

**FY 2026 U.S. EPA Brownfield Cleanup Grant Application
Narrative Information Sheet**

R01-26-C-024

1. Applicant Identification

City of Somersworth
One Government Way
Somersworth, NH 03878

2. Website URL

<https://www.somersworthnh.gov/>

3. Funding Requested

- a. Grant Type Single Site Cleanup
- b. Federal Funds Requested
 - i. \$1,311,500
 - iii. Requesting a waiver of the \$500,000 limit. (\$1,311,500)

4. Location

City of Somersworth, Strafford County, New Hampshire

5. Property Information

261 Main Street Somersworth, NH 03878

6. Contacts

- a. Project Director
Michelle Mears, AICP Director of Planning and Community Development
City of Somersworth
One Government Way
Somersworth, NH 03878
(603) 692-9517 mmears@somersworthnh.gov
- b. Chief Executive/Highest Ranking Elected Official
David Moore, City Manager
City of Somersworth
One Government Way
Somersworth, NH 03878
(603) 692-9503 davidmoore@somersworthnh.gov

7. Population

12,200 (U.S. Census 2024)

8. Other Factors

Other Factors	Page #
Community Population is 15,000 or less	1, 4
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 project/reuse; secured resource is identified in the Narrative and substantiated in the attached documentation.	7-10
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).	N/A
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.	2-3, 10
The reuse of the proposed cleanup site(s) will incorporate energy efficiency measures.	2-4, 10
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 (2014 or later) or is closing.	N/A

9. Releasing Copies of Applications

Not applicable.

(1) PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION AND PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION

Target Area and Brownfields:

a. Overview of Brownfield Challenges and Description of Target Area: Somersworth is a small working-class city located in the southern portion of Strafford County and across the Salmon Falls River from Berwick, Maine. Of the State's 13 cities, it has the smallest area and with a population of about 12,200, the third lowest city population in NH. Somersworth began as a grist and sawmill-centric community in the early 1800s. In 1822, Great Falls Manufacturing Company (GFM Company), a textile business with 3 mills, was established and other expansive brick mill buildings were later erected beside the river, creating a thriving downtown. Somersworth's Main Street, our target area, is populated by those now underutilized brick mill buildings, some in converted-reuse but many of those buildings are dilapidated and abandoned. The City has seven (7) known Brownfields sites, two of those sites are located on Main Street, which impacts the redevelopment, economic vitality and quality of life in the downtown area. Without remediation of these sites and buildings will continue to create detrimental impacts to the community, such as impacts to human health, air quality and water quality. Currently these are unsecured sites and without remediation to address the contamination there is a risk of injury to economically impoverished residents in the target area. In addition, our downtown is home to a riverfront, 5 story, art deco, 563,409 square foot, former GE Electric (GE) meter plant. The GE plant was the center of downtown for many decades; with housing, shops, and infrastructure constructed around it. The building was sold in 2016 to a solar meter company, who has now vacated the building, rendering the site unutilized. GE once employed 2,500 workers, when it closed its doors, it created a loss of industry and it has had a detrimental effect on the downtown and local economy. The GE lot is contaminated with chlorinated solvents and PFAS with an estimated remedial cost action of \$20 Million required. The remnants of the former plant's employment include empty storefronts and derelict, multi-story workforce housing, all within walking distance of the downtown. The GFM Company's largest mill was renovated for other uses in the 1980's, but then burned in a 2003 fire. The current (2021 ACS) manufacturing employment in the city is 1,228, about half its peak in 1990 (New Hampshire Employment Security).

Somersworth's current economic conditions, coupled with the loss and replacement of jobs with low-paying wages, have further eroded our ability to respond to the effects of the Brownfields sites in our community without outside assistance. **The target area for this grant (Census Block Group 083001-2) is where our downtown businesses suffer, and there are vacant or severely underutilized spaces and substandard housing.** In a balanced residential rental market, the target vacancy rate should be between 5-6%, however, the vacancy rate in Strafford County was 1.1% in 2023, according to New Hampshire Housing and Finance Authority's 2023 Residential Rental Cost Survey Report. The limited inventory and growing demand for housing have resulted in higher costs, which in turn has impacted affordability in the community, particularly in recent years. From 2010 to 2019, the median purchase price in Somersworth rose 21%. Between 2019 to 2022, it increased more than 50%. Rental prices have also increased significantly, surpassing the Fair Market Rent (FMR) as set by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. In 2024, the median rent for a 2-bedroom apartment in Somersworth was \$1,733, while the FMR was \$1,399. Over half of Somersworth's housing stock was built before 1970, and 28% of units were built before 1940. This EPA grant would allow for our target site to be restored and redeveloped into a new mixed-use building, adding new residential units to the City. Based on current construction costs and the level of cleanup required at our site, it wouldn't be economically feasible for the developer/City to clean up this site without federal assistance. The Brownfield properties located in the downtown are abandoned and underutilized industrial/commercial sites and have created a range of economic, environmental, health risks, and social challenges, such as, stifled investment, reduced tax base, and neighborhood blight, water quality threats, building hazards from older structures and disinvestment in downtown due to high cost of remediation, and fear of environmental liability.

b. Description of the Proposed Brownfield Site(s): The location for this cleanup grant is the J.A. Prince and Sons Garage site (Site). The Site, located at 261 Main Street, is comprised of a 0.737-acre lot identified on

Somersworth Tax Map 09 as Lot 217. The Site featured a 2,400 square foot commercial building with a slab-on-grade foundation that was demolished and hazardous building materials (HBM) removed in 2021. It was initially part of a downtown sawmill operation situated among tenement housing and other industrial operations. In the 1920's the Site was developed as an automotive service station and became one of the buildings from Somersworth's industrial past that was neglected and abandoned. Located within blocks of the downtown core, this vacant site is suitable for redevelopment once the remaining hazardous substances are removed. The City is working with a private developer that has a vision for the reuse of this property that aligns with the community and City goals to provide diverse and accessible housing along existing densely populated areas.

Following the removal and remediation of three gasoline USTs, a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) was conducted in May 2021 to assess conditions and determine the presence of Recognized Environmental Conditions (RECs) at the Site. The findings of the Phase I ESA identified the potential for impacted soil and groundwater beneath the Site as a result of site use as a gas station and service center with storage and use of petroleum and petroleum products, including underground storage tanks, the presence of an active floor drain and historical floor drain, presence of a hydraulic lift, and evidence of historic disrepair and releases. In September 2022, a Phase II ESA and Remedial Action Plan was completed to investigate the presence of soil and groundwater contaminants at the Site. Findings of the report indicated there are several polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon (PAH) and total petroleum hydrocarbon (TPH) contaminants across the Site at concentrations that exceed the New Hampshire Soil Remediation Standards (SRS). While findings indicated groundwater contamination is not a primary concern at the Site, 2021 soil sampling indicated the Site's soils contain metal contaminants including Barium, Arsenic, and Lead, which were detected at levels that exceed SRS, with Arsenic the most widespread metal of concern. The report indicated the Site's PAH and TPH exceedances are likely attributed to improperly managed waste oil and other petroleum products associated with the former repair shop and salvage operations conducted at the Site.

Revitalization of the Target Area:

c. Reuse Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans: The repurposing of the land into a mixed-use residential development component fits perfectly into the overall economic redevelopment plans for the downtown. These plans are supported by decades of public visioning sessions, charettes, and master plans which have continuously had our community call for mixed use development and public access to the Salmon Falls River. The Site is located in the Business Zoning District, which allows a mix of residential and commercial uses, such as office or retail use. The developer is also committed to reuse of the Site with an energy efficient building, incorporating geothermal into the plans, providing ADA living units with the first-floor space for the physically disabled that incorporates a commercial workspace to be used. The Site is not located within a federally designated flood plain, but redevelopment of the Site will consider Best Management Practices for stormwater treatment at the Site.

This project aligns perfectly with the Livability Principles by improving economic conditions, investing in the health and safety of our community's residents, and investing in rural downtown New England landscapes. Cleanup of this Site is also in keeping with the City's Master Plan, specifically the goals listed in the 2024 Housing Chapter to Goal 1: Encourage development of diverse and accessible housing types, Goal 3: Concentrate housing development along existing corridors/densely populated areas for easy access to transportation, and Goal 5: Revitalize downtown as a place to live, visit, and do business. As well as the 2024 Land Use Chapter goal to, maintain balanced, sustainable development and smart growth: Encourage the redevelopment of underutilized properties/parcels and encourage infill in areas already developed.

d. Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategy: The cleanup of the vacant Site will allow for the creation of new residential/commercial opportunities that will eliminate one of the most blighted areas of the downtown and will thus act to incentivize other developers and investors to become more interested in being part of the City's revitalization of this historic downtown. The reuse of the Site will result in new, upgraded, and energy efficient

mixed-use structure(s), which will benefit the City for many years. The cleanup and the creation of these incentives will be carried out with an effort to minimize the displacement of, or adverse impacts to, any residents in this area. The proposed project will improve local climate adaptation/mitigation capacity by creating a modern and energy efficient (geothermal) development. The redevelopment of the Site will include new stormwater BMPs which will reduce stormwater discharge flowing towards the shoreline of the Salmon Falls River and an improved landscape design on site.

Strategy for Leveraging Resources:

e. Resources Needed for Site Characterization: No further characterization is needed for the Site but if unanticipated conditions arise, additional characterization could be funded through the SRPC or NHDES Brownfields programs. The City has previously utilized the Strafford Regional Planning Commission (SRPC) Brownfields Assessment Program to perform site characterization from 2020 through 2025. The City has previously also leveraged the NHDES Brownfields program to perform additional environmental assessments and provide guidance to the City prior to Site acquisition. The City is actively working to be business friendly, and these partnerships are important to the future of the City. The partnerships can be further be used for small projects such as the preparation of a viable plan for the redevelopment of the Site.

f. Resources Needed for Site Remediation: Based on the ABCA and preliminary cost estimates it is expected that the EPA funding requested in this application will be enough to complete the remediation of the Site.

g. Resources Needed for Site Reuse: The removal of the building was completed by private investment in 2021. There will be future investments by private investors for redevelopment of the property.

<u>Name of Resource</u>	<u>Is the Resource for (1.e) Assessment, (1.f) Remediation, or (1.g) Reuse Activities</u>	<u>Is the Resource Secured or Unsecured?</u>	<u>Additional Details or Information About the Resource</u>
SRPC Brownfields Assessment – Hazardous Building Materials Assessment	1.e.	Secured \$10,000	Identification of asbestos, PCBs, and lead containing building materials - Completed 5/24/21
SRPC Brownfields Assessment - Phase I	1.e.	Secured \$4,000	Assessment for potential RECs for prospective purchaser. Updated Phase I ESA for City acquisition - Completed 5/24/21 & 10/20/22
Private Investment	1.g.	Secured \$49,901	Building materials abatement and demolition of unoccupied auto service station - Completed 11/22/21
SRPC Brownfields Assessment – Phase II, RAP/ABCA	1.e.	Secured \$75,000	Evaluation of identified RECs and cleanup alternatives for verified impacts - Completed 9/16/22

Private Investment	1.g.	Will be sought - Approx. \$2,000,000	Redeveloped Site Cost Estimate
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h. Use of Existing Infrastructure: No new infrastructure is needed for the reuse of the Site. The Site is adjacent to existing sidewalks, has streetlighting, access to City water and sewer, regional electricity and natural gas. There is an anticipated Complete Streets project for drainage improvements, water and sewer upgrades, landscaping, and streetscape scheduled in the 2030 Somersworth Capital Improvement Plan that will be funded by a bond that the City will pay over a period of time from general fund revenue and water and sewer enterprise fees.

(2) COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community Need:

a. The Community’s Need for Funding: EPA Brownfields funding is critical to the ability of the City of Somersworth to proceed to the remediation and revitalization phase of this project. New Hampshire is without a state income tax, thus relying on local property taxes for much of the state revenues. Somersworth is the 3rd smallest city in NH with a population of about 12,200. The City’s budget is constrained by an annual limitation on budget increase, also known as a tax cap, as well as the requirement to maintain 52 miles of roadways, 41 miles of sewer lines and 72 miles of water lines. For a community with a population that is comprised of struggling blue-collar residents with over 11% of the population living below the poverty level compared to 7% statewide, this financial responsibility would fall to the community through tax revenue. A large portion of the population is also underemployed; many take service sector jobs in the downtown target area. The economic well-being of the City of Somersworth has suffered since the mills closed, creating a social and economic downward slide. Without this grant, the City does not have the resources to clean up the Site.

The funding will help move the economic redevelopment of the Site and City’s downtown core area forward. The cleanup of the Site facilitated by this grant, and the incorporation of that property into a refreshed City that sits adjacent to a great natural resource in the Salmon Falls River, is an important component of that revitalization opportunity. The City has a developer who is committed to redevelop the Site. The outcome of the Site’s cleanup and redevelopment will help meet the community’s housing needs while prioritizing mixed use, energy efficiency and ADA accessibility.

b. Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations: A variety of indicators point to sensitive populations in Somersworth and the challenges that confront those populations. Low educational attainment, high reliance on food stamps, the number of individuals living in poverty, and the percentage of residents with disabilities emphasize the severity of the challenges faced by the population. The number of Somersworth families that have received Food Stamp / SNAP benefits in the past 12 months is 11.8% (and 15% in Census Tract 830.01) compared to 6% statewide, and the Median Household Income (MHI) is nearly 20% lower than the state. Somersworth also has a veteran and disabled population of 10% and 14.4%, respectively, compared to 7% and 13% statewide. The number of individuals in Somersworth with a bachelor’s degree or higher is 28.7% of the population [25 years or older] while statewide, it is 41.5%. In addition to the Site, Somersworth is home to a municipal landfill Superfund site, many old mill complexes along the river, abandoned gas stations, aging auto repair shops, and an older housing stock over half being built before 1970 and 28% before 1940. Known contamination at the Site, contamination at the 1950s era former GE plant, abandoned gas stations/auto repair facilities, and likely lead contaminated soil from the older housing stock (i.e., lead paint) within the downtown each have a cumulative environmental health and safety impact on our sensitive populations and receptors. The cleanup of the Site will eliminate the risk of exposure of site contaminants to sensitive populations and will help to incentivize site reuse and overall economic growth in the downtown target area. Added growth means more property tax revenues [the primary revenue source for the City], which can help provide better municipal support systems for all residents.

c. Greater Than Normal Incidence of Disease and Adverse Health Conditions: Many existing public health impacts increase the population’s vulnerability to area environmental issues. The densely settled downtown

Somersworth experiences high levels of traffic congestion. The median housing age in the target area - the downtown area - is 1939 which indicated likely impacts from lead which can cause permanent neurological damage in children. Air quality impacts can have profound, systemic impacts on sensitive populations in particular. Compared to other states, New Hampshire experiences some of the highest rates of asthma. In Strafford County specifically, 10.6% of both adults and children have asthma compared to 7% and 8.3% nationally. Data from the CDC National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network also shows that Strafford County experiences higher rates of cancer, with particularly high rates of lung and bronchus cancers, (6.6%, age-adjusted) compared to averages across both the state (6.4%) and country (6.2%). This cleanup grant will support the mitigation of present contaminants (e.g. PAHs, TPH, and metals) and aid in reducing the health burden placed on our sensitive populations as well as address the aging housing stock in the area.

d. Economically Impoverished/Disproportionately Impacted Populations: The remediation and reuse of the Site will improve the lives of disproportionately impacted and economically impoverished residents by creating housing and economic opportunities, reducing potential health risks, and alleviating associated environmental burdens. These impacts experienced by the community are further exacerbated by the presence of large, dilapidated mills and potentially contaminated Brownfields sites. Tract 830.01 containing the target site ranks in the 84th, 96th, and 75th national percentiles for proximity to potentially hazardous and toxic sites, National Priority List sites, and Toxic Release Inventory sites (U.S. CDC ASTDR). Nearly 30% of the Somersworth population earns less than the living wage for 1 adult in Strafford County at \$53,310 (MHI in NH is \$95,628), and over 11% of residents live below the poverty line compared to 7% in NH. In 2023, the median purchase price for a home in Somersworth was \$417,888 with a monthly payment of \$3,607. That indicates 30% of the Somersworth population would need to spend approximately 70% of their monthly income on housing costs, far surpassing the housing affordability threshold where total housing costs don't exceed 30% of a household's gross income. The risk of direct exposure of children to contaminants is particularly high due to the Site's status as an attractive nuisance and the presence of contamination in soil at the ground surface. Remediation of the Site will minimize contamination risks and protect the health and wellbeing of residents, surrounding properties, and the Salmon Falls River. This initiative will directly improve the economic quality of life for disproportionately impacted and economically impoverished individuals by expanding opportunities for affordable housing, strengthening Somersworth's tax base, and reducing long-term tax and infrastructure burdens on residents and future developers.

Community Engagement:

e.-f. Project Involvement and Project Roles: The entities below have participated in the strategic planning and oversight work in our downtown for the past decade, significant interest in continuing improvements in our downtown and will remain involved through the Brownfield cleanup and beyond.

Name of Organization/Entity/Group	Entity's Mission	Point of Contact (name & email)	Specific Involvement in the Project or Assistance Provided
Strafford Regional Planning Commission	Ensure that the region is responsive to the needs of its residents through cooperation with the federal and state agencies and its member municipalities.	Jen Czysz: jczysz@straffordrpcnh.gov	Provide communication and public outreach throughout the remediation process.
Somersworth Housing Authority	To provide safe, clean, independent and affordable housing to eligible families, elderly and disabled persons without discrimination and facilitate resident connections to our community resource network.	Michelle Masse; mmasse@somersworthhousing.org	Facilitate assistance with community engagement, communication throughout the remediation process and be a direct link to underserved populations.

Somedowntown LLC	To revitalize these areas into destination for the younger, vibrant and energetic demographic groups. Specifically, to create an environment downtown where these groups will seek to live, work and play.	David Baker; [REDACTED]	Support the redevelopment and help with leveraging resources. They will provide key design decisions for the redevelopment of the property.
Somersworth Community Chamber of Commerce	To enhance the economic vitality of Somersworth, Rollinsford, and The Berwicks by providing unparalleled support to local businesses.	Bonnie McNair; ExecutiveDirector@somersworthchamber.org	Facilitate outreach and engagement with the local business community during remediation of the property and re-development phases.

g. Incorporating Community Input: Community and public input will play a vital role in this remediation/reuse project. Through collaboration with local agencies such as Somersworth Housing Authority (SHA) and the Somersworth Community Chamber of Commerce (Chamber), the community will be engaged and sought for input and feedback. Comments received via any of the communication avenues mentioned below will be discussed and considered by staff and members of the economic development team. Comments from the community will be made publicly available by being posted on the City’s website and social media pages with the comments and responses on a quarterly basis. The City will hold a community forum where childcare and refreshments will be provided at the meetings. The plans to establish and maintain this input will include the following: a public meeting on the proposed grant application with comment period; updates at monthly City Council meetings held in person and televised live for viewing on the City website; regularly updating the project entities listed above; and, updates of project information posted to the City website, Facebook page, City Newsletter, local Channel 22 and news outlets [newspaper, radio], especially for all required meetings/hearings. Should interpreters for our non-English speaking residents or communication aids (visual aids for deaf/hard of hearing, etc.) be required the City will provide those at appropriate meetings. Should any issue arise during remediation that is deemed unsafe for residents, business owners, or sensitive populations, the City will immediately halt work until the QEP, contractor(s), and NHDES can be conferred to determine a resolution that it is safe to continue. The SHA represents one of the closest residential abutters. SHA will act as a liaison to this residential population conveying information regarding the cleanup and collecting concerns from residents to bring to the City. They have agreed to distribute information and meeting notices to their residents both at the Main Street Preservation Park property and at other SHA locations around the City. The project will involve collaboration with the Chamber and other community organizations for community outreach and engagement. The community feedback received will be used to guide decision making as the project progresses.

(3) TASK DESCRIPTIONS, COST ESTIMATES, AND MEASURING PROGRESS

a. Proposed Cleanup Plan: Prior assessment/characterization activities revealed various contaminants that exceed NH SRS at the Site. The City will enter the property into the NHDES Brownfields Covenant Not-to-Sue Program (NH’s VCP), which will ensure compliance with New Hampshire’s applicable cleanup standards and result in comprehensive liability protection that is transferable to future owners. Extensive soil delineation efforts indicated that concentrations of TPH, PAHs, and metals [arsenic, barium, and lead] exceed cleanup and risk-based standards. Soil contamination is present from the ground surface to depths up to 8 ft below surface, attributed to poor automotive waste management, discharges to the ground surface, and former presence of a hydraulic lift system. To maximize the protection of public health, safety, and welfare, and to provide for the broadest reuse options of the Site, including residential/commercial uses, soil source removal has been selected through the ABCA process as the optimal cleanup strategy. This work will involve excavation and removal of approximately 3,400 tons of soil exceeding applicable remedial standards, groundwater monitoring well replacement and remedial performance sampling, and all required confirmatory sampling and reporting requirements. All disturbed areas will be restored using clean fill/cover systems, and all excavated materials will be transported to

appropriately licensed off-Site disposal facilities. The cleanup will achieve closure and comprehensive liability protection under New Hampshire's VCP Program.

Description of Task/Activities and Outputs [b. Project Implementation, c. Anticipated Project Schedule, d. Task/Activity Lead, e. Outputs]

The schedule is provided in quarters, beginning with Q1 at the start of the project permit.

<p>Task/Activity 1: Program Management</p> <p>b. Project Implementation: <u>EPA Funded:</u> The contracted QEP will prepare technical reports such as reports for updating ACRES reporting; assure compliance with Davis-Bacon wage standards, maintain all files and records associated with the overall QEP project management work. City staff will attend EPA Brownfields Conferences (Regional and National). Preparation of the Cleanup Workplan and obtaining EPA approval of that Workplan.</p> <p><u>Non-EPA Funded:</u> City staff will, conduct the process of procuring a Grant Administrator (GA) and QEP in accordance with federal and state fair and open procurement standards (2 CFR 200 and 1500) and the applicable DBE participation standards (40 CFR 33); manage and oversee the GA and QEP, submit all required quarterly and financial reports; submit all Cooperative Agreement forms; oversee and manage all steering committee meetings.</p> <p>c. Anticipated Project Schedule: Q1: GA and QEP procurement. Throughout the grant period the following items will be completed: reporting in ACRES [quarterly], attendance at [2] Regional and [1] National Brownfields Conferences, Program Management [ongoing] Steering committee meetings [quarterly at minimum, committee may meet more often as needed] Q2: Draft Cleanup Workplan and obtain EPA approval.</p> <p>d. Task/Activity Lead(s): City Project Manager (Michelle Mears) for Non-EPA funded items, GA, with QEP support will lead all EPA funded items.</p> <p>e. Outputs: All required EPA reporting in ACRES, Quarterly and Financial Reports; Grant Project Close-out report; RFP for, and procurement of, QEP; EPA Cleanup Workplan, regular Steering Committee meeting materials; 2 Planning Staff members attendance at National Brownfields Conference during the grant period; 3 Planning Staff members attendance at the Regional Brownfields Conference during the grant period; grant drawdown requests.</p>
<p>Task/Activity 2: Community Outreach and Engagement</p> <p>b. Project Implementation: <u>EPA Funded:</u> The QEP will: finalize the ABCA, and update associated presentation materials for the pre-cleanup public meeting; coordinate with the City on the preparation and review/response of the CIP, which acts as a critical outreach and engagement tool; assist with applying to the NHDES' Brownfields Covenant no to Sue Program, and provide technical updates for inclusion on the website. The GA will prepare outreach materials and updates including Website posts, Newsletter information, social media posts, prepare correspondence to specific abutters when needed.</p> <p><u>Non-EPA Funded:</u> City staff distribute the prepared outreach materials and updates including Website posts, Newsletter information, social media posts, prepare correspondence to specific abutters when needed; work with the QEP on the CRP; coordinate all work associated with the ABCA for updates at the public meeting; and perform overall coordination and management of this community-based program consistent with the Community Involvement Plan [CIP]. Receive, respond and publicly make available comments and responses from the public.</p> <p>c. Anticipated Schedule: At least three (3) public meetings to be held at key project stages: Q1 Presentation of CRP And ABCA, Q2 Cleanup Planning, Q7 Post Cleanup Reporting and Reuse. Throughout the grant period the following items will be completed: share and respond to public comments [quarterly], newsletter posting [quarterly], abutter notices [Q3 to notify start of project work and Q7 to notify redevelopment]</p> <p>d. Task/Activity Lead: The City and GA, through the Planning Office, will lead all community engagement meetings, activities, and website updates; QEP will coordinate with the City on all technical and engineering</p>

<p>related issues and present the ABCA to the public.</p>
<p>e. Outputs: CIP; updated ABCA; VCP application; 1 informational flyer, website updates, compilation of all public comments, and written responses to public comments, and incorporation of public ideas into project plans, public notices for meetings & hearings; and meeting notes.</p>
<p>Task/Activity 3: Site-Specific Cleanup Activities</p>
<p>b. Project Implementation: EPA Funded: The QEP will: prepare all documents related to cleanup; SSQAPP; plans & specifications and bid documents for procurement of contractors; updates, and cleanup documentation reports]; support the City during the bid analysis process; obtain all necessary permits, oversee all phases of the cleanup activities; ensure contractor's compliance with applicable rules, project design and specifications, and contractual obligations; perform all required confirmatory sampling/monitoring throughout the cleanup work; monitor and ensure compliance with approved ABCA and QAPP; maintain communications with EPA and NHDES staff throughout the cleanup; review cleanup contractor pay requests and report the findings of these reviews to the EPA Project Manager. The GA will monitor all phases of the cleanup work and coordinate with the QEP and City Project Manager; prepare notices road closures or other public safety measures along with updates for the website and City Council. Prepare progress reports to be used for reporting to EPA or the State;</p> <p>Non-EPA Funded: The City's Project Manager monitor all phases of the cleanup work and coordinate with the GA and QEP; act as the liaison between the contractor and any impacted City departments relative to road closures or other public safety measures; keep records of progress of the cleanup to be used for reporting to EPA or the State; distribute updates for the website and City Council.</p>
<p>c. Anticipated Schedule: These tasks will commence in Q1; Q2 any required permitting [Dig safe, road closure, etc.] and plans/specifications and bid documents; Q3 secure contractors for site cleanup and mobilization, pre-start of work meeting with QEP, GA, contractors and City Staff to address erosion control, site security and access. Site mobilization and cleanup commence in Q3 and will continue through Q5.</p>
<p>d. Task/Activity Lead: The QEP will be responsible for all technical and engineering based cleanup activities and oversight of the cleanup contractor(s); the City's Project Manager and GA will direct the QEP, manage the flow of information, project updates, and internal coordination with other City staff.</p>
<p>e. Outputs: Cleanup contractor contract, SSQAPP, cleanup construction plans and specifications, bid documents, remedial construction contract, Davis Bacon compliance documents, written technical reports, regular construction update reports, completion of cleanup activities and stabilization of the Site for reuse.</p>
<p>Task/Activity 4: Cleanup Close-out and Final Reporting</p>
<p>b. Project Implementation: EPA Funded: The QEP will: perform final inspections, communicate with State and EPA offices; prepare all close-out reports, including the Remedial Action Implementation Report (RAIR), final quarterly report, and VCP closeout report. The GA will coordinate with the QEP to incorporate all relevant information into the Final reporting due to EPA.</p> <p>Non-EPA Funded: The City will coordinate with and support all project management performed by the QEP and GA and assist with reviewing the Final reporting due to EPA.</p>
<p>c. Anticipated Schedule: Close out will start in Q5 completing final inspections and preparation of final reports and anticipated to be completed by Q9</p>
<p>d. Task/Activity Lead: The QEP will manage final inspections of the Site, prepare close out documents/final reports. GA will submit final reports and prepare final CIP report. City Project Manager will review prepared documents prior to final submissions and distribute CIP report.</p>
<p>e. Outputs: Final cleanup and VCP closure reports; all final reporting to EPA and environmental cleanup reports to NHDES; and final project ACRES reporting</p>

f. Cost Estimates: The City is seeking \$1,311,500 in cleanup funding from EPA. These estimates were generated based on the results of a Remedial Action Plan/Aassessment of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives Update dated

1/12/26 with input from environmental professionals, and related experiences of the City with its previous cleanup grant. [Note: some minor rounding and adjustments for inflation are included] ***Administrative costs are not being sought with this grant.***

Budget Categories		Project Tasks (\$)				Total
		Task 1 Program Management	Task 2 Community Outreach & Engagement	Task 3 Site-Specific Cleanup Activities	Task 4 Cleanup Closeout & Final Reporting	
Direct Costs	Personnel	\$10,000	\$3,500	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$21,500
	Fringe Benefits	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Travel	\$7,050	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$7,050
	Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Supplies	\$0	\$750	\$0	\$0	\$750
	Contractual	\$12,400	\$9,300	\$135,000	\$15,500	\$172,200
	Construction	\$0	\$0	\$1,110,000	\$0	\$1,110,000
	Other	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Direct Costs		\$29,450	\$13,550	\$1,249,000	\$19,500	\$1,311,500
Indirect Costs		\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Budget (TDC+IC)		\$29,450	\$13,550	\$1,249,000	\$19,500	\$1,311,500

Cost Breakdown	
Task/Activity 1: Program Management	
Travel: (1) National Brownfields Conference attendance: 2 City Staff [\$500/airfare, \$250/day for lodging and meals for 4 days, \$300 registration fees= \$3,600] (2) Regional Brownfields Conference attendance: 3 City Staff, [\$250/day lodging/meals, \$75 registration fees= \$3,450] Contractual: QEP project manager 80 hours @ \$155/hr. [\$12,400] for grant management assistance, ACRES updates, and quarterly reporting, etc. throughout the grant period.	
Task/Activity 2: Community Outreach and Engagement	
Personnel (GA)= (70 hrs. x \$50/hr.) for hosting public meetings, performing community outreach, etc. [\$3,500]; Supplies = \$200 for a project sign and \$550 for document preparation and information repository @ 2,750 pages at \$0.20/page; Contractual: QEP project manager: 60 hours @ \$155/hr. [\$9,300] for ABCA public meeting / CRP work / monthly technical updates and related outreach for the public throughout the grant period.	
Task/Activity 3: Site Specific Cleanup	
Personnel = 80 hrs. x \$50/hr. [\$4,000] for cleanup contractor oversight/coordination and site inspections; Contractual: QEP field staff: 1,040 hours @ \$125/hr. [\$130,000] for finalizing an ABCA, preparing bid specifications, engineering design, verification sampling, monitoring, and cleanup oversight. Confirmation and waste characterization laboratory analyses [\$15,000]. Contractor equipment mob/demo [\$20,000]; Excavation transport and disposal 3,500 tons contaminated soil @ approx. \$240/ton (haz and non-haz soils) [\$850,000]; Clean fill and site restoration with approx. 2,300 CY @ approx. \$32/CY [\$75,000]; plus 20% contingency [\$185,000].	
Task/Activity 4: Cleanup Close-out / Final Reporting	
Personnel = 80 hrs. x \$50/hr. [\$4,000] for final reporting review and QEP coordination, and VCP closure; Contractual: QEP project manager: final inspections; ensure compliance with ABCA and all State/EPA requirements; final reporting and all close-out documents; complete ACRES management; 100 hours @ \$155/hr. [\$15,500].	

g. Plan to Measure and Evaluate Environmental Progress and Results: The City will measure and report on overall project performance through the required Quarterly and Financial Reports; updates to the City website, City staff, and to the elected City Council members. The QEP will update ACRES site data as the cleanup progresses to document project milestones, reports, and progress to meeting the outputs outlined in the project

work plan. The EPA approved cleanup/workplan will act as the yardstick for all measurements. If there are delays in the project due to various outside issues, the delays will be communicated with the EPA project officer and NHDES and then these will be referenced in the Quarterly reports. Internal City project management tools will be used to ensure funds are expended appropriately in a timely and efficient manner. Longterm outcomes will be measured by the volume of impacted soil removed, the number of new affordable and accessible energy efficient housing units developed on the property, and energy savings resulting from the installation of a geothermal system. In addition, outputs will also be measured by the final reporting indicating minimized exposure to hazardous substances contamination at the Site and the outcome will be displayed through final redevelopment/reuse of the Site.

(4) PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE

Programmatic Capability

a-b: Organizational Structure/Description of Key Staff: The City has substantial experience in grant administration. Oversight is a cooperative effort, and these key staffers will work together to manage and implement the EPA grant through to a successful end. City Manager, David Moore, as chief administrative official in Somersworth, is qualified to oversee the management of this Grant. Michelle Mears, AICP Director of Planning & Community Development, will serve as the project manager for this Grant. She has directed several other federally funded grants. The financial management of all Grants administered by the City is done by Jordan Miles who serves as the Finance Director. Legal Counsel will be provided by City Attorney, Laura Spector-Morgan as well as special Environmental Legal Counsel Garth Orsmond, if warranted.

c. Acquiring Additional Resources: In the case where additional expertise is required, including the services of a QEP and licensed environmental contractor(s), the City utilizes a competitive procurement process as set forth in City of Somersworth Chapter 29 Administrative Code that complies with applicable federal regulations on fair and open competition (2 CFR 200 and 1500) and DBE participation (40 CFR 33). This process includes public solicitation of proposals, receiving proposals from multiple firms, evaluating the firms based on established criteria, and awarding a contract to the firm that best meets those established criteria.

Past Performance and Accomplishments

d. Currently Has or Previously Received an EPA Brownfields Grant:

1. Accomplishments: The City of Somersworth received a \$200,000 Cleanup Grant in 2018 for the Breton Cleaners site located at 1 Winter Street which provided funding support for the cleanup of chlorinated solvents from former drycleaning operations. The cleanup work was logged into ACRES. Outcomes of the grant from the cleanup work include a green space with public access and continued long term monitoring of the groundwater. The City continues to look forward to further enhancing this green space that is located in the downtown of the City for benefits of the residents.

2. Compliance with Grant Requirements: The City has a history of compliance with grant requirements, including workplans, schedules, and terms and conditions for the most recently awarded 2018 Cleanup Grant for the 1 Winter Street project. The City's compliance includes a demonstrated history of timely and acceptable quarterly performance, grant deliverables, and ongoing ACRES reporting as well as progress completed and reported towards achieving the expected results of the grant in a timely manner. The City's project manager submitted all the required Quarterly and Financial Reports and the Final Project Report, and maintained regular communications with the EPA Project Manager. The City complied with all meeting and public involvement requirements. The 2018 Cleanup Grant is closed and there are no remaining funds for this project and all EPA requirements were complied with including monitoring of the site.

City of Somersworth – Application for EPA Brownfields Cleanup Grant
In Response to Section III.B, Threshold Criteria for Cleanup Grants

1. **Applicant Eligibility:** a. The City of Somersworth affirms that it is a duly established and authorized general-purpose unit of local government within the State of New Hampshire and is eligible for funding. b. N/A
2. **Previously Awarded Cleanup Grants:** The City of Somersworth affirms that the proposed site has not received funding from a previously awarded EPA Brownfields Cleanup Grant.
3. **Expenditure of Existing Multipurpose Grant Funds:** The City of Somersworth affirms that it has not received any Multipurpose Grant Funds from the EPA, and that there is no open Multipurpose Grant.
4. **Site Ownership:** The City of Somersworth purchased the subject property through fee simple title on March 27, 2023.
5. **Basic Site Information:** The property is referred to as J.A. Prince and Sons Garage, and the address is 261 Main Street, Somersworth, New Hampshire, 03878
6. **Status and History of Contamination at the Site:**
 - a) The Site is contaminated with hazardous materials, with no known petroleum products.
 - b) The Site is comprised of a 0.737-acre lot, that had been developed with a 2,400 square foot commercial building with a slab-on-grade foundation and utilized as a family-owned gasoline and services station since circa 1920. The Site was purchased by the Prince family in 1947 and operation continued under family ownership until 2015 when business operation ceased and the property was foreclosed by PNF Realty, Inc., the mortgage note holder. The building on site was demolished in 2021, leaving the site vacant and unutilized. It was purchased by the City in 2023 for cleanup and redevelopment.
 - c) Recognized Environmental Conditions have been identified in historical investigations conducted between 1986 and 1993, and more recent Phase I and Phase II ESAs conducted between 2020 and 2022. Known contaminants at the Site include site-wide PAHs and metals (arsenic, barium, and lead), and more concentrated areas of lead in soil that may be considered hazardous waste.
 - d) The contamination occurred between 1968 and 1988 through general site operations, improper disposal/dumping of wastes, and use of contaminated fill materials.
7. **Brownfields Site Definition:** The subject property, with known and unknown environmental hazardous is considered a Brownfield site as defined in CERCLA section 101(39) as real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, controlled substances, petroleum, or petroleum products, or is mine-scarred land. Further, the City affirms that the property is a) not listed or proposed for listing on

the National Priorities List; b) not subject to unilateral administrative orders, court orders, administrative orders on consent, or judicial consent decrees issued to or entered into by parties under CERCLA; and c) not subject to the jurisdiction, custody, or control of the U.S. Government.

8. **Environmental Assessment Required for Cleanup Grant Applications:** A May 24, 2021, Phase I ESA, September 13, 2022, Phase II ESA/RAP/ABCA, October 7, 2022, Phase I ESA, October 31, 2024, RAP/ABCA Update, and January, 12, 2026 RAP/ABCA Update [NHDES Site No. 198808013; Project Number 39526.]
9. **Site Characterization:** Based on all available information, the City of Somersworth affirms that there is a sufficient level of site characterization from the environmental site assessments performed to date for the remediation work to begin on the Site and the Site will be enrolled in New Hampshire's VCP program, the NH Brownfields Covenant Not to Sue Program. A letter from the NHDES is attached.
10. **Enforcement or Other Actions:** The City of Somersworth affirms that there are no known ongoing or anticipated environmental enforcement of any other action related to the Site for which Brownfields Grant funding is sought.
11. **Sites Requiring a Property-Specific Determination:** Based on a review of the document titled, "Information on Sites Eligible for Brownfields Funding under CERCLA § 104(k), the City of Somersworth affirms that the Site does not need a Property-Specific Determination.
12. **Threshold Criteria Related to CERCLA / Petroleum Liability:** The City of Somersworth's response to these criteria relate to the fact that the Site is contaminated with hazardous substances.

Section 12.a: **Property Ownership Eligibility – Hazardous Substance Sites:** The City is not exempt from CERCLA liability since the acquisition did not meet the specified circumstances. The project does not qualify for funding, since the property was not acquired prior to January 11, 2002. The City does affirm, as outlined below, that the project is eligible for a Brownfields Grant since it meets the requirements for asserting an affirmative defense to CERCLA liability through one of the landowner liability protections, as outlined below.

Section 12.iii (1) **Bona Fide Prospective Purchaser Liability Protection** applies to the circumstances presented by the City of Somersworth. The City claims that it satisfies the liability requirement to qualify as a Bona Fide Prospective Purchaser [BFPP]. This claim is supported by the following responses:

12.iii (1) (a): **Information of the Property Acquisition:**

(i – v) The City acquired the property through a negotiated purchase from a private individual. The date of the deed was March 27, 2023. The City owns the property through a fee simple purchase. There are no co-owners of the property. The property was purchased from the 261 Main Street, LLC, with an ownership address of 98 Fairview Ave Portsmouth, NH 03801.

The City had no familial, contractual, corporate, or financial relationships or affiliations with the seller, or with any previous owner or operator, of the property.

12.iii (1)(b): Pre-Purchase Inquiry:

- (i) Prior to the purchase of the Property, a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment was prepared. The report was prepared by the Nobis Engineering Group and was dated October 7, 2022.
- (ii) The Phase I assessment was prepared by Nobis Engineering, complied with All Appropriate Inquiries rule, and was prepared by an Environmental Professional.
- (iii) The Phase I assessment was prepared within 180 days of the deeding of the property to the City.

12.iii (1)(c): Timing and/or Contributions Toward Hazardous Substances Disposal:

All disposal of hazardous substances at the Site occurred prior to the City's acquisition. The City Affirms that it has not, at any time, arranged for the disposal of hazardous substances at the Site or transported hazardous substances to the Site.

12.iii (1)(d): Post-Acquisition Uses:

The Site has remained vacant and unused since the City purchased the Site on March, 27, 2023. Prior to the purchase by the City, the former owner, 261 Main Street, LLC agreed to secure the Site with chain link fencing and the City has maintained the fencing and City's police department routinely surveils the Site.

12.iii (1)(e): Continuing Obligations:

- (i) Since the property was acquired by the City, it has taken measures to stop any suspected releases of any additional hazardous materials or substances. The Site has restricted access with fencing around the entire perimeter. The City of Somersworth has no intent to allow anyone to use the property, in such a manner, as to cause any additional contamination or releases of any hazardous materials. The Somersworth Police Department makes regular trips to 261 Main Street to ensure public safety, and performs regular visual inspections of the property as well.
- (ii) As noted above, the City Police regularly patrol the area and keeps an eye out for overall public safety. Additionally, the Somersworth Department of Public Works team makes regular visits to the property. Currently there is a fence around the entire property restricting access to soil contamination and signage stating no trespassing.
- (iii) One key step in preventing or limiting exposure to any previously released hazardous substance will be through the pursuit of grant funds to remediate the property.

The City of Somersworth Affirms and Confirms their commitment to the following requirements:

- (i) The City will comply with any land use restrictions and will not impede the effectiveness or integrity of any institutional controls;
- (ii) The City will assist and cooperate with those performing the cleanup and provide access to the subject property. It is the goal and intent of the City that it will be the entity initiating and performing all cleanup work and remediation of the property.
- (iii) The City will comply with all information requests and administrative subpoenas that have or may be issued in connection with the property; and,

- (iv) The City will provide all legally required notices, especially those associated with the cleanup of the property.

13. Cleanup Authority and Oversight Structure:

- a. The City will hire a Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP) and Grant Administrator (GA) through its codified procurement process to conduct and manage cleanup work in accordance with the State of New Hampshire Code of Administrative Rules [Env-Or-600] and will enroll the Site into the NH Department of Environmental Services Brownfields Covenant Not to Sue Program (the State's VCP). All work plans and cleanup documentation will be submitted to the NHDES for review and approval in order to receive a Certificate of Completion and achieve site closure.
- b. Cleanup activities are not anticipated to impact adjoining properties and access to offsite properties is not required.

14. Community Notification

- a. **Draft Analysis of Brownfield Cleanup Alternatives:** A Draft ABCA was prepared on October 31, 2024, and recently updated on January 12, 2026, and is attached.
- b. **Community Notification Ad:** A copy of the ad is attached. Also attached is the notice that was placed on the City website [Somersworthnh.gov]. The ads include all the required information related to the availability and location of the assessment document, comment period, and the time / date / location of the meeting.
- c. **Public Meeting:** Attached are all the required documents associated with the public meeting, held on Wednesday January 14, 2026, at 5 pm. The Public Comment period ended January 21, 2026, and no comments were received. The document package includes: the public hearing meeting minutes and the sign-in /participant sheet.
- d. **Submission of Community Notification Documents:** All of the required documents, as detailed in Section III.B.14.d, are attached to this outline of the Threshold Criteria document.

- 15. Contractors and Named Subrecipients:** This item is Not Applicable, as the City of Somersworth has not procured a contractor or any subrecipient.



The State of New Hampshire
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES



Robert R. Scott, Commissioner

EMAIL ONLY

January 16, 2026

Michelle Mears
Director of Planning & Community Development
City of Somersworth
1 Government Way
Somersworth, NH 03878

Subject: City of Somersworth
FY26 Proposal for EPA Brownfields Cleanup Grant
Prince's Garage, Somersworth, NH (NHDES Site #198808013)

State Letter of Acknowledgement and Support

Dear Michelle Mears:

The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) acknowledges that the City of Somersworth plans to conduct the cleanup of a brownfield site and is applying for a FY26 EPA Brownfields Cleanup Grant.

The City of Somersworth has developed an application requesting site-specific federal Brownfields Cleanup funding for the property known as Prince's Garage, located at 261 High Street in Somersworth, New Hampshire.

NHDES affirms that Prince's Garage:

- i. Is eligible to be enrolled in the NHDES voluntary response program;
- ii. Is currently enrolled in the NHDES voluntary response program;
- iii. Has a sufficient level of site characterization from the environmental site assessments performed to date for the remediation work to begin on the site.

Should your proposal be successful, NHDES will commit to providing a liaison for technical support, facilitate the process of reviewing and approving all cleanup-related submittals to NHDES, and participate in any community outreach efforts.

We look forward to working with the City of Somersworth on this important project within your community. Please contact me should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Melinda S. Bubier
Brownfields Coordinator
Hazardous Waste Remediation Bureau
Tel: [\(603\) 271-2183](tel:(603)271-2183)
Email: Melinda.S.Bubier@des.nh.gov

cc: Anna Stockman, City of Somersworth
Katy Deng, EPA New England - Region 1
Jim Byrne, EPA New England – Region 1
Jeffrey Marts, P.G., Administrator, NHDES-HWRB

Waste
Management
Division

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