

## Application Information Sheet

### 1. Applicant Identification

Steel Rivers Council of Governments

1705 Maple Street, Homestead, PA 15120

### 2. Website URL

<https://steelriverscog.org/>

### 3. Funding Requested

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

### 4. Location

- a. Cities: Homestead, Braddock, Rankin, Glassport, Clairton, Turtle Creek, Chalfant
- b. Counties: Allegheny
- c. State: Pennsylvania

### 5. Target Area and Priority Site/Property Information (see attached map)

- a. Target Areas: Homestead, Braddock, Rankin, Glassport, Clairton, Turtle Creek, Chalfant, Duquesne
- b. Priority Sites:
  - “Atom Smasher”, Service Rd No 1, Pittsburgh, PA 15221
  - Duquesne City Center “Ore Pit,” South Linden Street, Duquesne, PA 15110
  - Whemco Steel Castings 601 W 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Homestead, PA 15120
  - Carrie Furnaces, 801 Carrie Furnace Blvd, Rankin, PA 15218

### 6. Contacts

- a. Project Director  
Name: An Lewis  
Phone: 412-462-7600 Ext. 101  
Email: [al@steelriverscog.org](mailto:al@steelriverscog.org)  
Mailing Address: 1705 Maple Street, Homestead, PA 15120
- b. Chief Executive/Highest Ranking Elected Official  
Name: An Lewis  
Phone: 412-462-7600 Ext. 101  
Email: [al@steelriverscog.org](mailto:al@steelriverscog.org)  
Mailing Address: 1705 Maple Street, Homestead, PA 15120

### 7. Populations of Target Areas/Priority Sites:

Homestead: 2,852  
Braddock: 1,669  
Rankin: 1,910  
Glassport: 4,298  
Clairton: 5,945

Turtle Creek: 4,925  
 Chalfant: 718  
 Duquesne: 5,074

**8. Other Factors**

<b>Other Factors</b>	<b>Page #</b>
Community population is 15,000 or less.	1, 4, 6
The applicant is, or will assist, a federally-recognized Indian tribe or United States territory.	N/A
The priority brownfield site(s) is impacted by mine-scarred land.	N/A
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).	1, 2, 3, 4
The priority site(s) is in a federally designated flood plain.	2
The reuse of the priority site(s) will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy.	3,4
The reuse of the priority site(s) will incorporate energy efficiency measures.	3, 8
The proposed project will improve local resilience to the impacts of extreme weather events and natural disasters	4
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 site(s) within the target area(s).	9
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.	6

**9. Letter from the State or Tribal Environmental Authority**

See attached

**10. Releasing Copies of Applications**

Not applicable, the application does not include confidential, privileged, or sensitive information

# Steel Rivers Council of Governments

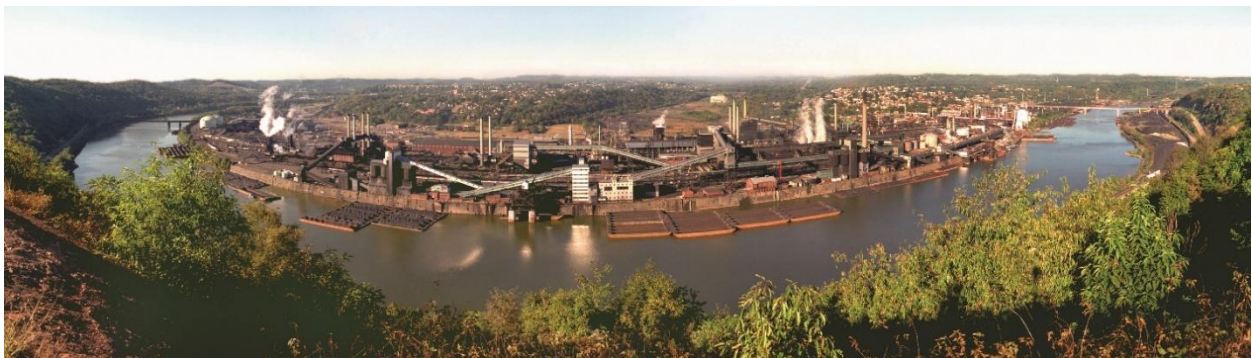
FY2027 U.S. EPA Community Wide Brownfield Assessment Grant



★ Target Community

⊗ Target Site

↓ Point of Interest





January 16, 2026

Ms. An Lewis  
Executive Director  
Steel Rivers Council of Governments  
1705 Maple Street  
Suite 100  
Homestead, PA 15120

**RE: U.S. EPA Brownfields Grant Proposal | State Letter of Acknowledgement  
Steel Rivers Council of Governments  
Mon Valley, PA (Allegheny County)**

Dear Ms. Lewis:

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection is pleased to support your efforts to redevelop brownfield properties in your regional area. Returning environmentally challenged and underutilized land and buildings to productive use improves our environment, safeguards our residents, and helps boost Pennsylvania's economy.

The DEP supports Steel Rivers Council of Governments' application for a US EPA Brownfields FY26 Community-Wide Assessment Grant in the amount of \$500,000 to conduct a regional brownfield site inventory, conduct Phase I and Phase II environmental site assessments, conduct preliminary remedial and reuse planning, and conduct community engagement activities meant to boost manufacturing, data center supply-chain production, energy, economic revitalization, and quality of life projects in Mon Valley communities.

The COG's efforts to examine the redevelopment potential of aggregated, underutilized sites to create renewed neighborhoods and business districts in Pennsylvania is a worthwhile endeavor.

Both Central Office and Regional Office Staff in the Land Recycling Program look forward to supporting Steel Rivers Council of Governments and U.S. EPA Region 3 on this project.

If you have any questions, please contact John Gross by email at [johngross@pa.gov](mailto:johngross@pa.gov) or by telephone at 717-783-7502.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael S. Maddigan".

Michael Maddigan  
Land Recycling Program Manager  
Bureau Environmental Cleanup and Brownfields

## **I. PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION & PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION**

### **A. Target Area & Brownfields**

**i. Overview of Brownfield Challenges & Description of Target Area** – Once a bustling region of steel production that helped drive the Industrial Revolution, the Mon Valley is a diverse group of 30+ towns and municipalities that border the Monongahela River in western PA. Bordered by Point State Park in Downtown Pittsburgh and Point Marion near the West Virginia border, the region includes Allegheny, Fayette, Greene, Washington, and Westmoreland counties. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, large manufacturing plants drove growth and prosperity in Mon Valley communities like Clairton, McKeesport, Braddock, Rankin, Homestead, and others. The severe recession of the 1980’s brought with it the closing of the vast majority of the Mon Valley’s manufacturing facilities. This left 15,903 vacant and blighted structures and major stretches of brownfields.

Since the collapse of the steel industry, the region has seen drastic population and economic decline that has been catastrophic for the wellbeing of communities. Since 1990, the region’s population has decreased at a rate of about 1% per year. From 2010 to 2020 alone, the region saw a 3.5% decrease in population. This decline in population has been [exacerbated by high distress and high rates of poverty](#): the median household income (MHI) in Mon Valley is \$57,000 (over \$25,000 less than the national MHI) and 34% of residents live below 200% of the poverty line. Steel Rivers Council of Governments (SRCOG) seeks \$500,000 in EPA Brownfield Community-Wide Assessment funding to conduct a regional brownfield site inventory, Phase I and Phase II environmental site assessments, preliminary remedial and reuse planning, and community engagement activities to boost manufacturing opportunities, data center supply-chain production, energy projects, economic revitalization, public health, and quality of life in Mon Valley communities.

With EPA support, SRCOG and partners will conduct a community-wide assessment to identify, prioritize, and categorize brownfield sites across the project area and begin to develop reuse strategies for communities. Historical knowledge of legacy brownfield sites has largely been lost with population decline, leaving a vast array of over 15,000 unassessed brownfields in the Mon Valley that threaten the health and quality of life of nearby residents. Many of these long-vacant brownfields are located near homes, schools, and commercial corridors and may pose ongoing risks related to contaminated soil, groundwater, and deteriorating structures for communities. To address these challenges, SRCOG will work with targeted communities in the Mon Valley, specifically within Allegheny County. Targeted communities include Homestead (pop. 2,852), Braddock (pop. 1,669), Rankin (pop. 1,910), Glassport (pop. 4,298), Clairton (pop. 5,945), Turtle Creek (pop. 4,925), and Chalfant (pop. 718). Assessment activities will help catalog brownfield sites and prepare the region for the unprecedented upcoming investment in the manufacturing, data center supply production, and energy growth sectors.

**ii. Description of Priority Brownfield Sites** – As the Mon Valley developed, commercial, residential, and industrial sites settled along the Monongahela River. As the region prepares for a catalytic investment of resources across several critical growth sectors, SRCOG and lead partner Turtle Creek Valley Council of Governments (TCVCOG) are taking the necessary steps to inventory, assesses, and prepare dozens of brownfields sites for remediation. Priority sites include:

- “Atom Smasher”, Service Rd No 1, Pittsburgh, PA 15221: Located outside of Pittsburgh in Forest Hills, the Atom Smasher is an iconic piece of America’s nuclear history. Completed in 1937, the 65-foot-tall Atom Smasher was a 5 million volt electrostatic nuclear accelerator and was the first particle accelerator built for industrial uses. Some of the research done at this site may have even been used by those building the first nuclear weapons at the Manhattan Project in the 1940s. Potential contaminants on this site include lead, mercury, and PCBs. This site has been prioritized due to its high visibility, unique historic significance, proximity to residential neighborhoods, and potential for public and heritage-based redevelopment. SRCOG is considering Phase I and reuse planning, including the potential for affordable housing on this site.
- Duquesne City Center “Ore Pit,” South Linden Street, Duquesne, PA 15110: The Duquesne Ore Pit is the last vacant site of the former Duquesne Steel Works mill, which was been redeveloped into a 250-acre industrial park. Duquesne Steel Works abandoned production in 1984 and closed its doors in 1987 when Allegheny County took control of the former steel mill site. The Ore Pit site was once used by the Allegheny Recovery Corporation to process and transfer spent foundry material to facilitate the reclamation of the ore storage

basin. Potential contaminants include heavy metals, petroleum, PAHs, and PFCs, amongst others. This site is prioritized because it is the sole remaining undeveloped parcel of the former U.S. Steel Duquesne Works, where completion of environmental assessment and Act 2 remediation is necessary to advance near-term redevelopment consistent with zoning and ongoing industrial park revitalization.

- Whemco Steel Castings, 601 W 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Homestead, PA 15120: As of January 2026, the Whemco Steel Castings Plant is actively being idled after losing over 50 jobs in the past several years. This 26 acre site is located in an extremely low-income area and is being considered for Phase I, Phase II, and remedial planning. Potential contaminants include PAHs, lead, and petroleum. This site has been prioritized due to its location within a severely disadvantaged community and its near-term redevelopment potential, with environmental assessment and remedial planning needed to support potential acquisition and reuse.
- Carrie Furnaces, 801 Carrie Furnace Blvd, Pittsburgh, PA 15218: A remnant of the once massive, legendary U.S. Steel Homestead Steel Works, the Carrie Furnaces are located on a 10.54 acre parcel and are a vestige of Pittsburgh's 20th-century domination of the steel industry. Constructed of 2.5" thick steel plate and lined with refractory brick, the Furnaces are extremely rare examples of pre-World War II iron-making technology. This is the last undeveloped portion of the 35-acre Steel Works property, which was critical to the success of the Hazelwood Green redevelopment located just downstream. The site offers significant potential for mixed reuse that maximizes remaining developable riverfront land and complements adjacent revitalization efforts. The Steel Works site is a recognized brownfields success story; however, additional environmental assessment is needed to advance redevelopment. Potential contaminants include heavy metals like arsenic and lead, PAHs, and petroleum. This site is prioritized for Phase I environmental assessment and reuse planning to support Pennsylvania Act 2 clearance and position the property for future cleanup, adaptive reuse, public access, and private investment at one of the Mon Valley's most significant riverfront sites.

Collectively, these priority sites were selected because they are highly visible, infrastructure-rich properties where unresolved environmental conditions currently limit redevelopment, and where EPA assessment support will directly reduce risk for public and private investors to accelerate reuse aligned with regional economic revitalization goals. Due to their position on the river, all except the Atom Smasher are located on a federally designated flood-plain. While potential reuse of these sites is yet to be decided, SRCOG is collaborating with a wide range of stakeholders to leverage the recent investment in advanced manufacturing and clean-tech coming to the area in the near future. These kinds of resources, as explained further in section I.B.ii, are critical for reuse plans, which may include affordable workforce housing, parks, residential units, clean-tech and renewable energy industrial sites, traditional and advanced manufacturing, materials R&D, and recreational tourism.

**iii. Identifying Additional Sites** – A critical component of this EPA request is the full brownfields inventory that will identify, prioritize, and categorize brownfield sites across the project area through municipal outreach, GIS analysis, and field verification. Through this process, SRCOG will identify additional sites for reclamation and redevelopment. These sites will be prioritized using the following criteria: redevelopment potential, protection of public health, proximity to sensitive populations, interested buyers, community support, capacity to unleash further revitalization, ability to create jobs, likeliness to negotiate site access with owners, and potential to leverage other resources for revitalization. Additionally, SRCOG will collaborate with a Steering Committee comprised of TCVCOG, neighborhood representatives, business owners, and other stakeholders to help identify additional sites in the Mon Valley. Public meetings will be hosted to educate residents about brownfields and encourage community members to recommend properties. Community input received during public meetings and outreach will be formally incorporated into site scoring and prioritization decisions.

## **B. Revitalization of the Target Area**

**i. Reuse Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans** – This community wide assessment has the potential to transform the Mon Valley into a vibrant, economic engine. SRCOG's fundamental reuse strategy is to leverage the unprecedented investment in the region to expand economic development opportunities and community priorities. SRCOG is collaborating with key partners including the Allegheny County Economic Development, Allegheny Conference on Community Development, PA's Department of Community and Economic Development & Department of Labor and Industry, and others to leverage EPA investment and other

economic investment in the Mon Valley. Assessment results will be used to match priority sites with a defined, market-supported reuse scenario that is consistent with local land use designations, infrastructure capacity, and community priorities. Large former industrial sites along the river corridor are well suited for modern manufacturing, clean-tech, and private-sector uses, while smaller neighborhood sites may be used for workforce housing, commercial services, or heritage-based redevelopment. As private investment floods the region, the community wide assessment will identify, inventory, and prepare brownfields sites for a mix of potential reuses.

Through this work, the project will advance a key goal of the [Southwest Pennsylvania Commission Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy](#) (CEDS) to create sustainable and resilient communities through leveraging brownfield sites to spur adaptive reuse and community development and revitalization (page 16). In terms of more focused regional plans, while the *Mon Valley Forward* Economic Development Strategy is in the midst of being updated, the plan will be largely based on the *2005 Mon Valley Revitalization Plan*. A key part of this regional action plan is leveraging brownfield sites to take advantage of emerging industry trends. The updated plan aims to create an action-oriented roadmap that positions the Mon Valley for business growth and investment readiness; aligns local assets and sites with emerging industry trends; supports job creation, workforce alignment, and economic participation, and; provides clear tools and guidance for public, private, and nonprofit partners. This project directly advances the [Mon Valley Forward Initiative](#) by translating the initiative's market analysis and strategic vision into site-specific assessment, prioritization, and reuse planning. This project will be a critical step to help move [Mon Valley Forward](#) from strategy to implementation and position the region to capture near-term investment. Assessment activities will implement these plans and priorities by informing municipal zoning, redevelopment approvals, and site reuse efforts to accelerate the implementation of revitalization strategies.

**ii. Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategy** – The proposed community wide assessment will support significant economic growth and heightened quality of life in the Mon Valley, where several major corporate and public investments have been announced in the past year. In summer 2025, Nippon Steel committed at least \$1.3 million to modernize the Edgar Thomson Plant in Braddock using cleaner technologies. The project is expected to reduce emissions and landfill waste, and spur job creation and economic revitalization in the Braddock and larger Mon Valley community. At the 2025 Pennsylvania Energy & Innovation Summit, President Trump, Senator Dave McCormick, and Governor Josh Shapiro announced \$90 billion in private-sector commitments statewide to expand data centers, energy and power infrastructure, and workforce programs, including grid upgrades, and natural gas, nuclear, and renewable energy projects that will generate tens of thousands of construction jobs and thousands of permanent technical and operations roles. Finally, the Pennsylvania DCED and Allegheny County are investing \$24 million in the expansion of energy battery storage manufacturer Eos Energy Enterprises' Ingenuity Campus in Turtle Creek, leveraging \$350 million in private investment and \$400 million in U.S. Department of Energy loan proceeds. Eos currently employs hundreds of workers manufacturing zinc-halide energy storage systems and is expected to expand its workforce by at least 720 additional jobs in the region, with strong potential to catalyze supply-chain growth and clean-tech manufacturing across the Mon Valley. These investments, along with several others including a R&D facility in Homestead, represent \$2.4 billion in total investment coming to the Mon Valley.

To position the region to capture these opportunities, SRCOG and TCVCOG formed the Alliance for Local Investment Growth Network (ALIGN) in partnership with organizations such as the Reinvestment Fund and 68 Degrees Consulting. Combined with Pennsylvania's EPA-funded \$400 million RISE PA program, companies have a strong incentive to invest and upgrade in the Mon Valley region. Considering this, SRCOG and partners are preparing for several renewable energy and energy efficiency reuse sites.

With major firms and national energy leaders backing these investments, the Mon Valley is well positioned to transform from a distressed legacy industrial region into a pivotal hub for the emerging energy, AI, and digital infrastructure industries. Against this backdrop, a community wide assessment is an essential strategic step to prepare for this surge of innovation and investment. Many former industrial and mill sites in the region are classified as brownfields but unaccounted for, and EPA investment will allow SRCOG to inventory, characterize, plan, and engage local stakeholders to ready these sites for productive reuse. Through this initiative, SRCOG will better leverage these historic investments, expand local job opportunities, and advance community priorities to ensure that former industrial sites become assets in the next wave of economic revitalization. In addition to

industrial and commercial reuse, assessment activities will support the transformation of select brownfield sites into parks, greenways, and community-serving spaces that improve public access to the river, expand recreational opportunities, and support nonprofit and public uses in legacy low-income communities. Reuse planning will also incorporate flood mitigation and stormwater management strategies to improve resilience to extreme weather events, particularly considering riverfront communities along the Monongahela River are vulnerable to flooding.

Together, EPA's investment will spur job creation, renewable energy deployment, local resilience, and community-serving reuse to ensure that brownfield revitalization advances long-term economic, environmental, and weather resilience in the Mon Valley. These economic, workforce, and clean-energy outcomes directly correlate with the proposed reuse strategy, which prioritizes preparing large, infrastructure-served brownfield sites for modern manufacturing, clean-tech, data, and energy-related uses, while enabling smaller or neighborhood sites to support community-serving, residential, recreational, and nonprofit reuse.

### **C. Strategy for Leveraging Resources**

**i. Resources Needed for Site Reuse** – SRCOG is prepared to leverage federal dollars with public and private resources. Although Mon Valley communities generate limited internal revenue due to long-standing economic distress and a constrained tax base, recent investment into the region will serve as a catalyst for revitalization and reuse implementation. Nippon Steel has committed to modernize its U.S. Steel Plants in the Mon Valley, which could take advantage of the \$400 million RISE PA program for factory modernization. Beyond our historic clusters, Mon Valley is moving into the industries of the future, with major investments in the AI/data supply chain and through clean-tech by firms such as Eos Energy Enterprises and others in the steel, chemical, plastics, and building supply chains. Completion of Phase I and Phase II assessments will position SRCOG and partners to pursue EPA Brownfields Cleanup grants, Revolving Loan Fund resources, and other site-specific remediation funding. EPA investment will thus stimulate follow-on funding from private investors, infrastructure and energy developers, workforce and manufacturing partners, and others already expressing interest in the Mon Valley. This will enable further environmental remediation and position sites for reuse aligned with emerging economic growth opportunities.

**ii. Use of Existing Infrastructure** – Brownfield redevelopment will take advantage of existing roads, sewers, utilities, rail-served parcels, riverfront sites, and transit facilities in the Mon Valley. A brownfields inventory, Phase I and II assessments, and mini area-wide plans will help SRCOG and partners identify sites where infrastructure capacity already aligns with emerging reuse opportunities in advanced manufacturing, energy and clean-tech, data center supply chains, and related industrial and employment uses. For example, the Duquesne Ore Pit is adjacent to the Greater Allegheny Passage Trail, and most priority sites are located along the Monongahela riverfront. These assets unlock the potential to leverage outdoor recreation infrastructure for potential community reuse. Assessment activities and reuse plans that focus on sites with or near existing infrastructure will heighten their competitiveness for implementation funding from state and federal sources. These include but are not limited to PA DCED programs, PennDOT Multimodal Transportation Fund, EPA cleanup funding, U.S. EDA Public Works programs, RISE PA funding, and private capital investments.

## **II. COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

### **A. Community Need**

**i. Community Need for Funding** – EPA support will help address the socioeconomic challenges faced by many Mon Valley communities who lack the financial capacity to fund environmental assessment, cleanup planning, and redevelopment activities due to small populations, low household incomes, and severely constrained tax bases. Many of the municipalities in the project region are former mill towns with limited staff capacity and little to no supplementary revenue. For example, the MHI in Rankin (pop. 1,910), a target community, is \$29,783. These constraints make reuse planning activities like Phase I and Phase II site assessments nearly impossible and is the reason why so many brownfield properties have remained vacant and unutilized for decades. Without federal assistance, these communities are unable to pursue remediation efforts that will help attract developers for reuse and prepare the region for the private investment pouring in from the advanced manufacturing and clean-tech markets. Additionally, the proposed initiative offers a shared, regional solution that leverages the combined capacity of SRCOG, TCVCOG, and others to deliver assessment, planning, and engagement services on behalf of distressed communities that could not otherwise conduct these activities.

**ii. Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations** – A significant number of sensitive populations live in the target area, many of whom experience elevated health burdens. Across the target area, children under the age of 5 comprise 7.1% of the population, while residents aged 65+ represent a disproportionately high share of the population compared to state and national numbers. Women aged 15-50 years old also give birth at a higher rate than state or national averages. See summary table below (levels higher than state and national levels shown in red):

Vulnerable Populations	Mon Valley Target Areas	Pennsylvania	USA
Residents 65 and Older	23.8%	19.1%	16.8%
Children Under 5	7.1%	5.3%	5.7%
Pregnant Women (per 1000)	71	48	50

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community 5-Year Survey, 2019-2023

These populations suffer increased vulnerability to chronic disease and environmental stressors. Pediatric asthma rates in the Mon Valley are substantially higher than the U.S. average (9.8% vs. 6.5% nationally), and overall asthma prevalence exceeds state and national rates, possibly a reflection of long-term exposure to industrial emissions, contaminated sites, and poor air quality. Allegheny County has the highest particulate matter concentration of any county in PA (11.3 micrograms per cubic meter compared to 7.8 average in the state). Additionally, according to the [PA County Health Report](#), 15% of project area residents report fair or poor health (compared to only 11.2% nationwide), indicating cumulative environmental and socioeconomic stressors.

This community-wide assessment will directly address these health and welfare challenges by identifying, assessing, and prioritizing contaminated and blighted properties that pose ongoing exposure risks to nearby residents. Through up to eight (8) total Phase I and Phase II environmental assessments and four (4) area-wide reuse plans, the project will help identify environmental hazards that disproportionately affect children, seniors, and vulnerable households, while guiding redevelopment toward health-protective uses such as modern industrial facilities with cleaner technologies, employment centers, parks, and other community-serving uses. By replacing long-vacant, contaminated properties with productive and regulated land uses, the grant will reduce exposure pathways, improve neighborhood conditions, and support safer environments for sensitive populations.

**iii. Greater than Normal Incidence of Disease and Adverse Health Conditions** – Populations in the target area experience a greater-than-normal incidence of diseases commonly associated with environmental exposure, particularly respiratory illness and cardiovascular disease. Nationally, the Mon Valley [ranks 5th worst](#) in the country for sulfur dioxide pollution and the region falls within the top 20 dirtiest locations for fine particulate levels. This has had a wide range of adverse effects, summarized by the table below (levels higher than state and/or national levels shown in red):

Health Condition	Mon Valley Target Areas	Pennsylvania	USA
Children with Asthma	9.7%	9.8%	6.5%
Total Population with Asthma	10%	12%	8.3%
Mortality Rate: Heart Disease (per 100,000)	187.1	174.3	203.3
Hospitalized for Chronic Lower Respiratory Diseases (per 100,000)	114.7	137.8	101.3
Cancer Rate for Males (per 100,000)	471	468	483.5
Cancer Rate for Females (per 100,000)	443.2	424.1	421.3

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Health, County Health Profiles

Considering prior uses, SRCOG expects targeted brownfields to be contaminated with lead, mercury, polychlorinated biphenyl (PCBs), polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), cadmium, chromium, nickel, zinc, and petroleum/diesel/oil. EPA has designated some of these substances as carcinogenic, mutagenic, and teratogenic. These contaminants pose serious concerns to sensitive populations. Polluted sites exacerbate the risk of cancer and non-cancer mortality for nearby households, including the area’s pregnant women and infants. Contaminants of concern include:

- Lead (likely at most sites): Children’s brains and nervous systems are more sensitive to lead’s effects. Pregnant women are also vulnerable to lead exposure, which can result in miscarriage and premature birth.
- Arsenic (likely at several sites): Evidence suggests that inhaled or ingested inorganic arsenic can injure pregnant women and their unborn babies.

- Petroleum (likely at several sites): Toluene has been shown to cause spontaneous abortion among pregnant women. Xylene inhaled by women can reach developing fetuses and contaminate breast milk.

Brownfields also yield negative psychological impacts, especially for sensitive populations, as vacant sites and dilapidated areas impact surrounding neighborhoods, resulting in blight and disinvestment, reduced property values and corresponding tax revenue, and higher crime. This grant will help identify, reduce, and prevent exposure-related health threats by generating the environmental data necessary to understand contamination risks and guide remediation and reuse decisions. The project’s coordinated assessment strategy will pinpoint sites where hazardous substances, pollutants, or petroleum contamination may contribute to ongoing exposure and adverse health outcomes and enable targeted cleanup planning and risk mitigation. The reuse strategies developed through mini area-wide plans will prioritize redevelopment that improves air quality, manages stormwater, and limits residential exposure near industrial uses. In doing so, the project will lay the groundwork for future cleanup and infrastructure investment and support healthier land use patterns that reduce disease risk and improve long-term health outcomes for Mon Valley residents.

**i.v. Economically Impoverished/Disproportionately Impacted Populations** – Throughout the 20th century, the Mon Valley was a powerhouse of steel and heavy manufacturing. When most mills closed in the late 1900s, the region lost 175,000 manufacturing jobs and experienced a 22.6% population decline. More recently, two major coal-fired power plants – Coke and Cheswick – closed in 2016 and 2021, respectively, leading to even more jobs and opportunity lost. According to the [Human Services Center of Mon Valley’s](#) 2024 snapshot of 33 communities, population losses between 2010 and 2020 were drastic, including –20.3% in Braddock, and –10.2% in McKeesport. This decline left 15,903 vacant and blighted structures, extensive brownfields, major unemployment (especially for prime working age individuals), eroding tax bases, higher crime, and high poverty (18% of the population lives below the poverty line, with six in ten residents relying on public assistance). As a result, low-income residents disproportionately bear the environmental and health impacts of unmanaged legacy industrial sites, including exposure to contaminated soil and groundwater and deteriorating structures near homes, schools, and community spaces. For example, Clairton, one of the project’s target communities, has a 30% poverty rate and an MHI of \$39,884, compared to PA’s MHI of \$76,081. According to the EPA, Clairton also has worse air quality than 99% of PA communities, and residents face an estimated lifetime cancer risk 2.3 times the EPA’s acceptable level. Similar statistics are the unfortunate reality for many of the target communities.

The proposed community-wide assessment will address these disproportionate environmental burdens by identifying, assessing, and prioritizing contaminated and blighted properties that pose ongoing risks to low-income populations. Through brownfields inventories, Phase I and Phase II environmental site assessments, and targeted reuse planning, the project will reduce environmental uncertainty, identify potential exposure pathways, and establish clear strategies to mitigate contamination prior to redevelopment. A key pathway to healthier and safer future reuse will be achieved through new and expanded advanced manufacturing and clean energy clusters, with accessible opportunities for skilled jobs for the valley's workers. With coordinated leadership from SRCOG and TCVCOG, the Mon Valley will implement a comprehensive, region-wide approach to environmental assessment and planning that has historically been hindered by fragmented governance, positioning communities to collaboratively benefit from current steel, data center, and clean-tech investment momentum.

**B. Community Engagement**

**i. Project Involvement & Roles** – SRCOG and TCVCOG have a robust and successful relationship of joint endeavors for community and economic revitalization in the Mon Valley. By nature, COGs are membership organizations composed of local government managers, elected leaders, and officials. Because of this, most of the cities, boroughs, and township governments in the Mon Valey region will be at the table from beginning to end of this effort, providing input on challenges and opportunities, sites, economic development prospects, and their vision for feasible and implementable manufacturing expansion and growth. Key partners include:

Name	Entity’s mission	Point of contact (name & email)	Specific project involvement or assistance provided
Turtle Creek Valley COG	Find efficient, cost-effective solutions and programs that benefit member communities.	Name: Amanda Settellaier Email: <a href="mailto:asett@tcvcog.com">asett@tcvcog.com</a>	Steering Committee. Support site prioritization, community engagement, site

			reuse input. Integrate reuse plans with revitalization goals. Management guidance.
Tri-COG Land Bank	Revitalize neighborhoods and stimulate economic growth by mitigating blight.	Name: Natalie Boydston Email: <a href="mailto:natalie@tricoglandbank">natalie@tricoglandbank</a>	Steering Committee. Support site prioritization, and assessment and reuse strategy.
Allegheny County Economic Development	Identify issues in region, develop policy solutions to address these issues and market an ever-improving region to employers and skilled individuals.	Name: Alan Sisco Email: <a href="mailto:Alan.Sisco@AlleghenyCounty.US">Alan.Sisco@AlleghenyCounty.US</a>	Steering Committee. Support site prioritization, community engagement, outreach to businesses, and reuse planning. Alignment with Mon Valley Forward Initiative.
Catalyst Connection	Diversify the Pittsburgh & Mon Valley economy with clean tech, energy, AI/data, metals manufacturing, and advanced manufacturing.	Name: Petra Mitchell Email: <a href="mailto:pmitchell@catalystconnection.org">pmitchell@catalystconnection.org</a>	Steering Committee. Support site prioritization, community engagement, and outreach to businesses and corporations. Support site reuse strategy, and workforce development potential.
Penn State Greater Allegheny, New Century Careers, & Auberle Employment Institute	Advance education and workforce opportunities and talent in the Mon Valley	Name: Anne Pastor Email: <a href="mailto:annepastor@psu.edu">annepastor@psu.edu</a>	Steering Committee. Work with communities to develop reuse strategy and workforce development opportunities.

**ii. Incorporating Community Input** – SRCOG and TCVCOG will implement a multi-layered communication strategy to keep residents, stakeholders, and partner organizations informed of progress and ensure community voices meaningfully shape project outcomes. SRCOG will host four formal community engagement sessions held at strategic milestones in the assessment and reuse planning process. These sessions will be offered in person at accessible local venues throughout the Mon Valley and will be recorded and published online to maximize accessibility for residents who cannot attend due to work schedules, transportation barriers, caregiving responsibilities, or other constraints. Sessions will cover project goals, preliminary findings from inventories and assessments, reuse planning concepts, and opportunities for community input. Complementing these sessions, SRCOG and TCVCOG will incorporate information into their regular newsletters, which will include project updates, summaries of engagement feedback, notices of upcoming meetings, and opportunities to participate in surveys or provide comments. These newsletters will be distributed monthly by email and made available on SRCOG and TCVCOG websites to reach a broad audience.

To ensure engagement is meaningful, each community session will incorporate facilitated activities such as interactive mapping, breakout discussions, and feedback worksheets that are designed to elicit community priorities and concerns. An online comment form will be available throughout the project to collect ongoing input from residents, businesses, and community groups. All input received via in-person sessions, online submissions, and newsletters will be systematically logged, reviewed by the project team, and referenced in subsequent communications. Project updates will explicitly address how community feedback has been considered and incorporated into assessment prioritization and reuse strategies, ensuring transparency and fostering trust among Mon Valley residents and stakeholders.

**III. TASK DESCRIPTIONS, COST ESTIMATES, AND MEASURING PROGRESS**

**A. Description of Tasks/Activities and Outputs**

<b>Task #1 – Cooperative Agreement Oversight</b>
<b>i. Project Implementation:</b> A project manager will ensure compliance with grant requirements. Tasks include oversight and performance reporting. Two people will attend EPA’s National Brownfields Training Conference to learn best practices and identify ways to leverage federal resources. Key residential and business leaders will participate on a project Steering Committee to implement the project.
<b>ii. Anticipated Project Schedule:</b> Ongoing project management with quarterly reporting, regular Assessment, Cleanup and Redevelopment Exchange System (ACRES) updates.
<b>iii. Task/Activity Lead:</b> An Lewis, Executive Director, SRCOG and Amanda Settlermaier, Executive Director, TCVCOG

**iv. Outputs:** Formalized Steering Committee, quarterly reports, ACRES updates, and closeout report.

**Task #2 – Procuring Contractors**

**i. Project Implementation:** Environmental/planning contractors will be hired to conduct assessments and develop cleanup/reuse plans. These services will be solicited through a Request for Proposals (RFP) process. SRCOG will initiate a competitive qualifications-based selection process in compliance with state and federal regulations.

**ii. Anticipated Project Schedule:** Environmental/planning contractors procured within three months of award.

**iii. Task/Activity Lead:** An Lewis, Executive Director, SRCOG and Amanda Settelmaier, Executive Director, TCVCOG

**iv. Outputs:** RFPs for assessments and cleanup/reuse planning and contracts with qualified professionals.

**Task #3 – Community Engagement**

**i. Project Implementation:** SRCOG and TCVCOG staff will lead community engagement activities. Residents will be involved in determining secondary sites and reuse options. The project team will connect with the community through quarterly meetings, newsletters, web sites, and social media. SRCOG and partners will use the ATSDR Brownfields/Land Revitalization Action Model to foster dialogue.

**ii. Anticipated Project Schedule:** Four community meetings at project milestones and ongoing communications.

**iii. Task/Activity Lead:** An Lewis, Executive Director, SRCOG and Amanda Settelmaier, Executive Director, TCVCOG

**iv. Outputs:** Four meetings in community neighborhoods, completed surveys, and newsletters/fact sheets.

**Task #4 – Brownfields Inventory and Site Selection**

**i. Project Implementation:** SRCOG, TCVCOG and environmental consultants will work with the Steering Committee to complete a brownfield inventory to uncover more sites in the middle and southern portions of the Mon Valley, confirm primary brownfields selected for assessments, and recommend additional sites in the targeted project area.

**ii. Anticipated Project Schedule:** Brownfields inventory will be conducted from Q2 Year 1 through Q2 Year 2.

**iii. Task/Activity Lead:** Environmental consultants, with support from SRCOG and TCVOG staff

**iv. Outputs:** Inventory of identified brownfields and primary/secondary site recommendations.

**Task #5 – Phase I and Phase II Activities**

**i. Project Implementation:** SRCOG will initiate and complete up to 6 Phase I assessments and conduct up to 2 Phase II assessments in targeted areas. These activities will be conducted by qualified environmental professionals and preceded with approved Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPP). Environmental contractors will ensure that Phase I and Phase II activities meet American Society for Testing Materials (ASTM) standards and comply with the All Appropriate Inquiries Final Rule.

**ii. Anticipated Project Schedule:** Assessment activities will occur from Q2 of Year 1 through Q3 of Year 3.

**iii. Task/Activity Lead:** Environmental consultants, with support from SRCOG and TCVOG staff

**iv. Outputs:** 6 Phase I and 2 Phase II assessments, 1 generic QAPP, and 3 site-specific QAPP addenda.

**Task #6 – Area-Wide Plans**

**i. Project Implementation:** Four area-wide cleanup/reuse plans will be developed by qualified experts at high-engagement communities, with significant community input. Proposed activities include: development of an Analysis of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA) for sites to be remediated; a land use plan that considers cleanup strategies for high-priority brownfield sites, energy efficiency, and Complete Streets; and an implementation strategy with business recruitment approaches, identification of public and private revitalization resources, and a game plan for implementing the land use plan.

**ii. Anticipated Project Schedule:** Area wide plans will occur in Q4 Year 2 through Q3 Year 3, unless needed earlier.

**iii. Task/Activity Lead:** Environmental consultants will develop area-wide reuse plans for high-engagement communities.

**iv. Outputs:** Four (4) area-wide plans that analyze assessment of existing infrastructure assets and upgrades needed to support reuse; sustainable land use plan; and detailed implementation strategy that includes brownfields cleanup priorities, business recruitment approaches, and public/private resources that can support revitalization.

A timeline of project activities is included below:

Activity	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Cooperative Agreement Oversight	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Procuring Contractors	X	X										
Community Engagement				X		X		X		X		
Brownfields Inventory		X	X	X	X	X						
Phase I & Phase II Activities			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Area-Wide Plans								X	X	X	X	

## B. Cost Estimates

		Project Tasks						
Direct Costs		Cooperative Agreement Oversight	Procuring Contractors	Community Engagement	Brownfields Inventory	Phase I & Phase II Activities	Area-Wide Plans	Total
	Personnel	\$17,000	\$500	\$10,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$27,500
	Fringe Benefits	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Travel	\$2,500	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,500
	Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Supplies	\$0	\$0	\$6,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$6,000
	Contractual	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$75,000	\$189,000	\$200,000	\$464,000
	Construction	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Other	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Total Direct Costs	\$19,500	\$500	\$16,000	\$75,000	\$189,000	\$200,000	\$500,000	
Indirect Costs	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>\$19,500</b>	<b>\$500</b>	<b>\$16,000</b>	<b>\$75,000</b>	<b>\$189,000</b>	<b>\$200,000</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>	

The cost estimates presented in the budget above include the following assumptions:

- Cooperative Agreement Oversight: The budget includes \$17,000 (\$50/hour for 340 hours) in staff time to provide cooperative agreement oversight and travel expenses for 2 people to attend EPA's National Brownfields Training Conference (\$1,250 per person for airfare and travel).
- Procuring Contractors: The budget allocates \$500 for staff time to conduct an RFP process for environmental and planning contractors to perform assessments and develop cleanup and reuse plans.
- Community Engagement: SRCOG and TCVCOG staff (\$40/hour for 250 hours) will manage engagement. \$6,000 is allocated to supplies for in-person meetings and outreach (rental space, papers, newsletters, etc.).
- Brownfields Inventory: The budget includes \$75,000 for contractors to manage the brownfield inventory and site selection process, with significant community input.
- Phase I/Phase II Activities: SRCOG will initiate and complete up to 6 Phase I assessments, estimated at \$6,500 each. SRCOG plans to conduct up to 2 Phase II assessments, estimated at \$75,000 each, in the target areas. Contractors will oversee the assessment process.
- Cleanup/Reuse Planning: Environmental consultants will develop four area-wide plans for communities targeted for remediation. The budget includes \$200,000 for area-wide plan contracting.

**i. Plan to Measure and Evaluate Progress and Results** – SRCOG will be exploring potential partnerships with University of Pittsburgh Medical Center and the Pitt Clinical and Translation Science Institute to conduct health assessments and monitor health outcomes. SRCOG will track project progress throughout the period of performance. An established work plan, to be approved by EPA, will help to guide outputs and outcomes. The project manager will evaluate progress based upon milestones identified in the work plan. Internal project management software will be used to help ensure that assessment and reuse planning activities are moving along, and that project outputs and outcomes are being achieved. This will provide safeguards that grant funds are expended in a timely and efficient manner. Data will be regularly entered into ACRES.

## IV. PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE

### A. Programmatic Capability

**i. Organizational Capacity** – Both SRCOG and key partner TCVCOG have successful experience with managing substantial federal and state grant projects. Our organization is fully familiar and able to comply with federal requirements including 2 CFR Part 200 Uniform Requirements including with respect to competitive procurement, allowable costs, financial management, and subrecipient monitoring. Our organization is also familiar with and able to comply with performance reporting, recordkeeping and documentation, non-discrimination, and closeout procedures. Further, COGs like SRCOG and TCVOG are nonprofits compliant with federal and state nonprofit incorporation procedures and are considered instrumentalities of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania subject to the PA Intergovernmental Cooperation Act requirements such as sunshine and right-to-know requirements, and prevailing wage requirements for significant public works contracts.

**ii. Organizational Structure** – Both COG’s have extensive experience coordinating multi-municipal projects, managing federal and state grants, and facilitating community-driven planning. By their nature, these organizations provide shared administrative, technical, and financial services to their member municipalities, enabling efficient allocation of resources, centralized decision-making, and consistent oversight across multiple jurisdictions. SRCOG will be responsible for grant administration, financial compliance, and reporting to EPA, while TCVCOG will help guide grant administration, coordinate technical activities, including brownfields inventories, Phase I and II assessments, and community engagement. Both organizations maintain dedicated staff and standardized contracting procedures to ensure timely expenditure of funds and adherence to technical, administrative, and financial requirements. Regular meetings will monitor progress and troubleshoot challenges.

**Description of Key Staff** -- The project will be led by An Lewis, Executive Director of SRCOG, who will serve as Project Lead and oversee grant administration, compliance, reporting, and strategic coordination. With over 20 years of experience in public administration and regional governance, Ms. Lewis began working with the COG in 2002 and has served in executive leadership since 2008. She brings extensive experience managing multi-municipal initiatives, federal and state grants, and regional planning efforts. Ms. Lewis also has strong expertise in GIS, which will directly support the brownfields inventory, site prioritization, and mapping of sites.

Amanda Settelmaier, Executive Director of the TCVCOG, will serve as Project Coordinator, helping to manage day-to-day activities, and guiding grant administration and community engagement. Ms. Settelmaier has 28 years of public administration experience and specializes in intergovernmental coordination, grant administration, and multi-municipal strategies to address blight and redevelopment. She represents 20 municipalities in Allegheny County and will play a central role in coordinating local governments, consultants, and community stakeholders.

**Acquiring Additional Resources** – SRCOG will issue a competitive RFP for qualified environmental consultants to conduct brownfields inventory, Phase I and Phase II environmental site assessments, and related planning activities. The RFP will be issued and administered in accordance with federal procurement requirements and SRCOG’s adopted procurement policies, including full and open competition, cost reasonableness, and conflict-of-interest standards. Contractors will be selected based on demonstrated qualifications, experience with EPA Brownfields projects, technical approach, and cost effectiveness.

## **V. Past Performance & Accomplishments**

### **i. Has Not Received an EPA Brownfields Grant but Has Received Other Federal or Non-Federal Assistance Agreements**

**ii. Accomplishments** – SRCOG has never received EPA Brownfields funding. However, lead partner TCVCOG is well versed in brownfields assessment, implementation, and reporting, and will provide expert guidance on project implementation. In 2016 and 2021, TCVCOG received brownfields assessment funding and successfully conducted a total of 18 Phase I assessments, 9 Phase II assessments, 1 Area-Wide Redevelopment Strategy, and more. All ACRES and FFR reports were submitted on time and TCVCOG complied with all agency, state, and federal requirements. Additionally, SRCOG has secured and managed federal and state resources to support local revitalization, including:

- An average of \$750,000 in annual HUD Community Development Block Grants, requiring robust community engagement, determination of priority community revitalization projects, and management of significant funds transfer activity.
- SRCOG's land bank program, the Tri-COG Land Bank, is administering a 2024, \$1,700,000 HUD Economic Development Initiative grant to support its land bank and community revitalization activities.
- Both the SRCOG and the TCVCOG run annual grants and allocations of state and regional funding for community revitalization, including from the PA Gaming Economic Development Tourism Fund, PA Local Share Account grants, PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources grants for community parks and recreation projects, and the Allegheny County Act 152 demolition and blight remediation grants.

**iii. Compliance with Grant Requirements** – SRCOG has a superb record of complying with state and federal grant requirements. SRCOG has successfully conducted work with PA agencies, as well as HUD and others. Work plans were created and diligently followed for previous efforts. All funding agency terms and conditions were met, including the filing of timely reports. Projects were completed on budget and on time and intended project results were achieved.

## **Threshold Criteria Steel Rivers Council of Governments**

### **1) APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY**

- a. As a council of government (COG), Steel Rivers COG is a regional authority and considered a general purpose unit of local government under EPA guidelines. COGs are defined by state law and determined to be instrumentalities of the Commonwealth just like municipalities. [See here for more information.](#) Steel Rivers COG is eligible to receive EPA Brownfields funding.
- b. Steel Rivers COG is exempt from Federal taxation. However, Section 501(c)(4) does not pertain to COGs. Steel Rivers COG is not registered to lobby the federal government.

### **2) COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

Steel Rivers COG and partner Turtle Creek Valley COG will ensure that residents, community organizations, local governments, and other stakeholders are meaningfully informed and involved throughout the planning and implementation of all brownfield assessment activities. The structure of these COGs allows for community engagement to be integrated at every stage of the project, including site identification, prioritization, assessment, and reuse planning. A Steering Committee composed of representatives from Steel Rivers COG, Turtle Creek Valley COG, participating municipalities, community organizations, business and property owners, workforce and economic partners, and other relevant stakeholders will provide ongoing guidance on site identification and prioritization, assessment activities, and reuse planning to ensure alignment with community priorities.

Throughout the period of performance, Steel Rivers COG will host four community engagement sessions. These sessions will be held in accessible, community-based locations within the target areas and will be recorded and made available online to ensure participation by residents who are unable to attend in person. Meetings will provide clear information about the brownfields program, current and potential environmental and health concerns, the assessment process, and opportunities for community input on site selection and future reuse. Feedback will be solicited through public meetings, post-meeting surveys, coordination with municipal leadership, and direct outreach to neighborhood organizations. This community feedback will be documented, considered, and incorporated into decision-making related to site prioritization, assessment activities, and reuse strategies at regular Steering Committee meetings. Steel Rivers COG will provide follow-up communication to inform participants how community input was used and how it influenced project decisions.

In addition to these public meetings, Steel Rivers COG will use multiple communication methods to provide regular project updates to inform and involve the community and other stakeholders throughout the grant period. This will include newsletters, email updates, and project information posted on the Steel Rivers COG and Turtle Creek Valley COG websites. Communications will include milestones, upcoming engagement opportunities, and project findings in clear, non-technical language to ensure that community members and stakeholders are able to understand and provide feedback about project development and strategy. This will help prepare these sites for a

community-based revitalization and reuse strategy after the assessment phase is completed.

Through this accessible and multi-layered engagement approach, Steel Rivers COG and partners will ensure that residents have meaningful opportunities to participate in and shape brownfield assessment and planning activities consistent with EPA's community involvement goals.

### **3) EXPENDITURE OF EXISTING GRANT FUNDS**

Steel Rivers Council COG has not received previous EPA Brownfields funding.

### **4) CONTRACTORS AND NAMED SUBRECIPIENTS**

N/A. Steel Rivers COG has not procured any contractors for EPA grant funds. Steel Rivers COG will comply with all EPA's Subaward policies. Steel Rivers COG will follow the federal fair and open competition requirements in 2 CFR Part 200, 2 CFR Part 1500, and 40 CFR Part 33 when contracting with environmental and planning specialists.