



R04-26-A-034

CITY MANAGER  
SCOTT E. HILDEBRAN

CITY OF LENOIR  
NORTH CAROLINA

MAYOR  
JOSEPH L. GIBBONS

CITY COUNCIL  
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T. H. PERDUE  
J. I. PERKINS  
R. S. PRESTWOOD  
K. R. ROGERS  
D. F. STEVENS  
C. D. THOMAS

1. Applicant Identification

City of Lenoir  
801 West Avenue NW  
Lenoir, North Carolina 28645

2. Website URL

[www.cityoflenoir.com](http://www.cityoflenoir.com)

3. Funding Requested

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

4. Location

City of Lenoir, Caldwell County, North Carolina 28645

5. Target Area and Priority Site Information

The Target Area is located in Lenoir, North Carolina and is Census Tracts 37027030300.

Priority Site Addresses:

Former Harper Chair #2  
418 Prospect Street NW  
Lenoir, NC 28645

Southeastern Adhesives  
815 Virginia Street SW  
Lenoir, NC 28645

Machine Technology Solutions  
723 Virginia Street SW  
Lenoir, NC 28645

6. Contacts

a. Project Director

Radford L. Thomas  
Special Projects Director  
P. O. Box 958



Lenoir, NC 28645  
 Phone: (828) 757-2175  
 Facsimile: (828) 757-2212  
 E-mail: [radford.thomas@cityoflenoir.com](mailto:radford.thomas@cityoflenoir.com)

b. Chief Executive/Highest Ranking Elected Official

Joseph L. Gibbons  
 Mayor  
 P. O. Box 958  
 Lenoir, NC 28645  
 Phone: [REDACTED]  
 E-mails: [REDACTED]

7. Population

City of Lenoir, 2018-2022, Population 18,352

8. Other Factors

<b>Other Factors</b>	<b>Page #</b>
Community population is 15,000 or less	1
The applicant is, or will assist, a federally recognized Indian Tribe of United States Territory	N/A
The priority 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)	3
The priority site is in a federally designated flood plain.	3, 6
The reuse of the priority site(s) will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy.	N/A
The reuse of the site with incorporate energy efficiency measures.	4
The proposed project will improve local climate adaptation/mitigation capacity and resilience to protect residents and community investments.	4,6
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.	N/A
The target area(s) is impacted by a coal-fired power plant that has recently closed (214 or later) or is closing.	N/A



NORTH CAROLINA  
*Environmental Quality*

January 22, 2026

JOSH STEIN  
*Governor*  
D. REID WILSON  
*Secretary*  
MICHAEL SCOTT  
*Director*

Radford Thomas  
Special Projects Manager  
City of Lenoir  
PO Box 958  
Lenoir, NC 28645  
[Radford.thomas@lenoirnc.gov](mailto:Radford.thomas@lenoirnc.gov)

Re: U.S. EPA Brownfields Community-Wide Assessment Grant – City of Lenoir

Dear Mr. Thomas,

The North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Brownfields Redevelopment Section (BRS) acknowledges and supports the City of Lenoir's application for a U.S. EPA Brownfields Community-Wide Assessment Grant. We understand that your grant will focus on the assessment of the Former Harper Plant #2, Southeastern Adhesives, and Marine Technology Solutions sites within the City of Lenoir. Revitalization of these properties will be a wonderful success for this community and the City of Lenoir.

The goal of EPA Assessment funds is to facilitate redevelopment and economic growth within a community. To that end, BRS offers technical project guidance to help ensure assessments conducted utilizing grant funds are in accordance with our program requirements throughout the life of your project. Coordination with DEQ BRS is critical to ensure that the assessments make efficient use of the federal funds awarded. This will begin at grant initiation and continue with review of site-specific assessment plans. It is imperative that BRS be involved in field sample scope planning to ensure that a property is eligible for future entry into the North Carolina Program should a property owner or future developer desire. A brownfields agreement outlines the controls needed to make the site safe for the intended reuse and is often a marketing tool for developers and instrumental in securing redevelopment financing. Additional tax incentives are also available upon completion of brownfields redevelopment if completed in the State's Program.

We hope that the City of Lenoir is successfully awarded this grant, and we will continue to support you in your brownfields redevelopment efforts whether a grant is awarded or not. We truly believe successful brownfields projects can rejuvenate a community.

Sincerely,

Jordan Thompson  
Brownfields Grants Manager

ec: NCDEQ Brownfields Grant Collaborative Team



North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality | Division of Waste Management  
217 West Jones Street | 1646 Mail Service Center | Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1646  
919.707.8200

## (1) PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION AND PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION

### Target Area and Brownfields

#### a) Overview and Brownfields Challenges and Description of Target Area

The City of Lenoir, the geographical boundary for these grant activities, is a historical North Carolina community known for its legacy as a manufacturing hub at the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Occupying approximately 20 square miles with a population of 18,352, the city is bordered by the Brushy Mountains to the east and the Pisgah National forest to the west and is situated along US Highway 321 to serve as a connection between the Appalachian and Charlotte metropolitan regions. Named after Revolutionary War hero William Lenoir, the city was designated as the county seat in 1841 and incorporated in 1851 it now consists of a mix of historic downtown, residential neighborhoods, former industrial zones, and natural recreational areas. With the arrival of the Chester-Lenoir Railway, Lenoir became known for its furniture manufacturing, which was solidified by the founding of Lenoir Furniture in 1889, paving the way for major companies like Broyhill, Fairfield, Bernhardt, and Kincaid, and their ancillary supporting businesses.

For more than a century, Lenoir's economy was anchored by furniture manufacturing, which by 2000 employed over 41% of the city's workforce and supported a stable tax base and near-full employment<sup>1</sup>. Once known as the "Furniture Capital of the World", the City of Lenoir has faced a series of significant challenges as globalization intensified and North Carolina's furniture sector shed 56% of its jobs after 1992. Between 2000 and 2006 alone, Lenoir lost approximately 5,000 manufacturing jobs, transforming the city from a community with less than 2% unemployment to one suffering "job losses in the thousands"<sup>1</sup> and the highest unemployment rate across the state. Even as the broader economy has diversified, Caldwell County remains a Tier 1 distressed county (NC Dept of Commerce) with 13.6% of residents in poverty, yet manufacturing is still the largest employment sector<sup>2</sup>. This wave of closures left behind numerous vacant furniture plants and related facilities along Lenoir's historic rain corridor and more than a third of the land in the city and the Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) remains vacant (35.6%)<sup>3</sup> presenting significant liability risks to potential investors and will continue to constrain redevelopment until assessment and cleanup can be completed. Meanwhile, the recent and planned expansion of Google's data center in Lenoir has dramatically increased redevelopment pressure and opportunity in the area. This convergence of legacy contamination and new capital investment creates a critical moment: without proactive brownfields assessment and cleanup, there is a high risk that redevelopment either will be delayed indefinitely or will proceed in ways that fail to benefit longtime local residents, potentially displacing low-income households and perpetuating economic injustice.

Our Target Area encompasses census tracts 37027030301 and 37027030303 which are federally designated as Low-Income Community Opportunity Zones and representative of Lenoir's historical industrial corridor and adjacent working-class neighborhoods. **This 9.1 square miles area houses approximately 4,200 residents** and includes older mill buildings, aging commercial strips, and multiple vacant or underutilized industrial and commercial parcels with known brownfields conditions. The degree of distress is highlighted by a median household income of \$35,000 which is approximately 39% below the statewide median. Roughly 26% of households live below the poverty line, which is roughly double the county (12.7%) and statewide (14%) values and median home values (\$95,000) are half of the state

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<sup>1</sup> All-America City Application. City of Lenoir, PDF file, [www.cityoflenoir.com/DocumentCenter/View/338/All-America-City-Application-PDF](http://www.cityoflenoir.com/DocumentCenter/View/338/All-America-City-Application-PDF). Accessed 8 Dec. 2025.

<sup>2</sup> "Caldwell County Data." NC Rural Center, 2025, [ncruralcenter.org/county-data/caldwell/](http://ncruralcenter.org/county-data/caldwell/).

<sup>3</sup> City of Lenoir. *Comprehensive Plan: Draft May 23, 2025*. Prepared by Freese and Nichols, Inc., 2025

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median (\$174,000)<sup>4</sup>. These conditions align with national evidence that brownfields and other vacant or underused industrial properties are disproportionately located in low-income communities are associated with lower household income, higher poverty rates, and depressed property values. Targeting assessment and cleanup resources to these tracts will help reverse long-standing disinvestment to stabilize housing markets that will support equitable redevelopment in Lenoir’s most economically vulnerable communities.

b) Description of Priority Brownfields Sites

Former Harper Plant #2 (Harper Plant): Approx 10 ac. | Former Furniture Manufacturing Complex

Built in the late 1880’s for the Lenoir Furniture Company and later operated by Harper Furniture, this 10-acre multi-building complex historically supported kiln drying, cabinet fabrication, varnishing, and finishing operations. As is common in legacy wood-products plants across Lenoir, the site likely contains contamination from Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs), Semi-Volatile Organic Compounds (SVOCs), and chlorinated solvents historically associated with these furniture and degreasing operations. These contaminants have been documented at similar furniture sites within Caldwell County and adjacent Lenoir facilities under prior DEQ evaluation<sup>5</sup>.

Today, the Harper Plant is largely vacant, used only for limited storage, and borders a former freight rail line. Although the site is well-positioned for desperately needed mixed-income residential development, the absence of environmental data and uncertainty around solvent contamination have stalled private investment. EPA Assessment funding will help Lenoir proactively guide reinvestment into a location that can provide new housing, jobs, and amenities for neighborhoods that have historically lacked equitable redevelopment.

Southeastern Adhesives (SE Adhesives): 2.8 ac. | Former Adhesives Manufacturing & Biofuel Production

Located immediately beside Google’s Lenoir Data Center, this property operated as a manufacturer of wood adhesives, urea-formaldehyde resins, and later biodiesel fuel. A Phase I ESA under the City’s 2021 Brownfield Assessment Grant identified *recognized environment conditions* (RECs) from past chemical handling, storage, and pre-regulation operations. Although vacant, the site still contains bulk chemical storage—including formaldehyde, nitric and muriatic acids, petroleum mixes, and methanol—and has several deteriorating industrial structures. The site is also listed on the EPA’s Per- and Poly-Fluoroalkyl Substance (PFAS) which poses potential risks to soil, groundwater, and worker safety<sup>6</sup>. The facility is also listed on EPA’s PFAS Industry Registry, indicating that operational processes may have involved the use or generation of per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances.

Vacant since 2016, the site is now in tax foreclosure but is expected to transfer to the City of Lenoir. Its highly strategic location between the Google campus and proposed greenway and trailhead makes it an ideal site for either commercial development or public amenities. Extensive Phase II investigation is urgently needed to protect the surrounding neighborhoods and ensure income-restricted households will benefit from the area’s rapid economic transformation.

Marine Technology Solutions (MTS): 13 ac. | Former Singer Furniture Manufacturer and Machine Shop

Located just west of SE Adhesives, the 13-acre MTS site previously supported machinery operations and automated lumber handling for Singer Furniture Company. A 1996 NCDEQ Groundwater Assessment Report for the property documents contamination of site groundwater with ,1,1,1-trichloroethane (TCA),

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<sup>4</sup> 1 “Census Tract 303, Lenoir, North Carolina.” OpportunityZones.com, [opportunityzones.com/zones/37027030300/](https://www.opportunityzones.com/zones/37027030300/).

<sup>5</sup> NCDEQ Brownfields Program & Site Locator records showing chlorinated solvent impacts at comparable furniture and wood-products facilities in Lenoir and Caldwell County (e.g., Singer Furniture, Bernhardt). NCDEQ Brownfields Site Locator Tool. <https://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/waste-management/brownfields-program>

<sup>6</sup> NCDEQ Brownfields & Hazardous Waste Section preliminary site file review (bulk chemical inventory noted during prior site inspections).

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benzene, 1,1-dichloroethylene (1,1-DCE) and toluene. These are all considered hazardous contaminants associated with degreasing, machinery maintenance, and industrial chemical use.

**The site lies within the FEMA 100-year floodplain (FIRM Panel 3710274900J), with Lower Creek crossing its northern parcel boundary.** Lower Creek is listed on EPA's 303(d) list of impaired waters due to water quality degradation and recent flooding during Hurricane Helene has raised concerns about mobilization of contaminated sediments and pollutants originating from nearby industrial brownfields.

Lenoir is exploring acquisition of the property for a rails-to-trails greenway trailhead, public open space, or a neighborhood playground that would finally bring equitable public investment to a long-neglected industrial area. However, because of the known solvent contamination, updated soil, groundwater, vapor intrusion, and surface water assessments are required before community-serving reuse can proceed. Depending on the results, the site may qualify for a NC Brownfields Agreement that would enable liability protection and facilitate safe redevelopment in perpetuity.

c) Identifying Additional Sites

Since our first Brownfield Assessment Grant in 2018, the City has maintained an active brownfield inventory, which has been aided by public awareness of the City's robust brownfield redevelopment program. Collaboration with the Caldwell County Economic Development Commission (EDC) has helped identify and prioritize at least 9 additional sites not included in our initial inventory but deemed prime candidates for redevelopment. The City completed Phase I ESAs under the 2021 Assessment Grant on the EDC's top two priority sites to enhance their redevelopment packages. Lenoir has also been made aware of additional sites during our brownfield community outreach activities. Site prioritization is guided by criteria developed by the Brownfield Steering Committee (BSC), that includes: (1) degree to which the site furthers objectives for revitalizing the Target Area(s), (2) sites that, based on historical use, pose the greatest potential threat to human health, (3) potential for private sector redevelopment and job creation, (4) potential to address essential community needs, utilizing tools such as US Census Bureau, for census tracts that demonstrate high poverty rates, low median incomes, and high percentages of minority residents (5) impact on public health, the environment, and wildlife habitats and (6) potential reuse of the site(s) for open/green space and/or recreational uses.

**Revitalization of the Target Area**

d) Reuse Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans

The reuse strategies for the Former Harper Plant #2, SE Adhesives, and MTS sites are closely aligned with the City of Lenoir's ongoing revitalization priorities which includes neighborhood reinvestment, expansion of greenway infrastructure, and leveraging major private investment to benefit low-income communities. The Harper Plant supports the City's goal of strengthening historic neighborhoods by creating opportunities for mixed-income residential and mixed-use redevelopment consistent with the City of Lenoir Comprehensive Plan 2040<sup>7</sup>. This plan calls for infill housing, redevelopment of underutilized industrial properties, and reinvestment in older neighborhoods in an effort to stabilize the urban core. Reuse planning at SE Adhesives directly complements both the Caldwell County Economic Development Strategy and Lenoir's long-range economic vision by transforming severely distressed industrial parcel, located between Google's Data Center campus and the proposed greenway corridor, into a community gateway that can support small businesses, workforce serving commercial uses, or civic amenities<sup>8 9</sup>. This strategic location allows brownfield cleanup to function as a bridge between high-tech economic growth

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<sup>7</sup> City of Lenoir Comprehensive Plan 2040, City of Lenoir Planning Department, 2020.

<sup>8</sup> Caldwell County Economic Development Strategy, Caldwell County EDC, 2022.

<sup>9</sup> Caldwell County Board of Commissioners, "Economic Development Incentive Agreement for Google Data Center

Expansion," 2024; Google Data Centers, "North Carolina Operations," <https://datacenters.google/locations/north-carolina/>

and the underserved residential areas surrounding the site. Meanwhile, redevelopment of the MTS site as a greenway trailhead, park space, and flood-resilient open space directly implements the Lenoir Greenway Master Plan and supports regional trail priorities outlined in the Carolina Thread Trail Master Plan, both of which emphasize expanding active transportation connections, improving access to recreation in underserved neighborhoods, and create safe public spaces near waterways. Together these reuse strategies ensure that brownfields assessment and cleanup are fully integrated into Lenoir's broader revitalization framework and links housing, economic development, environmental restoration, and recreational access together to maximize the benefits of public and private investment.

e) Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategy

Since the demise of the furniture and textile industries in Lenoir, we have struggled to find a footing in a non-manufacturing environment. The announcement and subsequent development of Google's Data Center has brought a technology focus to Lenoir and our region. Redevelopment and reuse of our priority and other sites in our Target Area is attracting technology- and medical-based industries. For example, Exela Pharma Sciences followed Google in 2008 with their first manufacturing site in Lenoir and now employees over 500 people, providing additional job growth, and accelerating our non-residential tax base. This grant will build off this momentum by providing the building space necessary for local businesses that will support this new technology-based industry and increase job accessibility for Lenoir's most marginalized populations in our disadvantaged Target Area. As more retail, dining, and entertainment options open in redeveloped spaces, we can expand the city's tax base and create a vibrant downtown that attracts families, professionals, and investors.

Additionally, redeveloping key sites like the MTS site as a greenway trailhead, a **sustainable** urban planning practice, would generate 35-75 construction jobs and provide much needed community space in an underserved portion of Lenoir. Greenways in urban cities promote **climate resilience** by improving water quality, managing flood risk, supporting walkable communities (thus reducing greenhouse emissions), and lowering energy costs from heat stress and stormwater management<sup>i</sup>. **Since 2015, Google's commitment to renewable energy at the Lenoir data center has** incentivized other businesses to incorporate renewal energy into their business strategy, aligning with the technology industry's renewable resource commitment.

Strategy for Leveraging Resources

f) Resources Needed for Site Reuse

The City of Lenoir is uniquely positioned to use this grant as a catalyst for unlocking substantial additional investment. Our priority sites cannot advance toward redevelopment without first addressing uncertainty around hazardous substances, solvents, petroleum, and PFAS related contaminants. By generating the Phase I and Phase II data needed to define environmental conditions and associated risk, this grant will make these properties viable candidates for North Carolina Brownfields Redevelopment Section Agreements, EPA Cleanup Grants, and access to Revolving Loan Fund programs. Assessment results will also strengthen the City's competitiveness for EDA Public Works, DOT RAISE, and FEMA BRIC funding which require shovel ready, clearly characterized sites.

In addition, completing assessments will position Lenoir to leverage significant private-sector and philanthropic investments, as evidenced by our success with Google's \$1.2 billion data center and newly improved campus. Similarly, trailhead and greenway concepts at the MTS site will become eligible for implementation funding through the North Carolina Land and Water Fund, Carolina Thread Trail, and regional foundations such as Golden LEAF. In these ways, the assessment grant will function as the critical first step that transforms stagnant, environmental uncertain properties, into competitive fundable projects.

g) Use of Existing Infrastructure

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Our priority sites were previously developed for industrial use and already have essential infrastructure in place. The Target Area is well-equipped with private telecommunications, high-speed internet, electricity, natural gas, and municipal water and sewer services, making the area ideal for redevelopment. If expanding greenway trails on the SE Adhesives or MTS priority sites is feasible, the City may invest in green infrastructure and seek federal and state funding opportunities, including NCDOT, Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail, and USDOT RAISE program, as discussed above and in the Downtown Plan. Existing infrastructure improvements are ongoing, funded by the City through tax revenues, CDBG, and other state/federal funding as appropriate.

## **(2) COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

### **a) The Community's Need for Funding**

The City of Lenoir faces significant structural and financial barriers that limit its ability to draw on alternative funding sources for environmental assessment activities. Lenoir is located in Caldwell County, a North Carolina Tier 1 economically distressed county. The City's median household income is \$48,889, well below the state average (\$69,904)<sup>10</sup>. Within our designated Target Area, the concentration of low-income households becomes even more pronounced with the median household income only reaching \$35,000 and the poverty rate (26%) being nearly double the county-wide average (12.7%)<sup>11</sup>. These economic conditions result in a limited municipal tax base and minimal discretionary capital that Lenoir can allocate toward high-cost activities such as Phase I and Phase II ESAs. Decades of job losses have further depressed property values and eroded revenue, thereby locking up dozens of brownfields properties that require environmental investigation before redevelopment can begin.

Lenoir is also constrained by the structure of most state and federal funding programs, which require site to be fully characterized before funding eligibility. NCBRS, EDA Public Works, and NC Land & Water Fund, as previously mentioned, require clear delineation of risks before cities may apply for their programs. Without EPA Assessment funding, Lenoir is unable to meet these prerequisites, especially due to the complexity of contaminants present at our priority sites.

### **b) Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations**

Our Target Area has a significantly higher share of older adults (residents aged 65 and older) making up nearly 20% of the population as well as children under 18 accounting for nearly 22% of the population. As identified within our priority sites, the Target Area contains a high-risk potential for VOCs, SVOCs, and other solvents which children are especially more sensitive to due to their developing organs and increased dose of exposure. Similarly, older adults face elevated risks due to natural weakening of the body as they age which can result in reduced lung function, cardiovascular conditions, and diminished immune response that could become even more dangerous with increased contaminant exposure. Educational attainment is a factor linked to reduced access to health information and limited capacity to engage in environmental decision-making that can exacerbate health threats to sensitive populations. Unfortunately, educational attainment lags behind the state, with only 79% of adults holding a high school diploma compared to 89% statewide. The tracts also contain elevated percentages of people with disabilities (approximately 18%) and single-parent households which is indicative of populations with fewer resources to respond to environmental hazards or displacement pressures. These demographic conditions illustrate a neighborhood where economic distress, age-related vulnerability, and health disparities intersect to make our Target Area a crucial priority for assessment in order to have the largest cumulative impact and benefits on residents.

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<sup>10</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. "ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, DP03 — Selected Economic Characteristics (2023), Caldwell County, NC." *Data.Census.Gov*, 2023, data.census.gov/table/ACSDP5Y2023.DP03?g=040XX00US37\_160XX00US3737760. Accessed 8 Dec. 2025.

<sup>11</sup> Opportunity Zone Database, ACS 2023

c) Greater Than Normal Incidences of Disease and Adverse Health Conditions

The vulnerabilities of the sensitive populations described within our Target Area creates an elevated exposure risk that is reflected in county-level health indicators that suggest that our community is already experiencing disproportionately higher rates of chronic illness. Caldwell County’s 2022 Community Health Assessment identifies chronic disease, cancer, and respiratory illnesses among the leading causes of death in the region, with chronic lower respiratory diseases consistently ranked in the top five causes of mortality. The county has recorded 249 cancer deaths in the most recent reporting period, according to the North Carolina Cancer Registry, further signaling increased cancer burden in a region historically shaped by solvent-intensive manufacturing and chemical production. Likewise, the county’s low-birthweight births (10.4%) compare to previous rates (8.7%) indicate increase reproductive and developmental vulnerabilities (NC SCHS Key Indicators Report, 2023). These statics align with well-established research showing that exposure to VOCs, petroleum hydrocarbons, metals, PFAS, and industrial solvents can heighten risks for respiratory illness, adverse birth outcomes, and cancer.

The planned reuse of Lenoir’s priority brownfields sites will directly reduce exposure risks and improve community health outcomes for the sensitive populations living in our Target Area and the greater City of Lenoir. Redevelopment of the Harper Plant into a mixed-income housing will remove potential sources of vapor intrusion, contaminated soils, and deteriorated building materials that contribute to elevated respiratory illnesses and cancer risks. Cleanup and reuse of the SE Adhesives site will eliminate residual bulk chemical such as formaldehydes, acids, and petroleum mixtures, reducing threats to air quality and stormwater pathways. **Transformation of the MTS site into a greenway trailhead and flood resilient open space will remediate solvent-contaminated groundwater through nature-based solutions to improve water quality in Lower Creek and expand access to open parks and recreation.** This provides measurable physical and mental health benefits for residents by providing a safer, more compatible land use.

d) Economically Impoverished/Disproportionately Impacted Populations

Together, the assessment and planned reuse of the Harper Plant, Southeastern Adhesives, and MTS sites will deliver long-term, tangible benefits to economically impoverished families by eliminating environmental hazards, expanding access to healthy housing, and creating new community amenities in areas that have historically been left behind. Cleaning up these sites removes potential sources of toxic exposure—such as solvents, petroleum, and deteriorating industrial chemicals—that disproportionately affect low-income households who lack the means to relocate or mitigate environmental risks. Redeveloping the Harper Plant into mixed-income housing and neighborhood-serving uses increases the availability of safe, affordable homes near schools, transit, and job centers. Revitalization of the Southeastern Adhesives site, positioned between low-income neighborhoods and the rapidly expanding Google data center, creates opportunities for employment, small business development, and improved connectivity to new economic activity. Converting the MTS site into a greenway trailhead and public open space improves environmental quality, **flood resiliency**, and access to recreational resources—factors strongly associated with improved physical and mental health, lower household healthcare costs, and greater quality of life. By unlocking additional state, federal, and private investment, these projects will strengthen the local tax base, attract new services, support workforce development, and ensure that underserved neighborhoods gain equitable access to the benefits of Lenoir’s revitalization. Ultimately, these brownfield efforts help break cycles of disinvestment and environmental injustice, creating safer, healthier, and more economically resilient communities for the families who need it most.

**Community Engagement**

e) – f) Project Involvement and Project Roles

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Name of Organization	Entity's Mission	Point of Contact (name & email)	Specific Involvement in the project or assistance provided
<u>Caldwell County Chamber of Commerce</u>	Provide Governance, Stewardship and Leadership	Bryan Moore <a href="mailto:bryan@caldwellchamber.com">bryan@caldwellchamber.com</a>	Identify sites, guide priorities, drive development, property owner outreach.
Habitat for Humanity Housing non-profit	Build, renovate, or preserve affordable housing	Pete Kidder <a href="mailto:pete@caldwellhabitat.org">pete@caldwellhabitat.org</a>	Affordable housing advocate, identify sites, guide priorities, public and owner outreach
Caldwell Community College	Provide quality instruction and support economic development	Dr. Mark Poarch <a href="mailto:mpoarch@cccti.edu">mpoarch@cccti.edu</a>	Workforce development and community liaison for small businesses and Spanish speakers.
Caldwell Pathways Greenway non-profit	Expanding and improving outdoor recreation and transportation options in the region	Rick Rash [REDACTED]	Resident liaison identifies sites, secures greenway funds, guides priorities, and outreach
Caldwell County EDC	Encourage economic growth that creates diverse quality jobs	Ashely Bolick <a href="mailto:abolick@caldwelledc.org">abolick@caldwelledc.org</a>	Identify sites, guide site priorities, property owner outreach, and recruit private developers

g) Incorporating Community Input

We are committed to partnering with the community and maintaining transparency throughout the project. This grant will build on previous community engagement efforts, and input from the BSC, which meets regularly and is composed of residents, local government, and small business leaders.

To support outreach the City will host a booth at Lenoir’s annual NC Blackberry Festival, sponsored by the Caldwell County Chamber of Commerce, which attracts thousands of residents each July. This allows us to share printed materials and engage directly with the community. Public meetings will be held bi-annually at key project milestones (e.g., completion of site selection, assessments, and remediation/redevelopment planning), to communicate progress and encourage citizen involvement. Notices will appear in local print media, on our website, and on social media. Meetings will be scheduled in a central location in our Target Area with virtual access via the Caldwell County Government Chanel YouTube channel. These outlets will provide immediate on-demand access to program information and an alternative to in-person community engagement. Brochures, project updates, and meeting notices will also be distributed at City Hall, the library, local churches, and other public locations, in English and Spanish, to reach the 27% Spanish-speaking population in the Target Area. To further support community involvement, we will invite residents to review project deliverables (especially redevelopment plans) through presentations to local business and civic organizations, small group meetings, and open houses. Interpreters and transportation will be provided as needed to ensure inclusive participation. Feedback from these events and media posts will be reviewed and discussed with the BSC and project partners. This multi-channel outreach approach ensures that project information is accessible to all community members.

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

a) – d) Project Implementation, Anticipated Project Schedule, Task/Activity Lead, Outputs

<b>Task 1: Project Management / Cooperative Agreement Oversight</b>
i. Project Implementation: Overseeing the cooperative agreement, grant budget, reporting requirements, and managing project contractors. City staff will attend Brownfields training including the national conference.
ii. Anticipated Project Schedule: October 2026 through end of grant
iii. Task/Activity Lead: Special Projects Director Radford Thomas with Contractor support.
iv. Outputs: Updates to ACRES database, 11 Quarterly Reports and 1 Closure Report, Required annual forms, attendance at a national Brownfields conference.
<b>Task 2: Public Involvement</b>

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<p>i. Project Implementation: Community outreach will follow methods in Section 2.b to gain trust, educate citizens about program activities, and solicit input. BSC meetings, public outreach sessions, project flyers/factsheets, e-newsletters, website postings. These activities will relate to both priority and the non-priority sites in our Target Area and will not require non-EPA grant resources. The City will be assisted by the contractor and an outreach specialist to lead visioning sessions for the redevelopment and revitalization of the project focus areas.</p>
<p>ii. Anticipated Project Schedule: BSC, public outreach sessions, and e-newsletters will be semi-annually or as-needed basis, quarterly website updates, from October 2026 through end of grant</p>
<p>iii. Task/Activity Lead: Special Projects Director Radford Thomas with Contractor support.</p>
<p>iv. Outputs: 6 BSC meetings, 6 public outreach meetings, 4 business group and property owner meetings, about 1,000 project flyer/factsheets, 6 e-newsletters, and quarterly website updates.</p>
<p><b>Task 3: Site Inventory</b></p>
<p>i. Project Implementation: The City, BSC, Caldwell County EDC will identify sites and prioritize sites based on the following criteria: alignment with revitalization goals, potential health risks, redevelopment potential, community needs, impact on public health and the environment, and suitability for green or recreational spaces.</p>
<p>ii. Anticipated Project Schedule: To be completed within 6 months of grant award.</p>
<p>iii. Task/Activity Lead: Special Projects Director Radford Thomas with Contractor support.</p>
<p>iv. Outputs: Completed potential pollutant source inventory, completed site prioritization.</p>
<p><b>Task 4: ESAs</b></p>
<p>Project Implementation: Complete 8 Phase I ESAs on eligible sites in accordance with ASTM E1527-21 and 40 CFR Part 312 (4 on priority sites and 4 on non-priority sites). Complete 6 Phase II ESAs in accordance with ASTM E1903-19 (3 on priority sites and 3 on non-priority sites). Before initiation of a Phase II ESA, Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPPs) will be prepared and submitted to EPA and NCDEQ for review and/or approval. QAPPs will relate to both priority and the non-priority sites. Task 4 activities will not require non-EPA grant resources.</p>
<p>ii. Anticipated Schedule: Phase I ESAs completed by month 18 with Phase II ESAs completed between months 12 and 30.</p>
<p>iii. Task/Activity Lead: Contractor</p>
<p>iv. Outputs: 8 Phase I ESAs; 6 Phase II ESAs; 1 site in the NC Brownfield Program.</p>
<p><b>Task 5: Clean-Up &amp; Reuse Planning (CUP)</b></p>
<p>i. Project Implementation: <u>Clean-up Planning</u>- City will oversee consultants' clean-up planning for up to 3 Brownfield sites, depending on Phase II ESA results and budget. Preparation of Analysis of Brownfield Cleanup Alternative (ABCA), comparing site data to regulatory standards, identifying cleanup options and costs, exploring redevelopment options, marketing and outreach to prospective developers, collaborating with property owners or developers to devise a cleanup plan. Where applicable, we may also involve securing a Brownfield Agreement through the NCDEQ. <u>Reuse (Redevelopment) Planning</u>- The City may hire a Community Development Specialist to assist in developing a community charette. Community feedback will be evaluated to align with neighboring residential development and the goals and strategies currently under development in the Living Lenoir 2045 Comprehensive Plan.</p>
<p>ii. Anticipated Project Schedule: To be completed between months 24 and 36.</p>
<p>iii. Task/Activity Lead: Contractor with oversight/assistance from City of Lenoir personnel.</p>
<p>iv. Outputs: 3 ABCAs; 1 NC Brownfield Agreement; 1 Community envisioning session/charette.</p>

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**e) Cost Estimates**

Budget Category	Project Tasks					Total
	Project Management	Public Involvement	Site Inventory	ESAs	CUP	
Personnel	\$ 4,500					\$ 4,500
Fringe Benefits	\$ 1,250					\$ 1,250
Travel	\$ 4,250					\$ 4,250
Supplies		\$ 1,900				\$ 1,900
Contractual		\$35,100	\$6,000	\$398,000	\$49,000	\$488,100
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>	<b>\$37,000</b>	<b>\$6,000</b>	<b>\$398,000</b>	<b>\$49,000</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>

**Task 1 – Project Management: Total Budget \$10,000** (2% of budget) –*Personnel \$4,500*: 90 hours at an average of \$50/hour, *Fringe benefits \$1,250*: in associated fringe benefits. *Travel \$4,250*: Expenses for one City representative to attend the national conference and/or other Brownfields training.

**Task 2 – Public Involvement: Total Budget \$37,000** –*Contractual \$35,100*: Contractor’s assistance in managing 6 BSC Meetings, 6 public outreach sessions, and an updated website (140 hours at \$165/hr = \$23,100); Outreach specialist for visioning sessions (80 hours at \$150/hr = \$12,000). *Supplies \$1,900*: 1,000 project flyer/factsheets.

**Task 3 – Site Inventory: Total Budget \$6,000** –*Contractual*: (12 hours @ \$165; 30 hours @ \$115; \$570 travel).

**Task 4 – ESAs: Total Budget \$398,000** –*Contractual*: (8 Phase I ESAs at \$5,000 each; Generic QAPP at \$6,000; 6 SSQAPPs at \$4,500 each; and 6 Phase II ESAs at \$40,000 each, with approximately \$85,000 for the Machine Technology site). We estimate that 2 of the sites may require asbestos testing as part of the Phase I ESA costs.

**Task 5 – Clean-up Planning: Total Budget – \$49,000** *Contractual*: (3 ABCAs @ \$5,000 each; 1 NC Brownfield Agreements (\$30,000); \$4,000 for targeted cleanup/reuse planning).

**f) Plan to Measure and Evaluate Environmental Progress and Results**

Mr. Radford Thomas, with contractor support, will track and report progress using EPA’s Assessment, Cleanup, and Redevelopment Exchange System (ACRES). He will review progress monthly with the contractor to ensure outputs, results, and eventual outcomes are met and funds are used efficiently. Key milestones include public outreach, inventory completion by month 6, Phase I ESAs by month 18, Phase II ESAs by month 30, and ABCAs and reuse planning between months 24-36. Radford will maintain regular communication with the EPA Project Manager and submit quarterly reports to track results.

**(4) PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE**

**a) – c). Organizational Capacity, Organizational Structure and Description of Key Staff**

The City of Lenoir has a strong track record managing federally funded projects, including ARC, CDBG, and the 2018 and 2021 EPA Assessment Grants, demonstrating its capability to complete all phases of work. For continuity, the City will retain its original Brownfield team which includes a skilled team of administrative, technical, and economic development staff who will manage the grant, ensuring effective project execution. Special Projects Director Radford Thomas, who successfully directed the 2018 and 2021 EPA Assessment grants, will lead grant tasks as Program Manager providing finance, monitoring, and city liaison expertise. Mr. Thomas has extensive experience working with NCDEQ on environmental solutions and managing Phase I ESAs for city property transactions. Mr. Thomas will collaborate with the environmental consultant to execute technical aspects, supported by City personnel. City Manager Scott Hildebran, with more than 30 years of holding municipal roles, will be the primary administrative contact, leveraging his leadership experience in economic development and managing federal and state grant management. Planning Director Hannah Williams, AICP, with eight years of GIS and planning experience,

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will support economic development efforts, drawing on her background working with community groups to improve quality of life in Lenoir. This dedicated team provides the capacity, knowledge, and continuity essential for successful project completion.

d) Acquiring Additional Resources

To support the technical aspects of the project, the City will hire a qualified environmental firm with expertise in brownfields assessment, real estate, planning and redevelopment. The City will solicit eligible contractors pursuant to the procurement standards set forth in 2 CFR Part 200, 2 CFR Part 1500 and 40 CFR Part 33.

e) Past Performance and Accomplishments

i. Currently Has or Previously Received an EPA Brownfields Grant

Lenoir has received two EPA Brownfield Assessment Grants, awarded in 2018 and 2021. As of submission, over 90% of the funds from the 2021-2025 have been utilized

(1) Accomplishments: Under its initial Brownfield Assessment Grant, the City of Lenoir assessed 8 sites, including 4 priority sites. One site—former *Jo Jas Superette*—faced NCDEQ enforcement for an undisclosed UST issue. The owner, a self-employed Latino resident, had purchased the property with his life savings. This success was highlighted by the *Lenoir News Topic* in October 2019, with the headline “**EPA Grant Saves Small Business.**” During the 2021 Assessment Grant, the City evaluated 12 sites—including each priority site—conducted 7 Phase I ESAs, 3 Phase II ESAs, 3 Asbestos surveys and 3 Lead-Based Paint inspections. A draft Brownfield Agreement with the NCBRS is being prepared for the City-owned former Broyhill site, assessed under the 2018 and 2021 grants, and in 2021, with support from the Western Piedmont Council of Governments, the City also received a \$300,000 ARC grant for debris removal at this site. Lenoir’s support for private redevelopment has driven significant progress, including the \$30+ million transformation of a historic Blue Bell textile mill into a 46-unit apartment property. Similarly, the City’s support for the redevelopment of the former JM Bernhardt/Bost Lumber site will assist the developer in securing HUD funding for a planned 68-unit residential project.

Asbestos and lead paint surveys at the Lenoir High School campus, funded by the 2021 Assessment Grant, enabled facility upgrades supported by over \$1 million in grant funding from CDBG, the Lenoir Tourism Development Authority, the American Rescue Plan Act, and State Capital and Infrastructure Fund. The outputs and outcomes from both grants are accurately reflected in ACRES.

(2) Compliance with Grant Requirements: In the first three years of our 2021-2025 Assessment Grant, we successfully completed the proposed work plan, evaluated each of our 3 priority sites, and fully complied with the terms of our cooperative agreement. Site information and leveraged funds are documented in ACRES, and the City has consistently submitted ACRES Quarterly Reports and deliverables on time. As of the time of submission, the City has utilized over 90% of the available funds, and the remaining funds are committed to planned projects or will support the activities described in this narrative. We anticipate expending the remaining funds of that grant in 2025, before the end of the performance period

### **Threshold Criteria Responses**

1. Applicant Eligibility
  - a. The City of Lenoir is a municipality and is identified as a General-Purpose Unit of Government as defined in 2 CFR 200.1 which is eligible for funding under this solicitation.
  - b. The City of Lenoir is NOT exempt from Federal taxation under section 501(c)(4) of the IRC.
  
2. Community Involvement – The City of Lenoir provides multiple avenues for community involvement including, but not limited to the following:
  - Participation in our Brownfield Steering Committee
  - Program updates on the City’s website
  - Community outreach via presentations to local civic organizations
  - Program meetings will be broadcast on the Caldwell County Government Chanel on YouTube
  - Printed materials will be made available in English and Spanish at the Chamber of Commerce, City Hall and the Library
  
3. Balance on Existing Assessment Grant – The current balance as of 11/8/2024 is \$8,976.27. (supporting documentation attached).
  
4. Contractors and Named Subrecipients: Not Applicable. The City of Wilson will procure its consultant and contractor in compliance with 2 CFR Part 200, 2 CFR Part 1500, and/or 40 CFR Part 33.