns of petroleum, PCBs, solvents, and lead contamination. Past work on the site started by a former owner included partial demolition of the building, removal of an underground oil tank and detection of potential contaminants but further investigation was not conducted. The site, a highly visible riverfront parcel with its 20,000sf foundation still in place, sat deteriorating and overgrown for half a decade until the town purchased the property in 2016. Efforts by the town to attract a private developer failed due to concerns about contamination and the site's location in a FEMA flood zone. The site sits surrounded by an older residential neighborhood. The site is 160 ft from the Connecticut River and would be contiguous with the river if not for River Rd. According to the CT DEEP Natural Diversity Database, the site also sits in a designated endangered species zone. The site requires assessment to determine the existence and extent of contamination with cleanup alternatives to inform redevelopment planning.

91 Beverly Heights, Middletown (Census Tract 09130541402) is the Historic Starr Mill (a.k.a. Russell Mill) listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This 1865 mill is surrounded by historic worker housing still in use. One of the oldest industrial sites in Middletown, the original mill manufactured arms from 1808-1845 and from 1864-1956 was used for textile manufacturing. The 24,000sf three-story mill sits on 0.13 acres contiguous with the Coginchaug River, a tributary of the Connecticut River, and used the waterway to power operations. Housing for workers was built around the mill with many of those dwellings still in use. When the mill closed, part of the building was used for light manufacturing of plumbing products and lighting fixtures. Currently, the mill sits mostly vacant and deteriorating. Former manufacturing uses raise concerns about contamination of petroleum hydrocarbons, heavy metals, VOCs, formaldehyde, dyes and solvents. The site sits in the center of a residential zone. Assessment of the property, including a Hazardous Building Materials Assessment (HBMA), is essential to protect the health of sensitive populations, restore an historic property and put it back into productive use as a mix of housing and commercial development.

a. Identifying Additional Sites: RiverCOG is participating in UConn TAB's Spring 2026 program to develop a region-wide inventory of known and suspected brownfield sites. Using GIS mapping and a supporting database, the inventory will document site history, potential contamination, assessment or cleanup status, and redevelopment opportunities. RiverCOG will establish a Brownfield Advisory Committee (BAC), including municipal leaders, staff, residents, and community, business, and social service representatives, to guide

planning and outreach. The BAC will set criteria to prioritize sites based on redevelopment potential, community need, sustainable reuse, climate resilience, protection of natural resources, and opportunities for public open space or public river access. Priority sites will be selected for EPA CWA-funded assessments based on these criteria and proximity to TAs, with additional sites considered if funds remain.

Revitalization of the Target Area

1) Reuse Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans: Regional and local POCDs, Affordable Housing Plans, Hazard Mitigation Plans, and TOD Plans all highlight the Lower Connecticut River Valley's valuable natural resources, community centers, and historic and cultural assets. Because these plans incorporate broad stakeholder input, they reflect community priorities—protecting air, water, open space, and sensitive ecosystems while also expanding the commercial tax base, revitalizing town centers, improving walkability and bikability, creating jobs, building affordable housing, and increasing recreational and riverfront access. These goals can conflict, but brownfield reuse offers a solution by enabling infill development on abandoned or underutilized properties—often historic—thereby protecting natural and cultural resources while advancing economic revitalization. Portland's priority site will model this approach by transforming a centrally located contaminated property into mixed-use commercial space with housing, bringing new businesses and residents to energize the Town Central Village. In Cromwell, reusing the priority site as a riverfront park will protect the river ecosystem and attract residents and visitors with trails, scenic areas, and renewed waterfront activity. In Middletown, restoring the historic mill site will safeguard human and ecological health while preserving a historic asset that can continue to serve as business space and housing.

2) Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategy: Infill redevelopment of brownfields helps towns meet the goals in their plans with the additional benefit of reducing toxins that contribute to the increased prevalence of asthma, cancer and birth defects and other ailments among sensitive populations and environmental zones in the priority areas. Cleaning up these sites removes hazardous contamination reducing negative health impacts on vulnerable community members and improving ecological health.

In Portland, the POCD identifies reinvigorating the Town Central Village District including improving accessibility and walkability to connect the area to the riverfront. An assessment, market feasibility study and revitalization plan for 198 Main Street will identify optimal redevelopment options desired by the community. Centrally located in the Town Central Village District and only one-half mile from riverfront attractions and neighborhoods, redevelopment of this site will be the catalyst for reinvigorating the district attracting businesses to increase the commercial tax base, creating jobs and add affordable housing in addition to improving health outcomes of sensitive populations in adjacent neighborhoods and protecting natural resources and sensitive environmental areas. Low impact sustainable design with energy efficiency measures and hazard mitigation strategies will be incorporated into redevelopment plans to minimize the impacts of extreme weather events and natural disasters.

In Cromwell, assessing, cleaning up and repurposing riverfront brownfields to create parks will be a catalyst that moves the town toward realizing its goal to "Create a Vibrant Riverfront that includes a Balance of Commercial Development and Recreation" that makes this area a waterfront destination. Public riverfront access with trails and scenic viewing spots will improve mental and physical health of residents and visitors. Design of parks will include flood and other hazard mitigation strategies to minimize the impacts of extreme weather events and natural disasters, ADA compliance and renewable energy for power. Attracting more residents and visitors to the park will lead to commercial development along the riverfront offering additional recreation, retail and restaurants for park visitors. The increased commercial tax base will reduce the pressure to increase taxes that disproportionately impact aging populations. Cleanup of the brownfields also protects natural resources and sensitive environmental areas in addition to reducing negative health impacts of the sensitive population living in adjacent neighborhoods.

Assessment, cleanup and redevelopment of 91 Beverly Heights in Middletown will lead to improved health outcomes for the sensitive populations in the surrounding neighborhood and reduce leaching of contaminants

into ground water in the Coginchaug and Connecticut Rivers. Consistent with its POCD, the city plans to partner with developers to remediate and adaptively reuse the site for mixed-use development, improving public and environmental health while preserving an historic asset and adding to the commercial tax base. This infill development will preserve an historic mill building, create needed affordable housing with a complementary mix of small businesses to serve the surrounding neighborhood and increase the commercial tax base. New development will include hazard and flood mitigation strategies to minimize the impacts of extreme weather events and natural disasters as well as low impact sustainable design that uses renewable energy.

Strategy for Leveraging Resources

f. Resources Needed for Site Reuse: Understanding the existence and extent of contamination on these sites provides important information that will allow RiverCOG and the towns to leverage clean-up funds available through CT DEEP and Department of Economic and Community Development (CT DECD). Without the opportunity to assess these properties, we would not be able to plan for and estimate the costs of additional assessment if needed, remediation or redevelopment plan implementation for these sites. Other potential resources for funding include: CT Department of Housing; Preservation Connecticut; Brownfield Revolving Loan Programs; USDA Rural Business Development; and private developers. Without support from EPA CWA grant, it will take many years to accomplish these brownfields redevelopment goals. The towns' limited staff and rising costs keep pushing brownfield projects into the future. With funds from EPA to complete this work, towns can move faster to eliminate exposure of sensitive populations and ecosystems to toxic chemicals and attract private investment for redevelopment.

g. Use of Existing Infrastructure: Redevelopment will benefit from the use of existing infrastructure. All sites are served by public water, sewer, electricity, cell service and paved public roads. Although unexpected, if upgrades to infrastructure are required, RiverCOG will work with the town to secure funding to ensure appropriate services are provided for new development.

2) COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community Need

a. The Community's Need for Funding: Portland is a micro community of 9,421 residents and Cromwell is a small community of 14,301 residents. CT towns rely on property taxes to fund public services putting smaller communities with declining commercial tax bases at a disadvantage. Middletown is a larger community with 47,717 residents with a median household income (MHI) 22% lower than that of CT. Middletown's tax base is reduced by a state non-profit property tax exemption that removes 28% of properties from tax responsibilities because they are owned by non-profit organizations including Wesleyan University, CT State University and Middlesex Hospital. These towns face increasing costs to provide public services, declining and reduced commercial tax bases and aging populations. Towns are being pressured by residents to cut taxes and struggle to find and afford qualified staff to fill positions leading to a lack of capacity to write grant applications, manage grant funds and implement programs. This is aggravated by a trend in losing working age adults ages 18-64 since 2019 (a drop from 59.6% in 2019 to 58.6% in Portland and a drop from 60.6% to 58.5% in Cromwell). Additionally, residents of retirement age (65 and older) reach nearly 20% in each town, contributing to a declining tax base. The TAs in Portland and Cromwell are 93rd and 82nd percentile in CT for percentage of low-income residents, and 12.2% of residents in Middletown live below the property level compared to 10% across the state. Residents' threshold for increasing property taxes to hire staff or fund brownfield revitalization initiatives has been exceeded. The limited resources of these small, disadvantaged towns make realizing brownfield assessment, cleanup and redevelopment goals challenging. Without CWA funding, these brownfield sites will continue to sit dormant, their structures eroding and contaminants leaching into groundwater and waterways negatively impacting human and ecological health.

b. Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations: The TAs have several population groups that are sensitive to the environmental and health impacts of brownfields, including residents ages 65 years and older and under age 5, veterans, disabled individuals and those residents living below the poverty line (ACS 2023 5-Year

Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau). In tracts 5703.00 (containing 61 River Rd. in Cromwell) and 5414.02 (containing 91 Beverly Hts. in Middletown), 27% and 21% of the population is aged 65 years and older, respectively, much higher than both the state (18.1%) and national (16.8%) levels. Tract 5602.00 (containing 198 Main St. in Portland) also has 19% of residents older than age 65, and a significant population under age 5 of 9% (5% in CT, 6% nationally). The TAs also have an average population of veterans (7.2%) which is higher than that of the U.S. (6%) and CT (5%). Additionally, 16% of residents in both tract 5703.00 and 5602.00 have disabilities compared to 13% nationally. Low-income populations are prevalent in the TA's, with tracts 5602.00 and 5414.02 having MHIs 19% and 30% below the state level. Tract 5602.00 has a greater portion of households receiving food stamps/SNAP (12.1%) compared with both the state (11.7%) and nation (11.8%).

There is an average of 60%, 81%, and 60% of occupied housing units that were built prior to 1980 in Cromwell, Portland, and Middletown, respectively, resulting in an elevated risk of potential exposure to Hazardous Building Materials (HBMs) such as lead paint and asbestos which are linked to serious health issues such as respiratory diseases and cancer. It's essential to assess and clean up the brownfield sites in these Census Tracts to eliminate toxic contaminants and reduce negative health and welfare impacts on sensitive populations near the sites. This grant will help make redevelopment of these properties possible, addressing the aging housing stock and lack of green space, riverfront access and economic opportunity.

c. Greater than Normal Incidence of Disease and Adverse Health Conditions: Residents in the TAs are disproportionately exposed to environmental and socioeconomic stressors and exhibit greater than normal incidents of health conditions. According to the U.S. CDC, tract 5602.00 in Portland faces a greater rate of adult asthma (11.1%) compared to the nation (10.6%). Additionally, all three tracts are burdened by higher rates of cancer (5703.00 = 11.4%, 5414.02 = 9.3%, 5602.00 = 9.4%) when compared to the rest of the nation (9.1%). Due to the high prevalence of homes built before 1980 in the TAs (average of 67% compared to 51% nationally), there is a drastically increased risk of child lead exposure; according to the Connecticut Department of Public Health, child blood lead levels exceeding the U.S. CDC blood lead reference value in Middletown is triple that of Connecticut. Additionally, Middlesex County, which includes all TAs, experiences a greater prevalence (per 10,000 births) of birth defects associated with environmental exposures than the rest of the state, such as hypospadias (102.79 vs. 65 statewide) and gastroschisis (12.2 vs. 5.5 statewide) (U.S. Environmental Public Health Tracking Network). Assessment of the Priority Sites will aid in the eventual cleanup and subsequent reduction of threats caused by contaminated fill, volatile compounds, petroleum, heavy metals, and potential groundwater contamination associated with the sites to the sensitive populations in the TAs that are already burdened by elevated instances of asthma, cancer, and birth defects.

d. Economically Impoverished/Disproportionately Impacted Population: Older, economically impoverished individuals often live in older areas of towns where industries and neighborhoods once thrived, but are now stagnant due to defunct manufacturers, disinvestment and lack of redevelopment interest because of potential contamination. These populations are also more likely to suffer from lack of access to green space and the riverfront due to historic development patterns.

Portland's TA suffers from a declining population (a drop of 8% since 2010). The population is also aging: residents over age 65 were 16% of the population in 2010 and 19% of the population in 2023. Because towns rely on property taxes to support services, industrial decline combined with these demographic shifts increases the tax burden on seniors who increasingly want to stay in their homes and age in place. In addition, over 14% of Portland's population aged over 65 in the 5602 Census Tract relies on SNAP benefits, higher than the US and CT SNAP benefit rates both of which are 12%. The same percentage (14%) of children under 5 years live below the poverty line, a point higher than the 13% in the state.

In the Cromwell TA, the industrial decline has also led to outmigration of younger residents. The population decreased 13% between 2010 and 2023. The population share of residents 65 and older increased from 24% to 27% during that time. The aging population that increasingly choose to age in place now shoulder a greater tax burden due to the shrinking commercial tax base.

Middletown's MHI is 22% lower than that of CT, and 12% of residents live below the poverty level compared to 10% in CT. The MHI in tract 5414.02 is also 27% lower than that of CT. Middletown residents over 65 in the TA are a larger share of the population increasing from 19% in 2015 to 21% in 2023 and 13% of this vulnerable population lives below the poverty line (higher than both the US rate of 11% and CT rate of 9.3%).

According to CDC ATSDR data, the TAs have a moderate-to-high environmental burden ranking compared to communities across the U.S., attributable to ozone exposure (82nd percentile for tract 5703.00 and 85th percentile for both 5602.00 and 5414.02) and "potentially hazardous and toxic sites" (77th percentile for tract 5703, and 81st percentile for tract 5602). Within its small land area of just over 12 square miles, Cromwell contains a staggering 35 active RCRA hazardous waste sites, 20 active Underground Storage Tanks (USTs), two Superfund sites, and 33 permitted water dischargers. Portland is burdened by 17 active RCRA hazardous waste sites, 13 USTs, 44 permitted water dischargers, and five TRI sites. Middletown has 75 RCRA hazardous waste sites, 43 USTs, 9 Superfund sites, and 13 TRI sites. Assessing and remediating riverfront brownfields will allow these communities to reduce environmental threats faced by their vulnerable populations, revitalize neighborhoods and the housing stock, promote economic development and provide recreational opportunities formerly blocked by contaminated riverfront properties.

Community Engagement

e. Project Involvement & f. Project Roles: RiverCOG and its member towns consistently and proactively engage with many different community and advocacy groups for planning and regional service purposes. BAC members will represent these stakeholders and provide guidance on brownfield projects. In addition, stakeholder events, surveys and a variety of communications channels will be used to gather input from businesses and residents. BAC representatives will engage stakeholders through their organizations listed below. Additionally, RiverCOG will lead all procurement and oversight of contractual services and work closely with consultants on community engagement efforts. RiverCOG plans regular meetings throughout the project period with these organizations to maintain strong communication.

Municipal Health Districts – *Mission:* To protect and promote public health through health monitoring and resources in Portland, Cromwell and Middletown. *Involvement:* Provide health data, communicate human and environmental health risks to residents, support community health education during assessments of priority sites in each TA. *Point of Contact:* Middletown, [Kevin Elak](#), Director of Health, kevin.elak@middletownct.gov, (860) 638-4960; Portland, [Russell Melmed](#), Director of Health, Russell.melmed@chathamhealth.org, (860) 365-0884; Cromwell, Wesley Bell, Director of Health, wbell@cromwellct.com, (860) 632-3426.

Middlesex and Lower CT River Valley Land Trust – *Mission:* To conserve, study, steward, and promote the unique values and scientific significance, natural and working lands, and historic, ecologic, cultural, and scenic resources of the communities of the Lower Connecticut River Valley Region. *Involvement:* Support community engagement efforts for site reuse options; ensure redevelopment mitigates negative impacts to natural resources; involvement in future site selection. *Point of Contact:* Jeb Stevens, Executive Director, jstevens@middlesexlandtrust.org, (860) 343-7537,

Connecticut Main Street Center – *Mission:* Help CT communities create and maintain vibrant downtowns, grow local businesses and spark community pride. *Involvement:* Support community engagement and education for priority site assessment and future reuse planning. *Point of Contact:* Michelle McCabe, Executive Director, michelle@ctmainstreet.org, 860-280-2557.

Middlesex Habitat for Humanity of Connecticut – *Mission:* Address housing stability, affordability, and family well-being in Cromwell, Middletown, and Portland. *Involvement:* Member of RiverCOG Regional Housing Committee based in Middletown. Support reuse planning for affordable/mixed-income housing reuses and support community engagement efforts pertaining to housing reuse. *Point of Contact:* Sarah J. Bird, Executive Director, sbird@habitatmiddlesex.org, (860) 398-6485.

Middlesex Chamber of Commerce – *Mission:* To be the voice of business in Middlesex County and surrounding area. *Involvement:* Support community engagement efforts with businesses and solicit business input on site

reuse planning. *Point of Contact:* Johanna Bond, Executive Director, johanna@middlesexchamber.com, (860) 347-6924.

River Valley Transit – *Mission:* To provide a variety of public transportation resources to Middlesex and New London Counties. *Involvement:* Support community engagement efforts with public transportation riders on input regarding reuse planning and support from transportation planners to make public transit stops available at redeveloped sites. *Point of Contact:* Brendan Garegthy, bgaregthy@rivercog.org, (860) 510-0429.

g. **Incorporating Community Input:** RiverCOG will communicate project progress to communities and frequently solicit meaningful input and feedback from all stakeholders. The QEP, with support from RiverCOG, will use a multi-media approach based on best practices and new techniques with a variety of content. Efforts are constantly made to increase engagement. RiverCOG recently used multiple short videos coupled with short surveys on the subject matter to increase response rates for a TOD project. RiverCOG seeks other creative tools to engagement as well; Augmented Reality (AR) will be used to visualize redevelopment concept plans on sites and increase stakeholder input. The QEP will create a Community Engagement Plan with input from municipal and organization partners to identify stakeholders, communications channels and schedules. Communications channels will include: social media; email; partner websites; a dedicated project webpage; and printed flyers located in high traffic community spaces throughout the region. Content will be created in both Spanish and English (additional languages will be considered as needed). Because the TAs contain large populations of elderly residents, direct mail may be used in addition to senior center communication channels for updates and gathering input. A least 2 public meetings will be held for each TA with both in-person and virtual attendance options; recorded meetings will be posted on the website. Events will be hosted in ADA-compliant spaces and accommodations will be provided to those with special needs. Local newspapers, radio and community access television will receive regular media advisories for stakeholder events and project updates. Regular meetings with the BAC will be held to share information and collect input from each representative’s organization or stakeholder group. RiverCOG and municipal staff will meet frequently to discuss progress and relay public input received. Any feedback received from the BAC, community and project partners will be consolidated, organized and publicly responded to via a forum on the dedicated brownfields webpage on RiverCOG’s website, in local media and at meetings.

3) TASK DESCRIPTIONS, COST ESTIMATES, AND MEASURING PROGRESS

Description of Tasks/Activities and Outputs

<p>Task/Activity 1: Project Management & Cooperative Agreement Oversight</p> <p>a. <u>Project Implementation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>EPA-funded tasks/activities:</u> Project Management, Agreement Oversight and attendance for 2 RiverCOG staff at the National Brownfields Training Conference. EPA’s Assessment, Cleanup and Redevelopment Exchange System (ACRES) database will be used to report progress, accomplishments and detailed results of assessments on brownfields sites. Consulting with EPA Region 1 and CT DEEP, Project Manager will follow all federal and state procurement regulations, including 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 1500, to hire Qualified Environmental Professionals (QEPs) to perform assessments and conduct property redevelopment planning and stakeholder engagement. • Non-EPA grant resources needed to carry out tasks/activities, if applicable: N/A
<p>b. Anticipated Project Schedule: QEP Procurement Q3&Q4 2026 & Q1 2027/ACRES Reporting Quarterly through end of grant</p>
<p>c. Task/Activity Lead(s): RiverCOG Project Manager</p>
<p>d. Output(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QEP procurement processes; procurement process documentation; development of scope of work, negotiation and execution of contracts and obtaining property access agreements. • Regular updates on ACRES; final report and closeout forms. • Attendance at National Brownfields Training Conference 2027 for 2 RiverCOG staff.

Task/Activity 2: Site Inventory, Evaluation & Prioritization
a. <u>Project Implementation:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>EPA-funded tasks/activities:</u> NA • <u>Non-EPA grant resources needed to carry out tasks/activities, if applicable:</u> RiverCOG has been accepted into UCONN TAB’s spring 2026 program to create a comprehensive and detailed inventory of all known and suspected brownfields in the 17 towns of the RiverCOG region. RiverCOG will create a Regional Brownfields Advisory Committee (BAC) to review the brownfields inventory and develop criteria to prioritize brownfields for assessment, cleanup and revitalization. The priority sites and additional sites from the new inventory that are considered high priority will undergo assessment with available grant funds.
b. Anticipated Project Schedule: Inventory Completed prior to EPA Grant Project/Prioritization and Identification of Additional Sites Q1 and Q2 2027
c. Task/Activity Leads: RiverCOG Project Manager with support from BAC and UConn TAB.
d. Outputs:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A comprehensive inventory of known and suspected brownfield sites mapped with data on assessment, cleanup and redevelopment status. • A Regional Brownfields Advisory Committee (BAC) to guide brownfields revitalization. • Clear criteria to review and prioritize brownfield sites for ESAs, cleanup and reuse. • Prioritization of sites and selection of additional sites for assessment.
Task/Activity 3: Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs), Site-Specific Quality Assurance Project Plans (SSQAPPs), Hazardous Building Materials Assessments (HBMAs) and Analysis of Brownfield Cleanup Alternatives (ABCAs)
a. <u>Project Implementation:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>EPA-funded tasks/activities:</u> Phase I ESAs will be completed on up to 8 brownfield sites in accordance with standards established by the American Society for Testing Materials (ASTM) 1527-21, EPA’s “All Appropriate Inquiry” (AAI) rule and Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP) regulations. Phase I ESAs will include up to 6 SSQAPPs for sites requiring Phase II ESAs. Phase II ESAs will be conducted in accordance with ASTM 1903-19 and CT DEEP regulations on up to 6 sites. HBMAs will be conducted on up to 2 sites. ABCAs will be created for up to 6 priority sites to use in redevelopment planning. ABCAs will be developed for additional sites in priority order if funds are available. • <u>Non-EPA grant resources needed to carry out tasks/activities, if applicable:</u> N/A
b. Anticipated Project Schedule: Phase I ESAs & SSQAPPs Q2-Q4 2027/Phase II ESAs & HBMAs Q1 2028 – Q3 2029/ABCAs Q1– Q4 2029
c. Task/Activity Lead(s): QEPs with support from RiverCOG Project Manager and officials from towns.
d. Output(s): Phase I on up to 8 sites & SSQAPPs on up to 6 sites, HBMAs on up to 2 sites, Phase II and ABCAs on up to 6 sites.
Task/Activity 4: Redevelopment Planning/Community Engagement/Reuse Concept Plans
a. <u>Project Implementation:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>EPA-funded tasks/activities:</u> RiverCOG staff will work with QEPs to engage stakeholders including residents, property owners, businesses, health officials, community leaders and others throughout the assessment and cleanup planning process. New techniques and AR tools will be used. • <u>Non-EPA grant resources needed to carry out tasks/activities, if applicable:</u> N/A
b. Anticipated Project Schedule: Q4 2026 – Q1 2030
c. Task/Activity Lead(s): QEPs with support from BAC and RiverCOG Program Manager
d. Output(s): Community Engagement Plans (content (videos, posts surveys, AR visualization), meeting notices and attendance, website pages, community input and responses), Implementation Tools (communication channels & meeting locations) & Redevelopment Concept Plans for 3 priority sites.

e. Cost Estimates

Task Activity 1 - RiverCOG anticipates 200 hrs will be required for project management over the grant period and agreement oversight at \$110/hr for a total of \$22,000 and travel to the National Brownfields Training Conference in 2027 for Program Manager and one additional RiverCOG planner (Conference Registration & other fees (\$800), Travel (\$1,500), lodging (\$1,350) and per diem (\$850). Total cost: \$26,500.

Task/Activity 2 - This task leverages the services of UCONN TAB and RiverCOG’s budget. Inventory and selection of prioritization criteria will begin prior to grant award. On-going work on the inventory and selection of additional sites will occur during the project. Total Cost: In-kind staff support

Task/Activity 3 – Site Access Agreements: 8 sites x \$250 = \$2,000. Phase I ESAs: 8 sites x \$4,500 = \$36,000. SSQAPPs: 6 sites x \$3,500 = \$21,000. Phase II ESAs: 4 sites x \$45,000 = \$180,000 and 2 sites x \$75,000 = \$150,000. HBMA will be conducted on up to 2 sites: 2 sites x \$2,000 = \$4,000. ABCAs will be created for up to 6 priority sites to use in redevelopment planning: 6 sites x \$6,000 = \$36,000. Total cost: \$427,000.

Task/Activity 4 – RiverCOG anticipates facilitating community engagement for Redevelopment Planning, Community Engagement and development of Reuse Concept Plans to require 200 hours at \$110/hr for a total of \$22,000 plus mileage reimbursement (\$1,500). QEP expenses to assist these activities are estimated to be 50 hours at \$200/hr for a total of \$10,000. A four-year subscription to inCitu costs \$8,000. An estimated \$3,000 will cover supplies and other costs including flyers, mailings, advertising, signs, presentation materials and refreshments for in-person stakeholder meetings. Total Cost: \$43,000

Budget Categories		Project Tasks (\$)					Totals
		Project Management	Site Inventory	ESAs	Planning & Engagement	Admin Costs	
Direct Costs	Personnel	\$18,744		\$2,000	\$18,744		
	Fringe Benefits						
	Travel	\$4,500					
	Equipment						
	Supplies				\$3,000		
	Contractual			\$429,000	\$10,000		
	Construction						
	Other				\$9,500		
Total Direct Costs		\$23,244		\$429,000	\$41,244		\$493,488
Indirect Costs		\$3,256			\$3,256		\$6,512
Total Budget		\$26,500		\$429,000	\$44,500		\$500,000

e. Plan to Measure and Evaluate Environmental Progress and Results: Upon notification of award, the Program Manager will work with EPA Region 1 to create a Cooperative Agreement Work Plan outlining the project schedule, budget, tasks, goals, benchmarks, milestones and deliverables. The selected QEP will be responsible for ensuring that all assessment work is compliant with State and Federal guidelines. RiverCOG, in consultation with the QEP and the BAC, will track, measure, evaluate and report progress toward Work Plan objectives through EPA’s ACRES database. If modifications to the Work Plan are needed, the Program Manager will consult with EPA Region 1 to make revisions. RiverCOG expects deliverables and reports required in the Work Plan to demonstrate progress toward completing assessments and reuse plans that will lead to successful cleanup and redevelopment. The Program Manager will also identify and report on opportunities to leverage additional funding and resources to support cleanup and redevelopment of the sites assessed.

4) PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE

a. Organizational Capacity: RiverCOG manages more than a dozen concurrent federal and state grants up to \$550,000, along with multiple long-term projects averaging over \$500,000 annually. The agency consistently meets all programmatic, administrative, and financial requirements within each grant’s performance period. Its team of 14 multidisciplinary professionals successfully develops, implements, and manages numerous projects,

grants, and consultants across varied program areas. RiverCOG operates on a \$2 million budget supported by US DOT funds distributed through CT DOT, a state Regional Support Grant, member-town dues, and additional federal and state project-specific grants. RiverCOG's financial administrator oversees compliance with stringent US DOT financial management protocols and maintains procurement and payment systems that meet all state and federal requirements. RiverCOG's audits are exemplary, with no adverse findings.

b. Organizational Structure and c. Description of Key Staff: RiverCOG's Executive Director and Deputy Director oversee all operations and funding, while discipline-specific planners manage projects in their areas. Susie Beckman, Regional Planner for Economic Development, will serve as Program Manager, responsible for procuring QEPs, coordinating project work, securing site access, reporting progress, and working with finance staff to meet procurement and financial requirements. She brings over 10 years of economic development experience and has managed \$855,000 in state grants, including a BAR Planning Grant and a Brownfield Assessment Grant. Supporting Susie will be Eliza LoPresti, with expertise in housing planning, hazard mitigation, and stakeholder engagement, and Jake Capobianco, who has experience in environmental management and related projects. RiverCOG operates collaboratively, and additional team members will participate as needed.

d. Acquiring Additional Resources: RiverCOG acquires additional expertise and resources through competitive procurement processes required by US DOT. RiverCOG will use this process to identify qualified QEPs to complete this project. As with all RiverCOG RFPs, RiverCOG will adhere to 2 CFR Part 200 and 2CFR Part 1500.27, DBE participation in 40 CFR 33 and other applicable rules governing labor and contracting.

Past Performance and Accomplishments

e. Currently Has or Previously Received an EPA Brownfield Grant: RiverCOG has not applied for or received an EPA Brownfield Grant in the past.

f. Has Not Received an EPA Brownfields Grant but has Received Other Federal or Non-Federal Financial Assistance Agreements: RiverCOG has not received an EPA Brownfields Grant. However, as a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), RiverCOG annually receives over \$1.25 million in funding from the US Department of Transportation (US DOT) through allocations made by CT Department of Transportation (CT DOT) for transportation planning and project implementation. RiverCOG adheres to all USDOT requirements for managing, spending and reporting on grant funding received from US DOT through CT DOT. RiverCOG received a project-specific \$240,000 grant from US DOT Safe Streets for All (SS4A) program in 2022 to create a Comprehensive Safety Action Plan for the region.

i. Purpose and Accomplishments: As the MPO, RiverCOG develops and implements the 25-year Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), which establishes the region's transportation vision and funding priorities. RiverCOG receives annual US DOT funding through CT DOT to carry out MTP projects, including bridge inspections and replacements; safety upgrades to railroad crossings, crosswalks, and traffic signals; and roadway safety improvements such as roundabouts. The SS4A program, concluding in March 2026 supported comprehensive safety analysis across all 17 RiverCOG towns. Since 2022, the project evaluated streets, reviewed crash data, and gathered community input through meetings, surveys, and an online mapping portal identifying dangerous locations for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers. This work produced a region-wide assessment of existing infrastructure and crash trends and created strategies for ongoing project prioritization to improve road safety. The final report includes: Policy and Process Recommendations; Base Mapping & Safety Analysis; and Analysis of the Mapping Tool.

ii. Compliance with Grant Requirements

For all grants, RiverCOG follows the Cooperative Grant Agreements terms and conditions and Work Plan. Quarterly Performance Progress Reports (PPR) and Federal Financial Reports (SF-425) are submitted as required. The project will be completed on time following the work plan requirements.

g. Never Received Any Type of Federal or Non-Federal Financial Assistance Agreements

RiverCOG receives annual allocations from US DOT through CTDOT as described above.

FY26 EPA Community-Wide Assessment Grant Application

Threshold Criteria

1. Applicant Eligibility

- a. Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments (RiverCOG) is eligible as a council of governments a General Purpose Unit of Government. Councils of government are established under Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) with authorities granted under CGS Section 127, Section 4-124 and Section 8-35a-e.
- b. RiverCOG is not exempt from Federal taxation under Section 501(c)(4).

2. Community Involvement

- a. RiverCOG intends to engage with stakeholders prior to and throughout the duration of the Community-Wide Assessment Grant project. Prior to the grant award, RiverCOG plans to develop a comprehensive Brownfield Inventory with assistance from University of Connecticut Technical Assistance for Brownfields (UCONN TAB). Stakeholders will be engaged in that process as members of the Brownfield Advisory Committee (BAC). The BAC will determine criteria to prioritize the region's brownfields for assessment, remediation and redevelopment. Once the Community-Wide Assessment Grant project begins, input will be solicited from community stakeholders through multiple communications channels. All stakeholder input will be compiled and listed on the project webpage along with responses and opportunities to provide comments. Stakeholder input will be an essential component of the project and incorporated into decision-making and in creating site reuse plans. RiverCOG staff maintain relationships with town CEOs and staff, community organizations and business organizations. These relationships will be leveraged throughout the Brownfield Community-Wide Assessment Grant project to gather input by expanding our reach to more community members for additional input. RiverCOG staff and consultants use a multi-media approach to reach community members with information and create a feedback loop for input. In addition to meetings and events (in-person and online), communication channels include local newspapers, community access television, social media, email, partner websites, a dedicated project webpage, printed flyers in town halls and other community spaces and mail. Content is created in English and Spanish as well as other languages, as needed. Efforts are constantly made to improve engagement. RiverCOG recently used multiple short videos coupled with short surveys successfully increasing survey response rates through social media channels. RiverCOG seeks other creative tools for engagement as well, such as Augmented Reality (AR) to visualize redevelopment concept plans on sites.

3. Expenditure of Existing Grant Funds

RiverCOG does not have an open EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant or Multipurpose Grant.

4. Contractors and Named Subrecipients

Contractors. Not applicable

Subrecipients. Not applicable