

MIKIE SHERRILL
Governor

State of New Jersey

HIGHLANDS WATER PROTECTION AND PLANNING COUNCIL

100 North Road (Route 513)
Chester, New Jersey 07930-2322
(908) 879-6737
(908) 879-4205 (fax)
www.nj.gov/njhighlands



CARL J. RICHKO
Chairman

DR. DALE G. CALDWELL
Lieutenant Governor

BENJAMIN L. SPINELLI, ESQ.
Executive Director

RE: FY2026 EPA Brownfields Community-Wide Assessment Grant for States and Tribes Application

The New Jersey Highlands Water Protection and Protection Council (the Council) is pleased to submit this proposal for FY2026 Brownfields Community-Wide Assessment for States and Tribes Grant funding. Below we provide the information requested.

(1) **Applicant Identification:**

The New Jersey Highlands Water Protection and Protection Council (the Council)
100 North Road (Route 513)
Chester, NJ 07930-2701

(2) **Website URL:**

(a) Website URL for Applicant: nj.gov/highlands/

(3) **Funding Requested:**

(a) Assessment Grant Type: Community-wide Assessment Grant for States and Tribes.
(b) Federal Funds Requested: \$2,000,000

(4) **Location:**

(a) City: The priority sites are in Holland Township, Oxford Township, Town of Phillipsburg, and Ringwood Borough.
(b) Counties: The Target Areas are located in Hunterdon, Passaic, and Warren Counties. The Council's geographic boundary is the entire Highlands Region in New Jersey, which encompasses portions of seven counties (Bergen, Hunterdon, Morris, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex, and Warren).
(c) State or Reservation: New Jersey

(5) **Target Area & Priority Site Information:**

Target Area Name	Address	Priority Site Name
Town of Phillipsburg	14 N Main St., Phillipsburg, NJ 08865	Riverside Way Redevelopment Area
	1 Meyner Rd., Phillipsburg, NJ 08865	Walters Park
Oxford Township	Jonestown Rd., Oxford, NJ 07863	Oxford Agricultural Lands
Holland Township	1 County Rd. 519 Holland, NJ 08804	Warren Glen & Hughesville Paper Mill
Borough of Ringwood	8 Greenwood Lake Tpk., Ringwood, NJ 07456	Roger Redner Excavating
	8 Countryside Ln., Ringwood, NJ 07456	Skyline Service Center

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(6). Contacts:

(a) Project Director:

Name: Kelley Curran

Phone: (908) 879-6737 ext. 116 | Email: Kelley.Curran@highlands.nj.gov

Mailing Address: 100 North Road (Route 513) Chester, NJ 07930-2704

(b) Chief Executive/Highest Ranking Elected Official:

Name: Ben Spinelli, Executive Director

Phone: (908) 879-6737 ext. 101 | Email: ben.spinelli@highlands.nj.gov

Mailing Address: 100 North Road (Route 513) Chester, NJ 07930-2704

(7). Population:

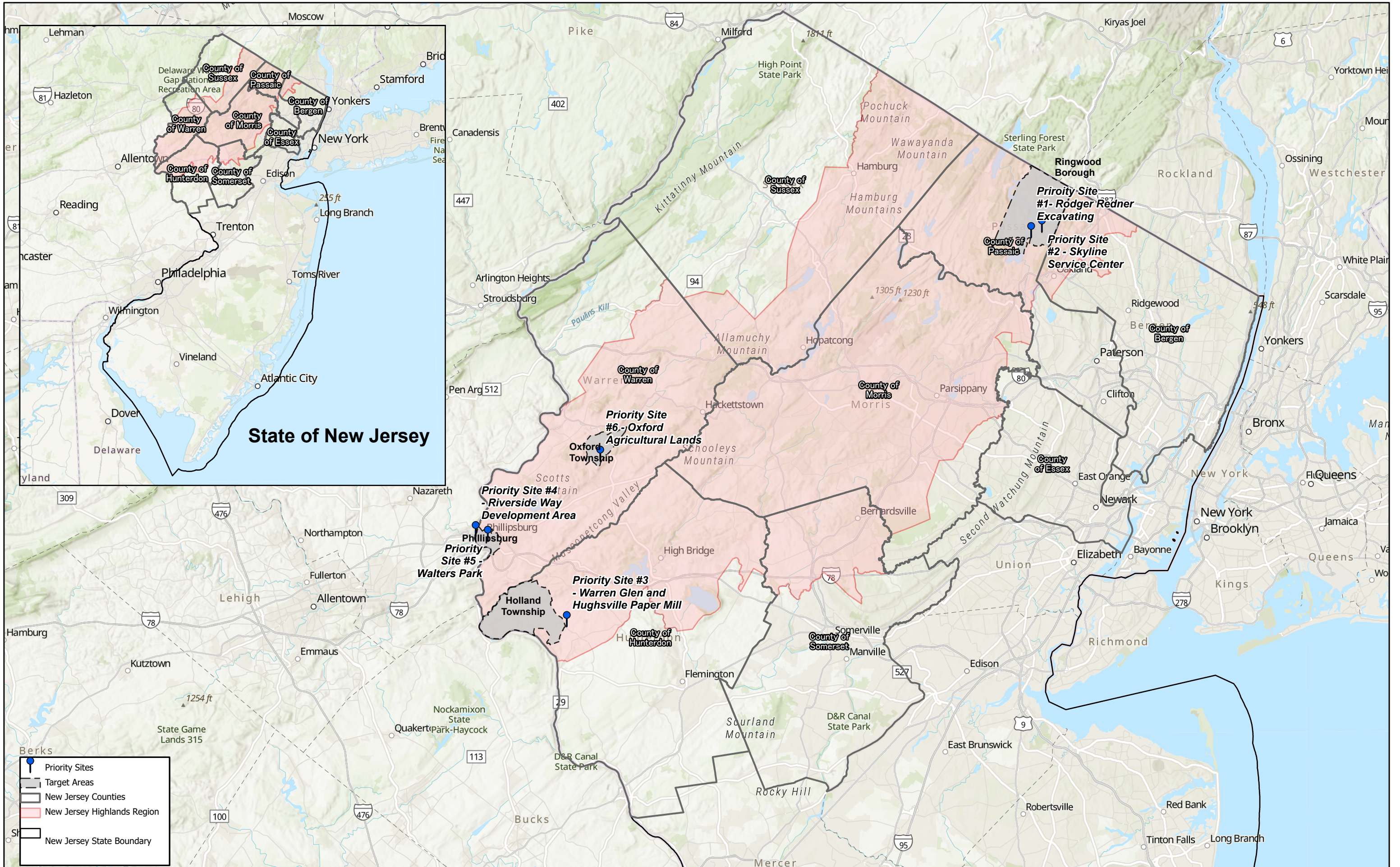
- Population of Target Areas (ACS 5-yr. 2019-2023):
 - Town of Phillipsburg: 15,251
 - Oxford Township: 1,140
 - Holland Township: 5,184
 - Ringwood Borough: 11,600
 - Highlands Region: over 2.6 million residents

8. Other Factors:

Other Factors Criteria	Page #
Community population is 15,000 or less.	Yes, pg. 6
The applicant is, or will assist, a federally recognized Indian Tribe or United States Territory.	No.
The priority site(s) is impacted by mine-scarred land.	Yes, pgs. 1,2
The priority site(s) is adjacent to a body of water (i.e., the border of the priority site(s) is contiguous or partially contiguous to the body of water, or would be contiguous or partially contiguous with a body of water but for a street, road, or other public thoroughfare separating them).	Yes, pgs. 2,3
The priority site(s) is in a federally designated flood plain.	Yes, pgs. 2,3
The reuse of the priority site(s) will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy.	No.
The reuse of the priority site(s) will incorporate energy efficiency measures.	No.
The proposed project will improve local resilience to the impacts of extreme weather events and natural disasters.	No.
At least 30% of the overall project budget will be spent on eligible reuse/area-wide planning activities, as described in Section I.B., for priority sites within the target areas.	No.
The target area(s) is located within a community in which a coal-fired power plant has recently closed (2015 or later) or is closing.	No.

9. Letter from the State or Tribal Environmental Authority: A letter of acknowledgement dated January 20, 2026 from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and signed by Ronald J. Wienckoski Jr. is attached.

10. Releasing Copies of Applications: Not applicable.





State of New Jersey

PHILIP D. MURPHY
Governor

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
CONTAMINATED SITE REMEDIATION AND REDEVELOPMENT
OFFICE OF BROWNFIELD AND COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION

SHAWN M. LATOURETTE
Commissioner

TAHESHA L. WAY
Lt. Governor

Mail Code 401-05K
P.O. Box 420
401 E. State Street
Trenton, New Jersey 08625

Lee Zeldin, Administrator
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20460

January 20, 2026

**RE: 5-Target Highlands and Protective Areas, NJ
USEPA FY2026 Brownfields Community Wide Assessment Grant
for State and Tribes Application**

Dear Administrator, Zeldin:

This letter of support acknowledges the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's endorsement of the New Jersey Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council (Highlands Council) application to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) for a Brownfields Community Wide Assessment Grant for State and Tribes. If approved, this grant will provide up to \$2,000,000.

As per the FY26 GUIDELINES FOR BROWNFIELD ASSESSMENT GRANTS FOR STATE AND TRIBES, if awarded, the grant funds will be used to conduct site prioritization, community engagement, site assessments, and planning for future remediation and redevelopment of brownfield sites in the target areas of the Borough of Ringwood, Town of Phillipsburg, Township of Oxford, Township of Holland, and Borough of Bloomsbury within the Highlands Region. The region encompasses portions of seven counties, 88 municipalities, 1,323 square miles and is home to over 2.6 million people. Moreover, over 70% of New Jersey residents receive their drinking water from the Highlands. The Highlands Council has developed an aggressive redevelopment strategy to identify, assess and reuse underutilized, vacant, abandoned brownfield properties.

Please accept this letter of support for the NJ Highlands Council Community Wide Assessment Grant for State and Tribes application. Please do not hesitate to contact Anthony Findley of my staff if further assistance is required at (732) 239-8709 (Cell) or by email at anthony.findley@dep.nj.gov.

Sincerely,

Ronald J. Wienckoski Jr., Site Remediation Technical Specialist
Office of Brownfield & Community Revitalization

Cc;/

Anthony Findley, NJ DEP
Allan Miller, Montrose Environment
Benjamin Spinelli, Executive Director Highlands Council

1. PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION AND PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION:

Target Area and Brownfields: 1.a. Overview of Brownfield Challenges and Description of Target Areas:

The New Jersey Highlands Water Protection and Protection Council (the Council) is a state agency established by the New Jersey Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act of 2004. The Highlands Region (the Region) in Northwestern New Jersey is the geographic boundary for the proposed grant activities, and encompasses portions of seven counties, 88 municipalities, 1,323 square miles and is home to over 2.6 million people. The Region, long defined by its rural heritage, abundant water resources, and agriculture, is also severely impacted by contamination created by prevailing legacy industries such as mining, manufacturing, and transportation. In recent decades, the Region has experienced persistent and increasing challenges in economic competitiveness, job creation, business retention, and housing development. To support revitalization of brownfields throughout the Region's most impacted areas, the Council's EPA Community-Wide Assessment for States grant will prioritize the distressed communities referred to as Target Areas (TAs) that will greatly benefit from brownfield revitalization efforts that tie into long-range and broadscale economic development efforts.

Despite the significant number of brownfield sites in the Highlands Region, the most recent US EPA Brownfield Grants awarded in the region was a FY2005 \$200,000 assessment grant to Passaic County. This gap has contributed to unrealized redevelopment opportunities. The Council is prepared to leverage EPA resources with strong intergovernmental partnerships, active community stakeholders, and a clear strategy for prioritizing sites. Given the Highlands Region's vital role as a primary source of clean drinking water for New Jersey's residents and maintaining the area's agricultural importance and quality of life, the Council is uniquely positioned to address the collective brownfield redevelopment and community revitalization goals, funding gaps, and fuel public-private partnerships in the Region.

Watersheds within the Highlands Region provide drinking water to more than 300 municipalities and 70% of New Jersey residents, including 80% of people who live in a designated Overburdened Community^a. The region's extensive industrial history has profoundly influenced land use patterns and continues to be the root cause of many of the brownfield conditions present today. Historically, zinc and iron mining were prominent in Morris, Sussex, and Warren Counties, while agriculture and quarries shaped the economies of Hunterdon and Somerset Counties. The legacy of these industries has resulted in a substantial concentration of brownfield sites throughout the Region, ranging from mills and mines to farms and gas stations. While they vary from large and complex to small commercial parcels, the presence of brownfields constrains future development and offers opportunities for targeted remediation and sustainable redevelopment that can support current and projected community needs.

Although all of New Jersey is located within a Metropolitan Statistical Area; the Target Areas (TAs) for this grant represent a range of population densities within the Highlands Region, including a developed urban community and predominantly rural areas. The **Town of Phillipsburg** in Warren County has a population density of 4,778.8 persons per square mile, which is substantially higher than both the New Jersey state average (1,263 persons per square mile) and the national average (93.8 persons per square mile). Communities with higher densities like Phillipsburg have brownfield challenges that include industrial and commercial contamination, aging infrastructure, limited open space, and proximity of contaminated sites to residences, schools, and transit corridors. In contrast, **Oxford Township** in Warren County, **Holland Township** in Hunterdon County, and **Ringwood Borough** in Passaic County have population densities of 188.1, 220.6, and 458.6 persons per square mile, respectively, and are predominantly rural. Brownfields in these communities include agricultural, extractive, and smaller industrial sites, along with illicit dumping. Contamination in rural settings poses heightened threats to water sources, farmlands, and sensitive habitats. Under the unifying themes of protecting water sources, reducing sources of contamination, and advancing reuse strategies that drive economic growth and create housing, the Council will carry out strategies that balance the varying priorities and compositions of these communities that all lack the resources to address priority brownfields on their own. The TAs include:

- **Town of Phillipsburg** is situated at the confluence of the Lehigh and Delaware Rivers and is the most populous municipality in Warren County. Areas of Phillipsburg alongside the Delaware River are within

^a New Jersey Dept. of Environmental Protection uses 5-yr ACS (2018-23) data to identify census block groups with 35%+ low-income households, 40%+ minority, or 40%+ households have limited English proficiency as an Overburdened Community.

a **federally designated floodplain**, and the town includes a **federally designated Opportunity Zone**. Historically a transportation hub and shipping center, Phillipsburg served as the western terminus of the Morris Canal from the 1830s to 1920s, connecting the town to the New York City area. Phillipsburg was served by five major railways, and industrial activities included an iron and brass foundry, a cement plant, manufacturers of drills and chemicals, and a silk mill. With many of these manufacturers now closed, brownfields include former industrial sites along prime riverfront property, railyards, dumpsites, and underutilized areas. NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) lists 24 active sites with confirmed contamination in Phillipsburg.

- **Oxford Township** in rural Warren County has the lowest population density among the TAs. The town has a long-standing agricultural and iron ore mining heritage, and is home to the first hot blast furnace in the U.S. With mining operations long since ceased and a declining population, the Township has limited capacity to assess and remediate a contaminated agricultural site adjacent to a nature preserve. There are seven active brownfield sites with confirmed contamination in Oxford (NJDEP).
- **Holland Township** in northwestern Hunterdon County is a rural, agriculture-focused community that dates back to the 18th century. Also in a **federally designated floodplain**, Holland’s dispersed farmsteads and woodlands are bordered by the Musconetcong River. Legacy contamination includes a former paper mill and agricultural lands in proximity to riparian areas and wellhead protection areas. NJDEP reports five active brownfield sites with confirmed contamination in this small, rural township.
- **Ringwood Borough** located in the Ramapo Mountains of Passaic County, was originally inhabited by the Lenape people before European settlers discovered iron in the early 18th century. Iron mining and related industrial activities dominated the local economy through the 1930s, leaving mine shafts, pits, and historic landfills that still exist. Portions of Ringwood are in a **federally designated floodplain**, including a former excavating site, increasing the risk that residual contamination could be mobilized during flood events. There are 10 active sites with confirmed contamination (NJDEP). Given the regional importance of these watersheds and drinking water resources, addressing legacy contamination is critical to protecting public health and safeguarding water quality.

1.b. Description of Priority Brownfield Sites: With a history of over 200 years of mining, manufacturing, and transportation, the Region has hundreds of brownfield sites. These sites include: 1) former manufacturing facilities, machine shops, and mills, 2) contaminated agricultural land, 3), landfills and unsanctioned dump sites, 4) former retail businesses including gas stations, auto repair shops, and car washes, 5) mines and quarries, and 6) rail yards, freight depots, and trucking terminals. The Council selected the priority sites listed in the table below based upon the likelihood of redevelopment occurring during the project period, and the projected economic and environmental benefits.

Priority Site Name & Address	Size	Site Description & Environmental Concerns	Contaminants of Concern (COCs)	Funding Needs
Town of Phillipsburg				
Riverside Way Redevelopment Area* Block 901, Lot 2 Block 902, Lot 7 & 8 14 N Main St. Phillipsburg	0.2 acres	Past uses include a foundry, machine shop, coal yard, and agricultural stock yard. Currently a parking lot, the site is in 500-year and 100-year flood zones . There are suspected impacts beneath the asphalt and an overlay historic fill of unknown origin.	PCBs, Petroleum, PAHs, Metals, Solvent Materials	Phase I/II ESA, ABCA/CAP
Walters Park – DPW/ Pool Complex Block 1901 Lots 1, 2, & 101 Meyner Road Phillipsburg	5 acres	The priority site is within Walters Park and adjacent to the municipal pool. Used by the Dept. of Public Works, this site is occupied by maintenance vehicles including construction equipment and trucks and is used as a material storage yard and disposal area. A railyard borders the site on two sides. Paved surface has multiple cracks which have likely absorbed petroleum and chemicals from machinery.	Petroleum, Waste Oils, PAHs, Metals	Phase I/II ESA, & ABCA/CAP, Reuse Plan
Oxford Township				
Oxford Agricultural Lands Block 1.01 Lot 3 Jonestown Rd. Oxford Township	158.04 acres	Former iron mines in operation between 1883 – 1905, with a single shaft remaining. The site also has a history of agricultural use and contains farmland soils. Environmental concerns pertain to legacy mining (and associated acid mine drainage) and	Metals, Petroleum, Pesticides, Acids	Phase I/II ESA, ABCA/CAP

Priority Site Name & Address	Size	Site Description & Environmental Concerns	Contaminants of Concern (COCs)	Funding Needs
		agricultural uses and include presence of metals, petroleum, and pesticides.		
Holland Township				
Warren Glen & Hughesville Paper Mill* 1 County Road 519 Holland Township	139.65	Former paper mill adjacent to the Musconetcong River is in 500-year and 100-year flood zones . The site has visible signs of contamination from abandoned and deteriorating buildings. Sensitive and environmentally important site to remediate due to proximity to river, nature preserve, riparian areas, wildlife corridor, and wellhead protection areas.	VOCs, Dioxins & Furans, Chlorinated Solvents, Metals, RBMs	Phase I/II ESA, & ABCA/CAP, RBM Survey, Reuse Plan
Ringwood Borough				
Roger Redner Excavating* 8 Greenwood Lake Turnpike Ringwood Borough	3.42 acres	Excavating company and former auto repair center. The site has been an industrial site since the 1960s and is near the Wanaque Reservoir. The eastern portion of the site is in a 100-year flood zone . Environmental concerns include petroleum hydrocarbons, heavy metals, and contaminated fill which may persist in soils and groundwater.	Metals, Petroleum, Waste Oils, Hydraulic Fluids, Solvents, Battery Acids, PAHs	Phase I/II ESA, ABCA/CAP, Reuse Plan
Skyline Service Center 8 Countryside Lane / 236 Country Road 692 Ringwood Borough	2.1 acres	Originally established as a car wash and automotive service station in 1985, the site was most recently an automotive dealership and gas station. Site is adjacent to preserved land and environmental concerns include petroleum and hydrocarbons.	Metals, Petroleum, Waste Oils, Hydraulic Fluids, Solvents, Battery Acids, PAHs,	Phase I/II ESA, ABCA/CAP, Reuse Plan

***Adjacent to a body of water.** Definitions: ABCA = Analysis of Brownfield Cleanup Alternatives; ACM = Asbestos Containing Material; CAP = Corrective Action Plan; COC = Contaminants of Concern; ESA = Environmental Site Assessment; LBP = Lead-based Paint; PAH = Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons; PCB = Polychlorinated Biphenyls; RBM = Regulated Building Material

1.c. Identifying Additional Sites: The Council has reviewed brownfields sites within the Highlands Region and have identified multiple properties within and outside of the identified TAs that can benefit from assessment and redevelopment activities. Using tools and resources such as the NJDEP’s Brownfields Inventory GIS, Site Remediation Profile, and Known Contaminated Sites List, the Council will develop a Region wide brownfield inventory/database to identify priority sites. The Council will use GIS mapping tools to assist with integrating known contaminated sites, brownfield development areas, community resources, and revitalization opportunities with priority sites. Through a variety of channels including QR codes on websites, flyers, and emails, the broader community will be invited to participate in nominating sites and developing the inventory. The criteria for selecting additional sites are anticipated to include site eligibility; location within the Highlands Region; alignment of needs with available resources; feasibility of cleanup/redevelopment; anticipated magnitude of economic and/or non-economic benefits; and ability to address the needs of sensitive populations.

1. d. Reuse Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans: Reuse plans and strategies for the priority sites align with the goals and objectives established in the following plans:

- **NJ Highlands Economic Sustainability Plan (ESP), March 2022** focuses on generating economic opportunities, including tying revitalization to industries which exhibit the greatest potential for growth and increasing jobs in the region, such as specialized manufacturing, tourism, recreation, and food protection. The ESP envisions the Region becoming, “a center of natural resource projection, innovation, and technology.” Key ESP strategic actions that will be supported by the proposed grant activities include: 1) Strengthen the role of the Council as a leader in regional planning by working with municipalities to identify, update, and promote brownfield redevelopment; 2) Focus redevelopment in designated centers and aging real estate assets where infrastructure already exists; 3) Use internal GIS capabilities to target redevelopment areas, infill opportunities, and growth development opportunities; 4) increase awareness and improve relationships with public officials/municipal liaisons for close coordination and strong working partnerships; and 5) contribute to regional and state economic development initiatives.
- **Phillipsburg TA:** priority sites in Phillipsburg directly align with goals and objectives stated in the **2024 Phillipsburg Master Plan Re-examination Report**, specifically 1) identify and preserve environmental features; 2) create a Riverfront Development Plan with business, housing, and access plans for trails; 3) create a continuous trail system; and 4) remediate, and reuse brownfield sites. The **Riverfront**

Redevelopment Plan links the two Phillipsburg priority sites through a trail system; and the riverfront priority site is a catalyst for the redevelopment of this historic district. Riverside Way’s mixed-use redevelopment and public access amenities advance **Warren County’s Master Plan** by concentrating activity in an already developed corridor and reinvestment in Walters Park aligns with the Plan by strengthening a key recreation hub with the County’s trail system.

- **Oxford TA: Oxford’s Master Plan** and land use policies prioritize the protection of agricultural land, rural character, and environmentally constrained land. **Warren County’s Master Plan** emphasizes farmland preservation and conservation of lands affected by legacy extraction. These plans support preservation as a proactive land use strategy.
- **Holland TA:** Reuse of the paper mill site advances **Hunterdon County’s Growth Management Plan, 2024** objectives by prioritizing reinvestment in a previously disturbed industrial property and supporting open space and historic preservation goals. Holland’s **Farmland Preservation Plan Update, 2018** favors redevelopment and reuse of disturbed sites and maintaining community character.
- **Ringwood TA:** Priority sites in Ringwood are consistent with the **Passaic County Subdivision and Site Plan, Corridor Enhancement Program**, which promotes economic development along the County’s commercial and recreational corridors by fostering safer, more attractive environments for redevelopment and tourism. The priority sites also directly support the objectives of **Ringwood’s Master Plan Reexamination Report, 2022**, which emphasizes the redesign and reinvestment of existing commercial sites to better concentrate businesses and services. Additionally, the Roger Redner Excavating priority site and its planned reuse for affordable housing supports a major Master Plan objective by addressing local housing needs and facilitating the reuse of an industrial property.

The selected sites align with these plans and are put forth because they meet the following criteria: 1) represent projects that protect critical water resources; 2) support areas with economic distress that need revitalization, 3) include existing infrastructure, and 4) are featured in recent planning initiatives. These sites have the potential to attract private investment and spur revitalization. The following table summarizes the reuse strategy and connection to land use/revitalization plans for each priority site.

Target Area	Address	Site Name	Site-Specific Reuse Plans & Strategies
Phillipsburg	14 N Main St.	Riverside Way Redevelopment Area	Reuse plans include developing well-designed mixed-use commercial and residential properties. Site has potential for attracting new business, residents, and visitors. It will have a safe pedestrian and vehicle circulation system, open space, access to the river, and connect to Warren County’s trail system. Reuse strategies include public-private partnerships and leveraging local tax dollars.
	1 Meyner Rd.	Walters Park	Reuse plans include expanding the existing park and connecting it to Warren County’s trail system. Reuse strategies include site cleanup and coordination of county-municipal partnership to support trail expansion and connection to the broader Riverside Way Redevelopment Area.
Oxford	Jonestown Rd.	Oxford Agricultural Lands	Reuse plans include connecting lands to the adjacent preserved land, West Oxford Mountain Natural Resource Area. Reuse strategies include site remediation and leveraging Warren County’s Open Space Trust Fund, Municipal & Charitable Conservancy Grants for historic property preservation, and Farmland Preservation Program to protect farmland from conversion to non-agricultural uses.
Holland	1 County Rd. 519	Warren Glen & Hughesville Paper Mill	Reuse plans include converting this previously disturbed industrial property into open space and a heritage site. Reuse strategies include site remediation and leveraging Hunterdon County’s Open Space Acquisition Assistance Grants and Historic Preservation Grants.
Ringwood	8 Greenwood Lake Tpk.	Roger Redner Excavating	Reuse plans include developing affordable housing in this rural commercial corridor area. Reuse strategies include site remediation and coordination of zoning to support mixed use; developer agreement to complete mixed-use development.
	8 Countryside Ln.	Skyline Service Center	Reuse plans include redesign of existing commercial site to concentrate businesses and services to improve access and economic development. Reuse strategies include leveraging the site’s proximity to preserved open space and recreational opportunities to attract investment and increase occupancy.

1.e. Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategy: The Council’s primary focus is protecting water resources and resiliency of these areas, increasing affordable housing, economic growth, and quality of life through preservation of open space, farmlands, heritage sites, and recreational opportunities. Redevelopment of the priority sites will provide the following benefits:

- **Spur Economic Growth in an Opportunity Zone (OZ)**: The project will prioritize community investment in the federally designated OZ in Phillipsburg to promote economic growth. To attract public and private investments, the site must be clean and shovel ready to attract developers and investors. Conducting environmental assessment and cleanup planning is the first step to addressing confirmed or perceived contamination concerns and positioning sites for redevelopment.
- **Develop Affordable Housing**: Affordable housing projects in Ringwood and Phillipsburg will help address the Region's wide-spread housing shortage and reduce cost burdening for low-income residents. EPA funding will be used to pay for environmental assessment and cleanup planning activities required to move these and other housing projects forward.
- **Preserve Open Space and Farmland**: Preserving open space and farmland within the region will safeguard valuable water sources and promote recreation, tourism, and agriculture. Balancing development of housing via infill development is vital for the preservation of open space, farmland, and water sources. Additionally, the proposed reuse projects support goals to minimize sprawl as the areas are already connected via existing thoroughfares and will not require new roads.
- **Support Adaptive Reuse**: Adaptive reuse in the TAs will highlight historic preservation, infill development, reduce traffic congestion, create recreational opportunities, and direct revitalization away from undeveloped areas within the Region that are vital to protecting resources from flood related erosion, infrastructure overload, and agricultural loss. Reuse strategies for flood-impacted areas will incorporate mitigation measures.
- **Create Jobs and Stabilize the Commercial Employment Base**: The Riverside Way Redevelopment Area and Skyline Service Center priority sites will help to create employment opportunities within their respective communities. Attracting new employers to these sites has the potential to create 50^b permanent jobs and restore critical tax revenues for communities that have limited sources of income. New employment opportunities will help reduce poverty and cost burdening for residents.

Strategy for Leveraging Resources: 1.f. Resources Needed for Site Reuse: The Council has a track record of leveraging funding from local, state, private, and federal sources. Assessment and reuse planning completed under this grant will be integrated into regional planning efforts completed to date by counties and municipalities within the Highlands Region and will position project partners to leverage EPA funding with other grants, loans, incentives, and resources, including:

- **Counties**: Hunterdon County offers **Open Space Acquisition Assistance Grants** and **Historic Preservation Grants** to municipalities; Warren County offers the **Open Space Trust Fund, Municipal & Charitable Conservancy Grants** for historic property preservation, and **Farmland Preservation Program** to protect farmland from conversion to non-agricultural uses within the county; **Passaic County's Trust Fund** offers competitive grants to municipalities and nonprofits to support open space acquisition, historic preservation projects, farmland preservation.
- **State**: **Main Street New Jersey** provides districts and small businesses with funding to support the revitalization of downtown areas. **NJDEP Hazardous Discharge Site Remediation Fund**, which includes a municipal grant program and a low-interest loan program for environmental assessments and remedial actions prior to development. **NJ Infrastructure Bank** provides funding for brownfield remediation and redevelopment if the end use will improve water quality. **NJ Economic Development Authority** has a Brownfields Redevelopment Incentive Program which provides a tax credit to incentivize environmental remediation, abatement, and demolition to support brownfield redevelopment. **NJ Farmland Preservation Program** provides matching funds and technical assistance for county and municipal farmland preservation efforts. **NJ Open Space Funding** supports land conservation acquisitions and preservation through set-aside designated funding. **NJ Redevelopment Authority** (NJRA) acts as a financing agency that provides technical assistance and financial guidance. Through the NJ Redevelopment Investment Fund (RIF) Program, the NJRA offers direct loans, real estate equity, loan guarantees and other forms of credit enhancements.
- **Federal**: **EPA Cleanup Grants and Revolving Loan Fund** provides funding for cleanup projects.
- **Opportunity Zone (OZ)**: Developers in the Phillipsburg OZ can access a federal capital gains tax incentive which encourages private investors to support investments via Qualified OZ Funds.

^b Job estimates based on the USEIA's most recent employment estimates for industrial, commercial, retail, restaurant, and mixed-use spaces.

1.g. Use of Existing Infrastructure: The proposed projects support infill development activities that promote adaptive reuse of underutilized and vacant properties in commercial areas of the TAs. All identified priority sites have access to existing roads and utilities, which minimizes additional investments in infrastructure and avoids undesirable impacts on natural spaces. Whenever feasible, the project will focus on sustainable reuse of existing buildings and infrastructure. Where demolition is necessary, the Council and its partners will establish salvage goals to divert waste and maximize recycling.

2. COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

2.a. The Community's Need for Funding: The TAs were selected because they have a mix of low and high density but are all municipalities that lack the resources and capacity to address their catalyst brownfield sites without assistance. With a small population base, tax revenues to fund environmental projects are very limited. Philipsburg is an Urban Aid community and relies on funding from the State of NJ to balance their budget. Demographic data provided in the table below demonstrates that residents of the TAs are cost-burdened households, with higher rates of unemployment and lower median household income and home values. All the TAs have very low housing vacancy, relatively higher average household size, and above average percentages of homes built before Regulated Building Materials (RBM) which underscores the need for safe, affordable housing throughout the Region.

Data Type	Holland Township (Hunterdon County)	Oxford Township (Warren County)	Phillipsburg (Warren County)	Ringwood Borough (Passaic County)	Hunterdon County	Passaic County	Warren County	New Jersey	United States
Total Population	5,184	1,140	15,251	11,600	129,448	518,289	110,238	9,267,014	332,387,540
Population/Square Mile	220.6	188.1	4,778.8	458.6	301.4	2,817.6	307.5	1,263.0	93.8
Unemployment	6.0%	8.4%	7.7%	5.6%	4.6%	7.8%	5.6%	6.2%	5.2%
Median Household Income	\$127,644	\$77,188	\$67,782	\$142,529	\$139,453	\$87,137	\$99,596	\$101,050	\$78,538
Households Receiving SNAP	2.9%	5.3%	24.1%	1.0%	2.9%	18.2%	7.9%	8.8%	11.8%
Children/Youth Population < 18 years	25.8%	17.7%	19.1%	18.8%	19.2%	23.7%	19.4%	21.9%	22.2%
Children/Youth Poverty Rate < 18 years	1.1%	4.1%	25.9%	0.4%	3.2%	20.8%	10.0%	13.3%	16.3%
Senior Population (65+)	19.3%	18.3%	15.2%	18.7%	20.1%	15.5%	19.0%	16.8%	16.8%
Persons with a Disability	9.6%	13.9%	13.4%	8.7%	9.0%	9.1%	11.7%	10.6%	13.0%
Average household size	2.74	2.64	2.29	2.77	2.52	2.86	2.41	2.61	2.54
Poverty Rates	3.5%	8.0%	17.4%	2.4%	3.8%	13.7%	8.1%	9.8%	12.4%
Cost Burdened Households	48.1%	79.8%	46.7%	60.0%	45.3%	55.0%	47.6%	50.8%	50.4%
Median Home Value	\$386,000	\$175,000	\$180,700	\$434,800	\$498,800	\$439,400	\$323,100	\$427,600	\$303,400
Housing built before 1980s	61.4%	79.7%	87.8%	82.0%	51.6%	78.3%	60.5%	63.7%	50.5%
Housing built before 1950s	19.4%	53.0%	51.9%	17.4%	20.9%	39.3%	28.0%	24.2%	16.4%
Vacant Housing Units	0.7%	3.9%	5.7%	2.1%	3.1%	4.0%	3.7%	7.9%	10.4%

2019-2023 5-yr American Community Survey. Bold indicates results that exceed or are less than NJ and the U.S., respectively.

2.b. Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations: Sensitive populations in the TAs include persons who experience unemployment, low-income residents, children and youth, seniors, persons with disabilities, and people with lower educational attainment. Health and welfare issues in the TAs include:

Housing: Communities within the TAs have an aging housing stock and a pronounced housing shortage. Vacancy rates are well below state and national averages, while average household sizes exceed regional norms, clear indicators of overcrowding and limited housing availability. A large share of the Region's housing was constructed prior to the 1950s, when lead based paint and other hazardous and unregulated building materials were commonly used. As these structures deteriorate, they pose elevated risks to residents, particularly children, pregnant women, and older adults. Exposure to lead is associated with serious and irreversible health impacts, including neurological disorders.

Youth Population: Children are vulnerable to environmental contamination due to higher exposure risks and ongoing physiological development. They eat, drink and breathe more per unit of body weight than adults, resulting in proportionately greater doses of contaminants from polluted air, contaminated soil, or dust. Exposures that may pose minimal risks to adults can cause lasting harm to children, especially to

brain and neurological development. As shown in Table 1, Holland and Passaic County have youth populations that exceed NJ and U.S. averages.

Education: While NJ’s statewide average shows that 42.9% of adults hold a bachelor’s degree or higher, educational attainment in Oxford (18.6%) and Phillipsburg (22.1%), falls well below this benchmark. Lower levels of educational attainment are strongly associated with unemployment, increased poverty, and reduced access to healthcare and preventative services which contribute to higher rates of disability and chronic disease. Educational disparities often continue across generations, placing youth at heightened risk for poor academic outcomes, long-term health inequities, and economic instability.

Senior Population: Older adults experience higher rates of chronic disease, which amplifies the impacts of environmental exposures. They also have prolonged exposure to environmental hazards due to their age and the likelihood of spending more time indoors in aging housing stock which may contain legacy contaminants. Holland, Oxford, and Ringwood all have high concentrations of senior populations.

People with Disabilities: As shown in Table 1, the TAs have higher concentrations of people with disabilities. People with disabilities often have pre-existing health conditions that make exposure to environmental contaminants more severe. They may also experience reduced access to information, and in extreme weather events, evacuation may be physically or mentally challenging.

To support sensitive populations, EPA Grant funding will be used to revitalize priority brownfields that can improve the job market, attract new businesses, increase access to quality housing, and generate tax-based revenue that can be used to fund critical services and education. As noted in the reuse plans for Section 1.e., the Riverside Way redevelopment plans will generate new jobs for Phillipsburg which will help alleviate unemployment.

2.c. Greater Than Normal Incidence of Disease and Adverse Health Conditions: Health data from CDC Places (US Census 2022) is available for Oxford and Phillipsburg TAs, Warren County, and the U.S.

Oxford has higher incidences of cancer and Phillipsburg has more cases of asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and heart disease. These health conditions may be exacerbated by historical exposure to hazardous substances, petroleum contamination, degraded environmental conditions associated with brownfield sites, and persistently damp environments which are breeding grounds for mold and bacteria. Mold issues and housing stock that is old, poorly ventilated, and likely to have LBP, ACM, and PCBs are factors that contribute to poor indoor air quality and elevated levels of respiratory illness.

CDC Places	Oxford	Phillipsburg	Warren County	U.S.
Asthma	9.6	10.3	9.3	9.8
Cancer	9.5	7.8	9.4	7.9
COPD	6.0	7.6	5.8	6.2
Heart Disease	5.9	6.6	6.1	6.4
CDC PLACES Comparison Report, US Census 2022, bold/shaded indicates higher than US averages.				

According to the NJ Dept. of Health’s State Health Assessment, **Phillipsburg and Oxford rank in the 84th and 90th highest percentile among NJ communities for lack of healthcare coverage.** Access to healthcare promotes better health outcomes, including preventing and managing disease, and reducing unnecessary disability and premature death. The Council will use this grant to help identify and plan for abatement of mold and RBMs in aging structures, leading to better respiratory health outcomes. Assessment and cleanup planning for industrial sites will help improve the health of people who live in the TA communities by quantifying environmental conditions and preparing sites with contaminated soil and groundwater for cleanup.

2.d Economically Impoverished/Disproportionately Impacted Populations: Among the TAs, Phillipsburg is economically impoverished, with a disproportionate low-income population that has greater incidences of serious health issues. Due to legacy industries such as mining, manufacturing, and transportation, Phillipsburg ranks in the 95th percentile in NJ for number of contaminated sites per square mile (NJDEP Environmental Indicators) and Oxford is in the 77th percentile. High density of contaminated sites signals a cumulative environmental burden, which is strongly associated with adverse health outcomes. Further, these residents are more likely to experience socioeconomic stressors described above, such as unemployment, reduced access to healthcare and education, and limited and/or substandard housing options. Equally concerning, Phillipsburg and Oxford have extremely high radon levels, both are in the 95th percentile (NJDEP). Increased radon migration is a result of disturbed soils from historic mining, excavation, and industrial activities. Older and poorly maintained buildings near these sites are susceptible to vapor intrusion pathways. Radon is one of the most serious environmental health

threats. Exposure to radon causes ~21,000 deaths annually in the US and long-term exposure to radon is the leading cause of lung cancer among nonsmokers^c. Radon exposure compounds health issues for sensitive populations, particularly children and seniors with compromised respiratory and cardiovascular health. Low-income households face financial barriers to testing or mitigating radon, especially for people who live in rental or aging housing stock. Addressing radon along with contaminated sites will support overall community revitalization efforts and contribute to safer housing and better health outcomes.

Community Engagement:

2.e. Project Involvement: **2.f. Project Roles:** The Council has a long history of facilitating effective community engagement to encourage a regional approach to protecting the area’s resources. The Council will lead the project with meaningful involvement from partners, stakeholders, and residents. In preparation for this project, the Council secured commitments from all seven counties in the Highlands Region, all municipal partners associated with the TAs, as well as other stakeholders who will assist with grant activities including identification of sites; coordination with local stakeholders impacted by the targeted sites; providing community meeting space; and obtaining access to sites. The Council will establish a Brownfields Advisory Committee (BAC) consisting of the partners listed in the table below. Additional partners will be recruited throughout the project.

Partner Name (Type)	Contact Name, Title	Mission and Specific Role and/or Pledged Assistance
	Email Address	
Bergen County (County)	Peter Kortright, Dep. Exec. Dir.	Mission: Provide essential services to residents. Role: Support planning, assessment, cleanup, and restoration efforts.
	pkortright@bergencountynj.gov	
Borough of Ringwood (Borough)	Kristen Holton, Dir. of Econ. Dev.	Mission: Support Ringwood’s businesses and encourage economic dev. Role: Support planning, assessment, cleanup, and restoration efforts.
	kholtan@ringwoodnj.net	
Holland Township (Township)	Dan Bush, Mayor	Mission: Provide essential services to residents. Role: Coordinating assessment, cleanup, and restoration efforts.
	d.bush@hollandtownship.org	
Hunterdon County (County)	Alan Hunt, Dir. of Planning	Mission: Preservation of farmland, open space, and cultural heritage. Role: Key collaborator; assist with site prioritization & outreach.
	alan.hunt@co.hunterdon.nj.us	
Morris Co. Office of Planning & Preservation (County)	Virginia Michelin, Asst. Planning Dir.	Mission: Preservation of farmland, open space, and historic resources. Role: Coordinating assessment, cleanup, and restoration efforts.
	vmichelin@co.morris.nj.us	
Musconetcong Watershed Assoc. (Non-profit)	Eileen Murphy, Executive Director	Mission: Protect and improve the quality of Musconetcong Watershed. Role: Assist with site prioritization and stakeholder engagement.
	eileen@musconetcong.org	
Oxford Township (Township)	Gerald Norton, Mayor	Mission: Provide essential services to residents. Role: Support planning, assessment, cleanup, and restoration efforts.
	gnorton@oxfordtwpnj.org	
Passaic Co. Dept. of Planning & Econ. Dev. (County)	Andras Holzmann, Planning Director	Mission: Facilitate development that supports quality of life. Role: Key collaborator; assist with site prioritization & outreach.
	andrash@passaiccountynj.org	
Somerset County Planning Div. (County)	Samantha DeAndrea, Director	Mission: Provide technical guidance and assistance for development. Role: Support planning, assessment, cleanup, and restoration efforts.
	planningbd@co.somerset.nj.us	
Sussex Co. Div. of Planning & Econ. Dev. (County)	Autumn Sylvester, Water Resources	Mission: Provide technical assistance for land use and development. Role: Support planning, assessment, cleanup, and restoration efforts.
	sylvester@sussex.nj.us	
Town of Phillipsburg (Town)	Craig Brontons, Business Admin.	Mission: Provide essential services to residents. Role: Key collaborator; assist with site prioritization & outreach.
	busadmin@phillipsburgnj.org	
Warren County Planning Dept. (County)	Ryan Conklin, Dir. of Planning	Mission: Promote balanced development to enhance quality of life. Role: Key collaborator; assist with site prioritization & outreach.
	rconklin@co.warren.nj.us	
Brownfield Coalition of the Northeast (BCONE) (Nonprofit)	Anne Lazo, Executive Director	Mission: Promote best practices for brownfield remediation, resilience, and development. Role: Provide technical assistance and resources.
	alazo@brownfieldcoalitionne.org	
Technical Assistance for Brownfield Communities program at NJIT (Nonprofit)	Cailyn Bruno, Director	Mission: Provide tools and resources that are necessary to reclaim and redevelop brownfield sites. Role: Provide technical assistance and resources.
	Cailyn.l.bruno@njit.edu	

2.g. Incorporating Community Input: The Council relies on collaboration, particularly with its county and municipal partners, to further its mission and understands that effective engagement is key for project success. The Council will work closely with its partners and members of the BAC to engage stakeholders and solicit input on site selection, assessment, and reuse planning. Responses will be documented and incorporated into project decisions. The Council’s Community Involvement Plan includes:

- **Project Webpage:** The Council will create and host a brownfield webpage, with fact sheets, links to resources, updates on activities, and opportunities to provide feedback and get involved.

^c epa.gov/radon

- **Brownfield Advisory Committee (BAC):** The Council will host quarterly BAC meetings for the first year followed by semi-annual meetings in subsequent years to solicit input on site selection/cleanup/reusing planning. BAC members have committed to assisting with outreach and engagement.
- **Emails & Newsletters:** Emails and newsletters will be sent periodically with information on the grant.
- **Outreach:** Outreach and community activities will continue throughout the project period.
- **Virtual Meeting Options:** The Council offers alternatives to in person meetings. Virtual meetings and online forums will be used to encourage participation and engagement.

This menu of engagement methods will allow stakeholders to provide meaningful input into all phases of work. Sustained outreach will ensure the project concludes with strong community backing.

3. TASK DESCRIPTIONS, COST ESTIMATES & MEASURING PROGRESS:

Description of Tasks (a. Project Implementation; b. Anticipated Schedule; c. Task/Activity Lead; and d. Outputs): The Council is requesting \$2,000,000 of Community-Wide Assessment (CWA) funding to inventory, assess, and plan the cleanup/reuse of priority brownfields in four TAs. The scope of work is organized into **four tasks**, with responses to Sections 3.a.-3.d. provided under each task.

Task 1: Grant Management, Reporting & Other Activities
a. Implementation (Activities): The Council will manage all aspects of the project, including coordination with EPA, project partners and the Qualified Environmental Professional (“QEP” or “Consultant”). Reporting will include: 1) Quarterly Progress Reports (QPRs); 2) Property Profiles/ACRES Updates; 3) Annual Federal Financial Reports (FFRs); and 4) A Final Performance Report documenting outputs, outcomes & accomplishments. The Council will meet regularly with the EPA Project Officer to keep the project moving forward.
b. Schedule: Grant Management and Reporting will be ongoing throughout the project period.
c. Lead: The Council will lead; the Consultant will assist with management and reporting activities.
d. Outputs: Twenty QPRs; five (5) FFR Reports; ACRES Entries/Updates; one (1) Final Performance Report.
Task 2: Community Engagement, Brownfield Inventory & Site Selection
a. Implementation (Activities): Community Engagement: The Council engaged with its partners to solicit input regarding the target areas, priority sites, and reuse plans, and will continue to do so throughout the project. Partners have committed to participate in engagement activities and provide other contributions. Detailed engagement plans are described in Section 2. and include: 1) Preparing a Community Involvement Plan (CIP); 2) Preparing fact sheets and establishing a webpage to solicit input/communicate progress; 3) Forming a BAC and hosting up to 12 Meetings; and 4) Other activities. Inventory/Site Selection: Grant funds will be used to develop a brownfield inventory of the TAs. As part of the comprehensive inventory process, the Council will engage with the BAC and other stakeholders to gather information on priority sites and potential reuse plans/strategies. The QEP will conduct file reviews and site reconnaissance activities to evaluate existing conditions. The BAC will inform the prioritization process and ensure the project focuses on activities that provide the greatest outcomes. Site selection will include preparing site eligibility determination (ED) requests.
b. Schedule: Community Engagement: The CIP, fact sheets, and webpage will be developed during the first quarter (1Q). A BAC kick-off meeting will be held during 1Q and convened quarterly for the first year, and semi-annually thereafter. The Council will conduct outreach on an ongoing basis, including providing regular project updates utilizing established networks and communication channels. Brownfield Inventory/Site Selection: Activities will begin in 1Q and continue over the course of the entire project. As several priority sites are known, initial site ED requests will be completed during 1Q. Identification of additional sites will occur as part of planned site reconnaissance and stakeholder engagement activities during the first year. This process will continue until funds are fully committed.
c. Leads: The Council will lead this task, with support from the BAC, consultant, and key stakeholders.
d. Outputs: CIP; fact sheets; press releases/articles; webpage content; 12 BAC Meetings (including presentations, minutes, etc.); Brownfield Inventory Report and corresponding data files (GIS; tables; figures); and preparation/submittal of 20+ site ED request forms.

Task 3: Phase I/II ESAs, Regulated Building Materials (RBM) Surveys & Cleanup Plans	
a. <u>Implementation (Activities):</u>	Includes completion of up to 18 Phase I ESAs (in accordance with AAI Final Rule/ASTM E1527-21 Standard) and up to 16 Phase II ESAs at priority sites. Some sites contain old structures; therefore, budget is included for up to 10 RBM Surveys. Budget is included for up to 10 Analysis of Brownfield Cleanup Alternatives (ABCAs) and/or Cleanup Action Plans (CAPs). This task also includes preparing: 1) Access Agreements; 2) an EPA-approved Master Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) prior to Phase II ESAs and/or RBM Surveys; 3) EPA-approved Sampling and Analysis Plans (SAPs) and site-specific Health & Safety Plans (HASPs) prior to Phase II ESAs and/or RBM Surveys; 4) National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) §106 and Endangered Species Act §7(a)(2) consultations, if required.
b. <u>Schedule:</u>	Year 1: QAPP, Six (6) Phase I ESAs, four (4) Phase II ESAs, four (4) RBM Surveys. Year 2: four (4) Phase I ESAs, four (4) Phase II ESAs, two (2) RBM Surveys, three (3) ABCAs/CAPs. Year 3: four (4) Phase I ESAs, four (4) Phase II ESAs, two (2) RBM Surveys, four (4) ABCAs/CAPs. Year 4: four (4) Phase I ESAs, four (4) Phase II ESAs, two (2) RBM Surveys, three (3) ABCAs/CAPs.
c. <u>Lead:</u>	The QEP will lead under the direction of the Council, who will also assist with access/reviews.
d. <u>Outputs:</u>	1 Master QAPP; 18 Phase I ESAs; 16 Phase II ESAs; 10 RBM Surveys; 10 ABCAs/CAPs.
Task 4: Site-Specific Reuse Plans & Area-Wide Plans (AWPs)	
a. <u>Implementation (Activities):</u>	Includes preparing two (2) Brownfield AWP Studies, including an existing conditions assessment, market/feasibility study, evaluation of infrastructure needs/capital improvement plan, preparing conceptual plans/renderings, and preparing an overall reuse strategy. The consultant will also complete up to eight (8) Site-Specific Reuse Plans for priority brownfields.
b. <u>Schedule:</u>	Year 1: AWP Starts, two (2) Site Reuse Plans. Year 2: AWP Ongoing, two (2) Site Reuse Plans. Year 3: AWP Completed, two (2) Site Reuse Plans. Year 4: two (2) Site Reuse Plans.
c. <u>Lead:</u>	The Consultant will lead the technical elements of this task under the direction of the Council.
d. <u>Outputs:</u>	2 Brownfield AWP Studies and 8 Site-Specific Reuse Plans.

3.e. Cost Estimates: A summary of the budget for grant funded activities by task and budget category is provided in the table. No equipment or travel expenses are requested.

Line #	Budget Categories	Task 1	Task 2	Task 3	Task 4	Totals
		Grant Management, Reporting	Engagement, Inventory & Site Selection	Phase I/II ESAs, & Cleanup Plans	Reuse Plans & Area-Wide Planning (AWP)	
1	Personnel	\$28,000	\$14,000	\$14,000	\$14,000	\$70,000
2	Fringe Benefits	\$12,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$30,000
3	Travel	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
4	Supplies	\$0	\$1,250	\$0	\$0	\$1,250
5	Contractual	\$36,000	\$54,000	\$1,441,500	\$266,000	\$1,797,500
6	Other	\$000	\$1,250	\$0	\$0	\$1,250
7	Total Direct Costs	\$76,000	\$76,500	\$1,461,500	\$286,000	\$1,900,000
8	Indirect Costs	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$100,000
9	Total Budget	\$101,200	\$101,500	\$1,486,500	\$311,000	\$2,000,000

72.0% (= \$1,441,500) of the total budget is directly allocated to site-specific activities [Phase I/II ESAs and cleanup planning (Task 3)].

Below is a breakdown of the estimated costs for project activities by task and budget category.

Task 1 – Grant Management, Reporting & Other Activities: Total Budget = \$101,200
Includes <u>Council Personnel + Fringe Costs</u> of \$40,000 (400 hrs x \$100/hr ¹ ; \$28,000 personnel/\$12,000 fringe) to complete grant management, reporting and other activities. <u>Contractual Costs</u> of \$36,000 are budgeted (200 hrs x \$180/hr ²) for the consultant to assist with reporting and other activities. <u>Indirect Costs</u> of \$25,000³ are budgeted.
Task 2 – Community Engagement, Brownfield Inventory & Site Selection: Total Budget = \$101,500
Includes <u>Council Personnel + Fringe Costs</u> of \$20,000 (200 hrs x \$100/hr ¹ ; \$14,000 personnel/\$6,000 fringe) to coordinate community outreach/engagement, inventory and site selection. <u>Contractual Costs</u> of \$54,000 (300 hrs x \$180/hr ²) to assist with engagement and inventory activities. <u>Supplies Costs</u> of

\$1,250 (meeting materials) and Other Costs of **\$1,250** (e.g. -printing/advertising) are also budgeted. Indirect Costs of **\$25,000³** are budgeted.

Task 3 – Phase I/II ESAs, RBM Surveys & Cleanup Plans: Total Budget = \$1,486,500

Includes Council Personnel + Fringe Costs of **\$20,000** (200 hrs x \$100/hr¹; \$14,000 personnel/\$6,000 fringe) to facilitate assessment/cleanup planning activities and to review and submit deliverables. Contractual Costs of **\$1,441,500** include costs for the QEP to complete eligibility determination requests for sites prioritized by the Council (\$7,500); one Master QAPP (\$7,000); 18 Phase I ESAs (\$6,500 each = \$117,000); 16 Phase II ESAs (\$70,000 each = \$1,120,000); 10 RBM Surveys (\$9,000 each = \$90,000); and 10 ABCAs/CAPs (\$10,000 each = \$100,000). Costs for Health & Safety Plans (HASPs), Sampling & Analysis Plans (SAPs) and/or other consultations are included in unit costs for other outputs. Indirect Costs of **\$25,000³** are budgeted.

Task 4 – Site-Specific Reuse Plans & Area-Wide Plans (AWPs): Total Budget = \$311,000

Includes Council Personnel + Fringe Costs of **\$20,000** (200 hrs x \$100/hr¹; \$14,000 personnel/\$6,000 fringe) to participate in planning activities and review and submit deliverables. Contractual Costs of **\$266,000** are included. Consultant to complete two (2) Brownfields AWP Studies (\$85,000/AWP Study = \$170,000; includes an existing conditions evaluation, market study, infrastructure strategy, and conceptual plans). Consultant will also complete up to eight (8) Site-Specific Reuse Plans (\$12,000 each = \$96,000) at priority brownfields. Indirect Costs of **\$25,000³** are budgeted.

¹Council Personnel (average \$70/hr) + Fringe Benefits (average \$30/hour) = \$100/hour. ²Average QEP cost = \$180/hour. ³ Council is requesting 5% of the total budget (= \$100,000) for indirect costs for administrative expenses, split evenly between Tasks 1-4 (= \$25,000/task).

3.f. Plan to Measure and Evaluate Environmental Progress and Results: The status of **outputs** and **short- and long-term outcomes** will be tracked and reported to EPA via Quarterly Progress Reports (QPRs), ACRES, and the Final Performance Report. QPRs will list goals accomplished and plans for the next quarter. Significant deviations will be discussed with the EPA Project Officer. Between QPRs, **outputs** will be tracked in a database including: (1) # of brownfields identified/prioritized/approved; (2) # of Phase I/II ESAs/RBM Surveys; (3) # of Cleanup/Reuse Plans; and (4) # of stakeholder meetings. Sites assessed will be linked to parcel data, to allow for efficient tracking and analysis of project outcomes using GIS. The following **short- and long-term outcomes** will be tracked: (1) # of sites cleaned up; (2) # of sites and acres of land redeveloped; (3) # of units/types of quality affordable housing developed; (4) \$ of private investment/leveraged funding; (5) # of jobs created or retained; and (6) increased property value/tax revenue. The Council will further refine the project schedule/milestones as part of the Cooperative Agreement (CA) Work Plan to ensure activities are completed within the project period. The Council will update ACRES beyond the end date to capture outcomes as brownfields are redeveloped.

4. PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE:

Programmatic Capability: 4.a. Organizational Capacity: 4.b. Organizational Structure: The Council is well qualified to lead an EPA brownfield grant and has the organizational capacity, experience, and strong partnerships to be successful. The Council has proven itself to be an effective and efficient steward of public funds and will use the same organizational structure for the brownfield grant that has been employed in past and current grants/initiatives, ensuring that roles and responsibilities are clearly defined from the start. The project partners and assigned staff will leverage their extensive knowledge of resource management, public administration, and contract management to effectively achieve the stated outputs, results, and outcomes. The Council maintains established financial management systems, procurement policies, and internal controls consistent with 2 CFR Part 200. The Project Director (PD) will set priorities, assign tasks, and oversee the Project Manager (PM) who will manage day-to-day program activities, reporting, and engagement. Administrative support, including purchasing, contracting, and financial tracking, will be provided by the Council's Manager of Grants Administration. GIS coordination will be led by the Council's GIS Manager. The organizational structure will incorporate contracted technical support where internal capacity is not yet established. Consultants will support inventorying, prioritizing sites, assessing sites, and cleanup planning, and reuse of priority brownfields. All project roles, reporting, deliverable responsibilities, and communication lines will be documented and consistent with existing internal policies and compliance with the administrative and programmatic terms and conditions.

4.c. Description of Key Staff: The Council has internal resources to support this project, and key staff have the expertise and experience to successfully manage an EPA Community-Wide Assessment Grant. **Kelley Curran, Science Manager** will be the Project Director. She will approve and sign all reports and requests for fund disbursements, secure assistance from Council staff, and oversee program administration work completed by the QEP. Ms. Curran has 20+ years of experience in the water resource management field and expertise in site-specific assessment, analysis, and remediation.

Elizabeth Ward, Principal Planner and Land Preservation Coordinator will be the Project Manager: responsible for daily grant management, overseeing QEP selection, managing the QEP, reviewing reports, and communicating with EPA and local communities. She will oversee community outreach, inventory preparation and updates, coordinating meetings, preparing materials, and supporting project logistics. Her experience includes planning and design, transit access, and municipal master plans.

Jocelyn van den Akker, GIS Manager will provide GIS services for community outreach, inventory preparation and updates, coordinating meetings, preparing materials, and supporting project logistics. Her experience include environmental consulting, report writing, GIS support, and field activities.

Herbert August, Manager of Grants Administration will manage the grant financial administration, disbursements and accounting; and review all financial reports and funding disbursement requests for the project. He has over 25 years of experience in civil planning, fiscal reporting, and project management.

4.d. Acquiring Additional Resources: The Council has in-house resources to assist with planning, business development, community engagement, GIS, and administrative support for the project as needed. The Council routinely contracts with consultants and has established procurement procedures for ensuring a fair bidding process. It also has a procurement policy governing purchases of goods and services that sets forth the competitive selection processes. The procurement policy requires compliance with any federal funding source requirements regarding purchasing and program components. The Council will comply with EPA's solicitation clauses in the performance of this grant. The qualifications-based procurement process used by the Council to select a contractor conforms with 2 CFR 200.317 - 200.326. The selected consultant will support project management and compliance reporting activities and complete all assessment and cleanup studies.

Past Performance and Accomplishments:

4.f. Has Not Received an EPA Brownfields Grant but Has Received Other Federal or Non-Federal Financial Assistance Agreements: (1) Purpose & Accomplishments: The Council has three recent grant awards that demonstrate capability for managing federal assistance agreements:

1. FY24 Highlands Conservation Act (HCA): The Council received \$1,383,625 in HCA grants administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to conserve land and protect water resources in the Highlands Region of New Jersey. The project is underway and includes the conservation of 190 acres across four properties. Conservation will result in enhanced habitat connectivity and public access.

2. FY23 HCA: The Council received \$187,800 from USFWS to conserve two parcels of land totaling 37 acres. The Council is working in partnership with local government and nonprofit partners to permanently protect the two parcels. The Morris Canal which is listed on the State and National Register of Historic Places, goes through the site and there are significant features that will be protected by the project.

3. FY19 HCA: The Council was awarded \$2,564,650 in grant funding. The Council has completed a property preservation project of 35 acres of land resulting in the permanent protection and ongoing stewardship of prime farmland. The Council continues to work with state, county, local, and nonprofit partners to preserve additional high conservation value land with the grant.

(2) Compliance with Grant Requirements: The Council has successfully complied with the terms and conditions of the grant agreements identified above. Due to excellent project management, no corrective measures have been required. The Council is committed to completing compliance reporting on time and in accordance with agency requirements. All activities have been completed on time and on budget. The expected results were achieved or are on track to be achieved. Through careful administration and oversight, the Council has received multiple HCA awards from USFWS.

Threshold Criteria for Community-wide Assessment Grants for States and Tribes

(1) APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY:

a) State Agency.

b) The New Jersey Highlands Water Protection and Protection Council (the Council) is a state agency established by the New Jersey Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act of 2004 and is an eligible entity for a Community-Wide Assessment Grant for States and Tribes.

(2) COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:

The Council relies on collaboration, particularly with its county and municipal partners, to further its mission and understands that effective engagement is key for project success. The Council will work closely with its partners and members of the BAC to engage stakeholders and solicit input on site selection, assessment, and reuse planning. Responses will be documented and incorporated into project decisions. The Council's Community Involvement Plan includes:

- **Project Webpage:** The Council will create and host a brownfield webpage, with fact sheets, links to resources, updates on activities, and opportunities to provide feedback and get involved.
- **Brownfield Advisory Committee (BAC):** The Council will host quarterly BAC meetings for the first year followed by semi-annual meetings in subsequent years to solicit input on site selection/cleanup/reusing planning. BAC members have committed to assisting with outreach and engagement.
- **Emails & Newsletters:** Emails and newsletters will be sent periodically with information on the grant.
- **Outreach:** Outreach and community activities will continue throughout the project period.
- **Virtual Meeting Options:** The Council offers alternatives to in person meetings. Virtual meetings and online forums will be used to encourage participation and engagement.

This menu of engagement methods will allow stakeholders to provide meaningful input into all phases of work. Sustained outreach will ensure the project concludes with strong community backing.

(3) EXPENDITURE OF EXISTING GRANT FUNDS:

Not applicable. The New Jersey Highlands Water Protection and Protection Council does not have an open EPA Brownfield Community-Wide Assessment Grant for States and Tribes.

(4) TARGET AREAS AND PRIORITY SITES

The Council has identified four target areas, with at least one priority site in each target area. The six priority sites are listed in the table below.

Target Area Name	Address	Priority Site Name
Town of Phillipsburg	14 N Main St., Phillipsburg, NJ 08865	Riverside Way Redevelopment Area
	1 Meyner Rd., Phillipsburg, NJ 08865	Walters Park
Oxford Township	Jonestown Rd., Oxford, NJ 07863	Oxford Agricultural Lands
Holland Township	1 County Rd. 519 Holland, NJ 08804	Warren Glen & Hughesville Paper Mill
Borough of Ringwood	8 Greenwood Lake Tpk., Ringwood, NJ 07456	Roger Redner Excavating
	8 Countryside Ln., Ringwood, NJ 07456	Skyline Service Center

Threshold Criteria for Community-wide Assessment Grants for States and Tribes

(5) CONTRACTORS AND NAMED SUBRECIPIENTS:

(a) Contractors: N/A – A contractor has not been selected that will be compensated from EPA funds made available under this RFA.

(b) Subrecipients: N/A – No subrecipients are named in this proposal.