



CITY OF NEWTON

Planning Department

P.O. Box 550 • Newton, N.C. 28658 • phone 828.695.4305 • fax 828.465.7412

R04-26-A-037

Application Information Sheet – City of Newton, NC

- (1) **Applicant Identification:** City of Newton, North Carolina
- (2) **Website URL:** <https://www.newtonnc.gov/>
- (3) **Funding Requested:**
 - a. **Assessment Grant Type:** Community-wide
 - b. **Federal Funds Requested:** \$500,000
- (4) **Location:**
 - a) City: Newton
 - b) County: Catawba
 - c) State: North Carolina
- (5) **Target Area and Priority Site Information:**
 - a. Target Area:
 1. Corridor West (includes Census Tract 37035011200)
 2. Corridor East (includes Census Tract 37035011300)
 3. Corridor South (includes Census Tract 37035011601)
 - b. Priority Sites:
 1. **Priority Site #1:** Carolina Associated Mill (766 NC-10 West, Newton, NC 28658)
 2. **Priority Site #2:** Former Pinnacle Furniture Company (20 E 19th St, Newton, NC 28658)
 3. **Priority Site #3:** Central High School (301 South Ervin Ave, Newton, NC 28658)
- (6) **Contacts:**
 - a. **Project Director:**

Name: Randy Williams
Phone number: 828.695.4277
Email address: rwilliams@newtonnc.gov
Mailing address: 401 North Main Avenue, Newton, North Carolina 28658
 - b. **Chief Executive/Highest-Ranking Elected Official:**

Name: Eddie Hodge
Phone number: 828.234.5413
Email address: jhodge@newtonnc.gov



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Mailing address: 401 North Main Avenue, Newton, North Carolina 28658

(7) **Population:**

The population of the City of Newton is 13,223 (<https://data.census.gov/>).

(8) **Other Factors:**

Other Factors	Page #
Community population is 15,000 or less.	X, pg. 1
The applicant is, or will assist, a federally recognized Indian Tribe or United States Territory.	
The priority site(s) is impacted by mine-scarred land.	
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).	
The priority site(s) is in a federally designated flood plain.	
The reuse of the priority site(s) will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy.	
The reuse of the priority site(s) will incorporate energy efficiency measures.	X, pg. 4
The proposed project will improve local resilience to the impacts of extreme weather events and natural disasters.	X, pg. 4
At least 30% of the overall project budget will be spent on eligible reuse/area-wide planning activities, as described in Section 3.A.(2), for priority site(s) within the target area(s).	X, pg. 9
The target area(s) is impacted by a coal-fired power plant that has recently closed (2015 or later) or is closing.	

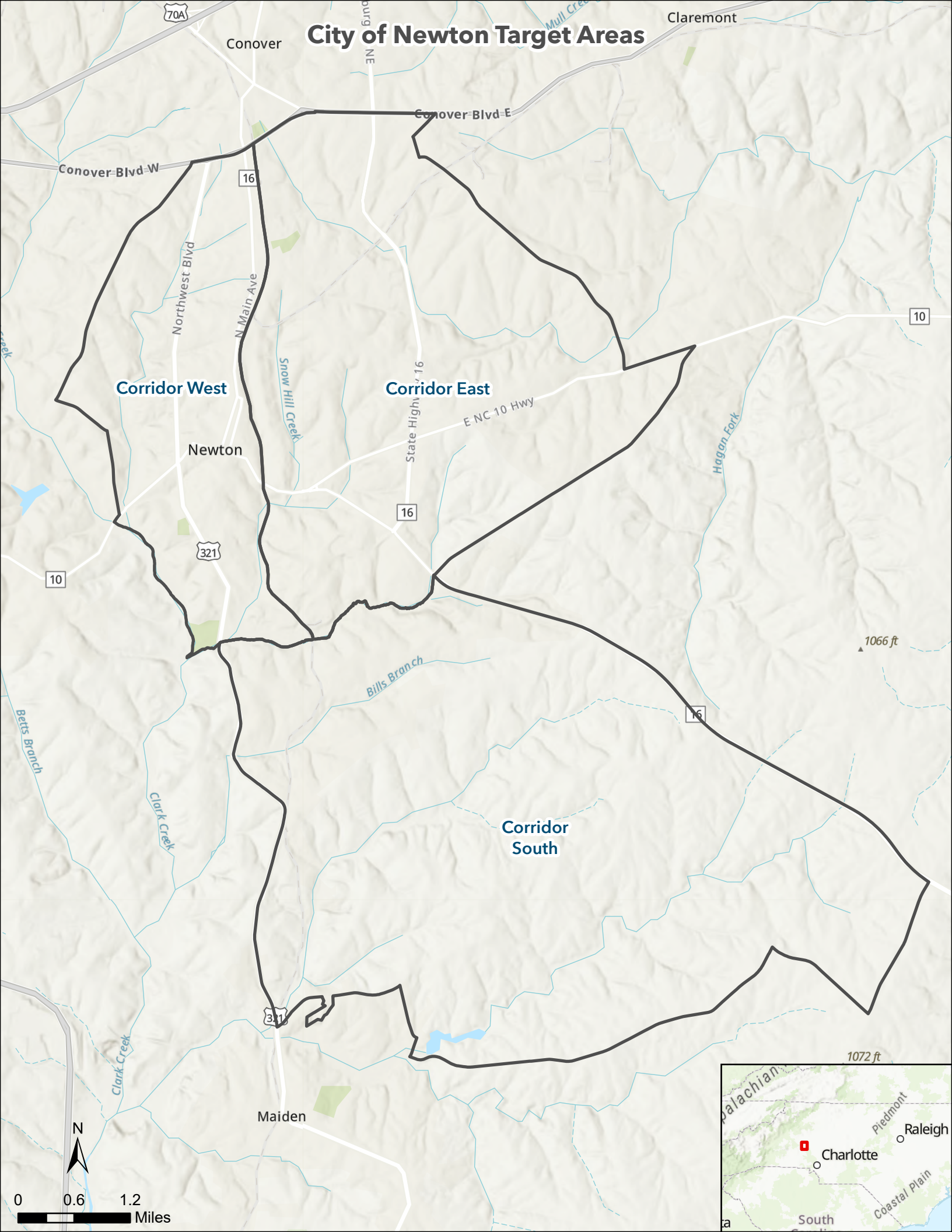
(9) **Letter from the State or Tribal Environmental Authority:**

See attached

(10) **Releasing Copies of Applications:**

Not applicable

City of Newton Target Areas





NORTH CAROLINA
Environmental Quality

December 31, 2025

JOSH STEIN
Governor
D. REID WILSON
Secretary
MICHAEL SCOTT
Director

Randy Williams
Planning and Zoning Department
City of Newton
135 N College Avenue
Newton, NC 28658
rwilliams@newtonnc.gov

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

Dear Mr. Williams,

The North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Brownfields Redevelopment Section (BRS) acknowledges and supports the City of Newton's application for a U.S. EPA Brownfields Community-Wide Assessment Grant. We understand that your grant will focus on the North Main Corridor, specifically the Carolina Associated Mill and Former Pinnacle Furniture Company, as well as revitalization efforts in South Newton. Revitalization of these properties will be a wonderful success for this community and the City of Newton.

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 Newton 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

cc: 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 (40 POINTS)

a. Target Areas and Brownfields

1.a: Overview of Brownfield Challenges and Description of Target Area (5 POINTS)

The brief history you are about to read inevitably fails to fully demonstrate the unique legacy, challenges, victories, and tenacity that have grown and sustained the City of Newton; however, the problems our City faces will sound familiar. A component of this story that will *not* sound familiar is our determined optimism to persevere until we secure the funding that our City desperately needs. **This is our tenth year applying for this grant.** Let us tell you about this small town of only 13,223¹ residents with an “industrial soul and artistic spirit,²” and why it is worthy of this decade-long effort. The City of Newton lies in the Catawba Valley in the westernmost portion of North Carolina’s Piedmont. Located roughly 50 miles northwest of Charlotte and 80 miles east of Asheville, Newton benefits from a prime location for growth. Originally a rural farming area, the first residents began to put down different kinds of roots with the establishment of the first county courthouse in 1843. The arrival of the Norfolk-Southern Railway in the 1850’s spurred tremendous growth, eventually transforming Newton into a hub for furniture and textile manufacturing. This industrial boom provided residents with employment opportunities and economic stability. Residential developments sprouted up near the factories to house the workforce and businesses flourished along the railroad Corridor, creating a bustling downtown.

As you can imagine, this is where our story takes a turn. Like many small towns, Newton faced economic challenges with the decline of manufacturing in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, leading to plant closures and job loss. Between 2000 and 2023, Catawba County lost 31% of its manufacturing facilities and 39% of manufacturing jobs. Our **Target Areas** are located along the once vibrant north-south railroad business corridor and includes Census Tracts 37035011200 (Corridor West), 37035011300 (Corridor East) and 37035011601 (Corridor South). Corridor West and Corridor East lie to the west and east of the rail line, respectively, while Corridor South sits adjacent to the south. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry’s (ATSDR) Social Vulnerability Index (SVI), all census tracts in our Target Areas rank **moderate** (Corridor West, 0.68) to **high** (CT 113, 0.85, and Corridor South, 0.75) based on four criteria: socioeconomic status; household characteristics; racial and ethnic minority status; and housing type and transportation³. Corridor East is also designated as a federally qualified Rural Opportunity Zone⁴, which has the potential to attract private investment to this economically disadvantaged community following assessment and cleanup. As the table below illustrates, economic distress has left its fingerprints on our Target Areas; economically disadvantaged communities suffer from mental health issues (distress, depression), obesity, functional limitations, barriers to maintaining a healthy lifestyle, and chronic health problems⁵.

Demographics (ACS, 2023) and PLACES: Local Data for Better Health (CDC⁶)	Corridor West	Corridor East	Corridor South
Population	5,604	7,142	4,730
Median HH Income (USD)	\$66,830	\$49,808	\$73,229
SVI (0, low – 1, high)	0.68	0.85	0.75
Obesity Among Adults	37.9%	40.5%	40%
Loneliness Among Adults	33.5%	35.5%	33.9%
High Blood Pressure Among Adults	36.2%	38.1%	38.4%
High Cholesterol Among Adults (never been screened)	36.5%	37.1%	37.7%
Short Sleep Duration Among Adults	32.4%	34.4%	34.1%
Any Disability Among Adults	32%	36.8%	35.2%
Depression Among Adults	25.3%	26.6%	26.5%
No Leisure-Time Physical Activity Among Adults	23.6%	29.1%	26.9%
Frequent Mental Distress Among Adults	16.8%	18.8%	18.2%
Frequent Physical Distress Among Adults	12.8%	15.1%	14.6%
Food Insecurity (past 12 months among adults)	14.1%	21.3%	17.4%
Diagnosed Diabetes Among Adults	11.6%	13.5%	12.9%

¹ <https://data.census.gov/>

² [Welcome to City of Newton, North Carolina](#)

³ [SVI Interactive Map | Place and Health - Geospatial Research, Analysis, and Services Program \(GRASP\) | ATSDR](#)

⁴ [Opportunity Zones Map - OpportunityZones.com](#)

⁵ [Income and Health Perceptions in an Economically Disadvantaged Community; How-Do-Neighborhood-Conditions-Shape-Health.pdf](#)

⁶ [PLACES: Local Data for Better Health | PLACES | CDC](#)

With factories closed and jobs gone, their ruinous environmental legacy remains. Many of our economically disadvantaged citizens live near these blighted facilities and are disproportionately affected by the threat of hazardous substance releases. As the buildings continue to decay, families increasingly face exposure to potentially dangerous releases and the psychological stress of living in a scarred, blighted neighborhood. For many of our community members, the situation is exacerbated by the lack of stable jobs that would enable them to provide for their families. Without documenting environmental conditions and steps toward mitigation and reuse clearly laid out, businesses are unlikely to purchase or develop these properties, diminishing opportunities for employment. This grant will enable the City to address environmental hazards, encourage development, revitalize the local economy by attracting future employers, and bolster our effort to showcase the City's rich African American history in our collective narrative. Within the City of Newton's footprint, two Target Areas have been identified:

North Main Rail Corridor (Corridor West and East): The NC-16 Business/Main Street Corridor, which parallels the rail line, is the gateway to Downtown Newton from all points to the north, including interstate I-40 and US Highway 70. The corridor was once dominated by Newton's manufacturing facilities due, in part, to its access to major highways and rail. The closure of major manufacturing facilities and the businesses that supported them has resulted in an area of unused, unsafe, and unsightly buildings that hinder potential redevelopment and growth. Grant funds will help us capitalize on our location, create connectivity, and foster growth of a commercial corridor, which would be a critical asset to Newton as it seeks to reinvigorate and diversify its economy.

South Newton (Corridor East, West, and South): This area lies within Corridor East, Corridor West, and part of Corridor South, adjoining the southern end of the North Main Rail Corridor. The City intends to promote economic development in this area through historic preservation, with an emphasis on local African American history. The area will prove to be challenging due to former gas stations, dry cleaners, light industrial sites, and other brownfields sites throughout.

1.b Description of the Priority Brownfield Site(s) (10 POINTS)

The manufacturing boom of the 20th century that brought prosperity to the City of Newton left behind a legacy of potential environmental challenges. According to the CDC, the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and the American Heart Association, exposure to industrial chemicals such chlorinated solvents and heavy metals can severely impact health in a variety of ways, including but not limited to causing cancer, neurological problems, reproductive issues, and organ damage. Additionally, the ATSDR, Mayo Clinic, National Cancer Institute, and NIH assert that exposure to asbestos may cause a litany of health problems, including forms of cancer such as mesothelioma and lung cancer. Exposure to lead paint can also lead to a number of health effects, ranging from brain and nervous system damage in children to cardiovascular, reproductive, and neurological issues for adults (US EPA, CDC, Mayo Clinic, World Health Organization). For the City to embrace change and revitalization while improving the health and welfare of its citizens, we intend to face the environmental and social challenges with the same diligence and community involvement we exercised in generating **Blueprint Newton**⁷ (the City's first comprehensive plan in over 40 years), beginning with our three Priority Sites.

Priority Site #1: Carolina Associated Mill (766 NC-10 West, Newton, NC 28658⁸, 4.96 acres) This City-owned property is located immediately southwest of downtown along West C. Street (NC Highway 10), a major east-west thoroughfare located in the southern portion of Corridor West. This property operated for over 50 years as a hosiery manufacturing facility and has been vacant since 1991, was partially destroyed by fire in 1999, and following demolition of structures remains vacant land today. Among the manufacturing buildings was a dye house, a pervasive source of chlorinated solvents and heavy metals at former textile mills. Rivers and streams in the region were known for their colorful waters from dye and other waste released by upstream facilities; one even earned the nickname "Rainbow River" for decades. Following a fire and subsequent demolition, soil and groundwater impacts of solvents, petroleum, and metals were reported at concentrations above regulatory standards. Based on these impacts, the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) determined that there is a risk of vapor intrusion to future structures that must be addressed prior to reuse of the property (EPA ID: NCSFN0406911). Reuse plans include a **park and trailhead** to the adjacent Heritage Trail Greenway and an upgraded substation, which will improve electrical power infrastructure for future development. The property is bound by Hildebran Creek, which parallels the greenway. This area of the property is designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as a Special Flood Hazard Area

⁷ [Blueprint Newton](#)

⁸ [CAROLINA ASSOCIATED MILL | Superfund Site Profile | Superfund Site Information | US EPA](#)

(FEMA Flood Panel 3710373000J). Since a portion of this site will be used for recreational purposes as a trailhead to the Heritage Trail Greenway, additional investigation and likely mitigation or cleanup of surface soils will be necessary first steps. Access to green spaces and recreation is not only vital for child development and mental health⁹, but is also a crucial factor in decreasing social vulnerability¹⁰ and promoting health¹¹. Planned Reuse: trailhead and park, upgraded substation.

Priority Site #2: Former Pinnacle Furniture Company (20 E 19th St, Newton, NC 28658, 2.89 acres) Formerly a furniture factory with over 100,000 sq ft of operational space, this facility closed in 2009 and has become increasingly dilapidated from disuse. While specific former operations are unknown, typical chemical use for furniture factories included solvent and petroleum products, which could pose a risk to site occupants and nearby receptors. The structure is also a potential source of asbestos and lead-based paint that must be addressed. In addition to the environmental risk from past uses, unconfirmed reports of illegal dumping on-site persist - as is often the case with the cycle of decline - adding to the perception of environmental risk at the site. Additionally, the building is dilapidated and is a potential source of both asbestos and lead-based paint. In 2024, the property was foreclosed and sold to a development company that plans to build 100 apartment units here; however, development plans are paused due to potential contamination, underscoring the need for this assessment grant to overcome environmental hurdles. The factory operations likely included the use of toxic and carcinogenic petroleum hydrocarbons and chlorinated solvents that, when released to soil and/or groundwater, pose a risk of drinking water contamination and vapor intrusion. According to CDC, NIH, and the Department of Toxic Substances Control, exposure to chlorinated solvents and carcinogenic petroleum hydrocarbons can severely impact health in a multitude of ways, including but not limited to causing cancer, damage to the central nervous system, reproductive health issues, and organ damage. Potential sensitive receptors include private residences (some within 500 ft), churches, Newton Conover High School, and Discovery High School, which are less than two blocks away. The City has targeted this site for affordable housing reuse due to its ideal location along the transportation corridor. CDC PLACES reports 11.7% of residents in Corridor West experience housing insecurity, which this development will seek to alleviate. Brownfield funding for assessment will help quantify the real and perceived environmental risk prior to redevelopment. Assessment and redevelopment of this property is a priority to address health and safety concerns and to transform an eyesore into a productive reuse. Planned Reuse: affordable housing (apartments).

Priority Site #3: Central High School (301 South Ervin Ave, Newton, NC 28658, 15 acres) was founded in 1899 as an African American one-room schoolhouse; this diminutive place of learning was enlarged in 1924 and renamed Snow Hill Graded School. A decade later, grades 8 and 9 were added to become Catawba County's only African American high school. Central High School was closed in 1967 after desegregation and merged with Newton-Conover High School. Soon after, Central was shuttered and fell into a state of disrepair. Eventually the City converted the school into the Central Recreation Center, which still serves one of our predominantly African American neighborhoods today. In 2023, the City was awarded an NC Community Development Block Grant (CDGB) to rehabilitate the historic school. In addition to basic facility upgrades, including a new roof and HVAC system, former classrooms will be converted to meeting spaces and a kitchen added. One of the most significant features will be the "wall of history." When the school was shuttered, most of the trophies and other memorabilia were thrown away except for the few items salvaged by Central High School Alumni, some of which have been donated and will be showcased on the "wall of history." As part of building renovations, environmental concerns such as asbestos, lead paint, and possibly orphaned USTs for heating oil must be addressed to bring the site to its full potential of reuse as a community center, improving the wellbeing of citizens by fostering social connection and community resilience. Planned Reuse: recreation and historical center.

1.c Identifying Additional Sites (5 POINTS)

The collapse of the manufacturing industry in Newton left a rash of brownfields sites in its wake. If additional grant funds remain after addressing the Target Areas, we will first determine eligibility of additional sites under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, (CERCLA) § 104(k). For additional eligible sites, we will use a Brownfield Scoring Tool to prioritize additional sites using nine criteria: ownership, site use, land characteristics, community characteristics, community capacity, redevelopment incentives, infrastructure amenities, environmental conditions, and building characteristics. Special emphasis will be placed

⁹ [Green space may improve young children's mental health | National Institutes of Health \(NIH\)](#)

¹⁰ [Parks, Recreation, and Green Spaces | Active People, Healthy Nation | CDC](#)

¹¹ [How Greening Communities Can Reduce Violence and Promote Health | The National Environmental Education Foundation \(NEEF\)](#)

on sites that will enrich economically impoverished communities and those on which renewable energy infrastructure may be created.

Revitalization of the Target Area

1.d Reuse Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans (5 POINTS)

Redevelopment in our Target Areas is aligned with our citywide comprehensive plan, **Blueprint Newton**, which encompasses Corridor West, Corridor East, and the northern portion of Corridor South. The plan includes the following principles: **1.** Protect and preserve Newton’s history, specifically highlighting Newton’s African American history; **2.** Provide opportunities for strategic growth; **3.** Improve, maintain, and expand infrastructure, and create opportunities for renewable energy investment; **4.** Intentionally target investment that will ensure all residents of Newton benefit from growth. The citizens of Newton were directly engaged in developing these principles, listing “Environmental Protection” as a “top 5” strategic concern. Our plan to redevelop the aforementioned sites and Blueprint Newton land use revitalization plans, created with input from the citizens of Newton, are aligned and represent the vehicles through which we will work to achieve our goals. Our plans to repair and revitalize **Central High School** align with our commitment to protect and preserve Newton’s African American history. The **Pinnacle Furniture** priority site offers multiple development opportunities, including affordable housing with LEED-certified energy efficient design. The City recently acquired the former **Carolina Associated Mill** property on which we plan to locate a new substation, a much-needed infrastructure improvement for future development. Consistent with the City of Newton’s focus on building long-term community and economic resilience, Catawba County solicited bids in 2024 for solar installations at two closed landfills in Newton as part of broader revitalization efforts. The Target Areas is served by rail, NC-16, NC-16B, with access to I-40, which, combined with the improved electrical power infrastructure, will create jobs and pave the way for future development. The City intends to leverage Brownfields Grant funding in an overall strategy that will enable us to pursue other grant funding.

1.e Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategy (5 POINTS)

The **devastating effects of Hurricane Helene** in western North Carolina underscore the urgent need for resilience, infrastructure improvements, and disaster preparedness for extreme weather events. The outcomes of our reuse strategy (incorporating energy-efficient retrofitting and requiring LEED-certified construction, along the Target Areas corridor) include cleaner air, reduced energy consumption, lower energy costs, and new job opportunities. The new sub-station will provide a more reliable energy grid for citizens and will offer secure infrastructure benefits to investors. **Energy technology jobs** from installation and maintenance will provide secure employment with fair pay, good benefits, and a safe workplace. Contractors working with the City will retain contractors who will commit to the US Department of Commerce and Labor’s “Good Jobs Principals” that prioritize recruitment from underserved communities and foster a workplace culture that promotes employee well-being and empowerment. Two of our priority sites, the Carolina Associated Mill property and the Central High School are City-owned and will be redeveloped to serve the community as resources for history, outdoor recreation, and green space. Economic redevelopment resulting from brownfields reuse will generate increased tax revenue, both directly through the reuse of currently vacant and run-down properties, and indirectly by spurring reinvestment in the area.

Strategy for Leveraging Resources

1.f Resources Needed for Site Reuse (5 POINTS)

The City will leverage grant funds to work cooperatively with the NCDEQ Brownfields Redevelopment Section to enter eligible sites into the state program. A North Carolina Brownfields Agreement provides both liability protection and financial incentives to developers through reduced property taxes. As a local governmental unit, the City is also eligible for county, state, and federal funding and continues to pursue additional funding. Federal sources include Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Block Development Grant – Demolition (up to \$500,000) for demolition of structures to facilitate redevelopment where structures are not reusable; HUD Community Block Development Grant – Building Reuse (up to \$500,000) to renovate structures to facilitate redevelopment where existing structures are reusable; EPA Brownfields Cleanup Grant (up to \$2,000,000) for remediation at brownfields sites; and NC Department of Transportation Streetscapes for construction of streetscaped and pedestrian access improvements.

1.g Use of Existing Infrastructure (5 POINTS)

The existing infrastructure in our Target Areas and priority sites includes paved access, stormwater improvements, municipal water and sewer, electricity, natural gas, and telecommunications. All established infrastructure is ready for redevelopment. Reuse of the Carolina Associated Mill priority site will improve infrastructure for the surrounding area and remaining priority sites.

2. **COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (35 POINTS)**

Community Need

2.a The Community's Need for Funding (5 POINTS)

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that between the passage of NAFTA in 1994 to the end of 2021, Catawba County lost 187 manufacturers and 18,291 manufacturing jobs. The median household income in Newton is approximately 20% lower than the NC median household income. North Carolina's economy grew approximately 10% between 2010 and 2019, while Newton's economy grew 1.8%. The Covid-19 pandemic in 2019 and 2020 slowed growth even more. Costs for providing municipal services have outstripped tax revenues due to high demand and slow growth. Municipal departments are overtaxed, and with a population of just over 13,000, many of whom are either unemployed or employed at low-wage jobs, the funds to address the brownfields site do not exist without the financial assistance provided by a Brownfields Assessment Grant.

Below is a table demonstrating the percentage of households compared to the threshold income for quality of life (\$74,072). According to EPA's EnviroAtlas¹², an average of 68% of households in Corridor West are below the quality-of-life threshold income; a staggering **86% of households** in the census block group (370350112001) closest to the former Pinnacle Furniture Company site are **below the quality-of-life threshold income** as shown on the table below. Similarly, an average of 78% of households in Corridor East are below the quality-of-life threshold income. As you might expect, **83% and 95% of households** in the two census block groups (370350113001 & 370350113003, respectively) closest to the former Pinnacle Furniture Company site and Central High School are **below the quality-of-life threshold income**. Finally, an average of 64% of households in Corridor South are below the quality-of-life threshold income.

Target Areas	Census Block Group (EPA EnviroAtlas)	% household incomes under \$30,000	% households with incomes above twice the poverty line and below \$75,000	% households below quality-of-life threshold income
Corridor West	370350112001	49.4	43.9	86.2
Corridor West	370350112002	39.6	35.7	62.9
Corridor West	370350112003	41.3	47.2	72.1
Corridor West	370350112004	17.5	48.5	50.1
Corridor East	370350113001	62.3	24.7	83.2
Corridor East	370350113002	22.1	49.2	54.3
Corridor East	370350113003	57.3	41.4	95.1
Corridor South	370350116011	36.3	29.9	64.7
Corridor South	370350116012	36.2	31.9	63.5
Corridor South	370350116013	33.7	46.2	63.7

Economic redevelopment resulting from brownfields reuse will generate increased tax revenue, both directly through the reuse of currently vacant and run-down properties, and indirectly by encouraging reinvestment in the area. The Rural Opportunity Zone (CT1113) is a particularly promising area as its official designation will attract private investment through federal tax incentives post assessment and cleanup.

2.b Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations (5 POINTS)

The impacts of over a century of manufacturing within our Target Areas have yet to be fully assessed, but one fact is clear: this area is rife with former textile and furniture manufacturers that existed long before environmental regulations were implemented. The sheer amount of waste dumped from dyeing and finishing operations led to polluted and – in some cases – even brightly colored rivers. A wide range of compounds with serious health effects were used daily, with no safety or disposal standards. Sensitive populations in our Target Areas include the young, the elderly, low-income populations, and those burdened with disease:

Households and Families (ACS, 2023)	Corridor West	Corridor East	Corridor South
Households with children under 6 years only	26.2%	34.2%	20.9%
Households with children 6 to 17 years only	57.1%	55.4%	64.4%
Households with one or more people under 18 years	25.4%	37.4%	34.9%
Households with one or more people 60 years or older	48.9%	42.8%	42.0%
Households with one or more people 65 years or older	35.8%	36.9%	33.7%
Householder living alone 65 years and over	17.6%	10.6%	16.5%

¹² <https://enviroatlas.epa.gov/enviroatlas/interactivemap/>

PLACES: Local Data for Better Health (CDC)			
High Blood Pressure Among Adults	36.2%	38.1%	38.4%
High Cholesterol Among Adults (never been screened)	36.5%	37.1%	37.7%
Obesity Among Adults	37.9%	40.5%	40%
Arthritis Among Adults	27.3%	28%	28.7%
Current Asthma Among Adults	10.6%	11.3%	10.9%
Diagnosed Diabetes Among Adults	11.6%	13.5%	12.9%

According to the 2023 Catawba County Community Health Assessment (CCCHA¹³), there were 4,146 deaths from diet-related health conditions (heart disease, stroke, cancer, and diabetes) from 2016 to 2021, accounting for 43.5% of the total deaths within the County. The CCCHA reported that **40% of residents in Corridor East do not get physical exercise outside of work**, further exacerbating health conditions such as obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and high blood pressure. Further adding to our residents’ burden, Corridor East is qualified as a **food desert** at every scale shown on the US Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Food Access Research Atlas, meaning this low-income area has a “significant number of residents” that have low access to supermarkets¹⁴. One of the resulting health priorities cited in the CCCHA is to provide all County residents with consistent access to affordable, healthy food. Economic development tends to attract better food retailers – thereby reducing food deserts – with healthier options as well as generally leading to higher average household incomes. This, in turn, enables families to purchase higher quality, more nutritious foods.

Yet another obstacle our community faces is proximity to environmental hazards. Historically, mills and factories provided company-owned rental houses within walking distance of their facilities, many of which are still in use. Residents, largely low-income, are exposed to legacy pollution from the now-defunct factories. Many of the compounds used in the treatment of wood and textiles, such as chlorinated solvents and heavy metals, are toxic. Moreover, many are known carcinogens and/or teratogens. EPA’s EnviroAtlas (data sourced from US EPA 2014 National Air Toxics Assessment) reveals that Corridor West and Corridor East face higher ambient concentrations of acetaldehyde and formaldehyde, both of which are used in manufacturing, than the County of Catawba or the state of North Carolina. Corridor West and Corridor East’s cumulative respiratory and neurological risks are also higher than that of the County or state. This grant will enable us to assess the environmental impacts at the sites within the Target Areas, and to create a clean-up or mitigation strategy that will address related health threats to sensitive populations and provide more opportunities for health-promoting activities.

2.c. Greater Than Normal Incidence of Disease and Adverse Health Conditions (5 POINTS)

Low income is a strong predictor of poor health outcomes, essentially creating a cycle that impacts access to fundamental needs, such as good housing and nutrition, while simultaneously increasing stress, risky behaviors, and exposure to unsafe environments. This cycle ultimately leads to higher rates of mental health issues and chronic diseases, as we saw in the data tables for our Target Areas. Much of the available affordable housing in our Target Areas is near potential sources of contamination, leading to negative health outcomes such as **asthma, cancer, low birth weight, infant mortality, and diabetes**. Living near the decaying manufacturing sites can also affect the **mental health** of residents, which, in turn, can lead to or exacerbate poor physical health. Addressing the disparity in health outcomes in our community requires identifying the sources and types of contamination, which grant funding will allow us to do. Once we assess the problems, we can begin the process of risk reduction and community restoration. Our goal for the **grant** is to promote the health and well-being of all of Newton’s residents by promoting job creation, facilitating development, and transforming underutilized spaces. Our goal for the **community** is to provide a safe, equitable place to live, learn, work, worship, and play.

2.d Economically Impoverished/Disproportionally Impacted Populations (5 POINTS)

As discussed in 2.a, our Target Areas show signs of economic distress, particularly in census block groups closer to the former Pinnacle Furniture Company site and Central High School. Economic growth is slow and 83% and 95% of households in the two census block groups closest to these two sites, respectively, are below the quality-of-life threshold income. Economically revitalizing this area through brownfield reuse will generate both increased revenue and opportunities for the community.

Similarly, sections 2.b and 2.c identified the health and welfare issues of the sensitive populations in our Target Areas: high blood pressure, high cholesterol, obesity, arthritis, asthma, diabetes, inactivity, poor access

¹³ [2023 Catawba County Community Health Assessment](#)

¹⁴ [Food Access Research Atlas - Go to the Atlas | Economic Research Service](#)

to healthy food, mental health challenges, and exposure to potential sources of contamination. Confronting disparities in our community’s health outcomes will require identification of both the sources and types of contamination, which grant funding will facilitate. The process of community restoration and risk reduction, which will in turn promote residents’ holistic well-being, can then begin.

Community Engagement

2.e Project Involvement (5 POINTS) and 2.f Project Roles (5 POINTS)

City staff, including our City Manager, Sean Hovis, will contribute their knowledge of the community and their successful experience in community engagement to foster public involvement in each stage of the brownfields assessment, planning, and redevelopment process. City Staff will assist with site screening prior to assessment, guaranteeing property owners and prospective developers are engaged and informed. Local community partners will be involved in the project to ensure grant outcomes are in line with community goals. In anticipation of grant funding, the City formed a Brownfield Advisory Committee (BAC) comprised of key City of Newton representatives, community and business leaders, and economic development personnel. A key role for BAC members is to prioritize the assessment of properties identified in the inventory. During the first BAC meetings, we will facilitate the development of prioritization criteria based on community needs, which will be solicited as discussed in 2.a – 2.d.

The community partners listed below are members of the BAC, which will meet at least quarterly (either in person or remotely) to discuss projects, visioning, and overall progress, as well as evaluating project progress.

Name of organization / entity / group	Entity’s mission	Point of contact (name & email)	Specific involvement in the project or assistance provided
First Presbyterian Church	Support the community by providing safe spaces to meet	Rev. David Roquemore droquemore@fpcnewton.com (828) 464-0648	Provide meeting space for community outreach meetings.
Commercial First Real Estate Investment and Development	Help connect investors with opportunities to help the local economy	Jenny Eckard jenny@commercialfirst.net (828) 320-8989	Contact property owners to enter the program and serve as a liaison to the development community.
Robinson Building Mart	Promote cost savings and carbon footprint reduction for people of Newton	Larry Adams ladams@robinsonbuilder.net (828) 464-7700	Provide professional advice on energy efficient building materials and construction.
First Citizens Bank	Promote sound financial practices to support the growth of the City	Lisa Crump Lisa.crump@firstcitizens.com (828) 464-8790	Provide professional financial advice for property transactions.
Catawba County Chamber of Commerce	Support Newton’s growth through business	Lindsay Keisler lkeisler@catawbachamber.org (828) 328-6111	Provide professional advice, promotion of Brownfield sites to businesses looking for operational spaces, and meeting space.
Catawba County Economic Development Corporation	Help Newton promote strategic growth	Scott Millar smillar@catawbacounty.nc.gov (828) 267-1564	Guidance on site selection and participation on Brownfield Advisory Committee.

2.g Incorporating Community Input (5 POINTS)

Our community input will make use of multiple media modes to accommodate Newton’s diverse communication needs and preferences. We will create and maintain an interactive website using ArcGIS or equivalent to identify property locations, document project progress, highlight community accomplishments and provide a platform for communication. We will mail utility bill inserts (three per year) and send six semi-annual e-newsletters to community members and stakeholders. Annual public meetings will be held to share project progress and solicit community input. A Brownfields booth will be displayed at community events, including the annual Foothills Folk Art Festival in May. The City hosts a Summer Concert Series that will provide additional opportunities to educate our community about brownfields, to answer questions and provide updates, and to actively listen to our neighbors' thoughts, comments, and concerns. Given the lack of public transportation, virtual "town hall" meetings will be held in addition to or in lieu of the six annual public meetings. Outreach materials and meetings will be tailored to fit the specific needs of the community to ensure that all stakeholders have access to information and the ability to provide feedback despite barriers such as language or disability. At minimum, communications materials will be available in both English and Spanish.

3. TASK DESCRIPTIONS, COST ESTIMATES, AND MEASURING PROGRESS (45 POINTS)

3.a Project Implementation (10 POINTS), 3.b Anticipated Project Schedule (5 POINTS), 3.c Task/Activity Lead (5 POINTS), and 3.d Outputs (5 POINTS)

Task/Activity: Project Management / Cooperative Agreement Oversight
a. Project Implementation: The City will oversee the cooperative agreement, manage reporting requirements, the grant budget, and project contractors, and coordinate with the contractor and the EPA. The City will procure a qualified environmental contractor, who will work with the City to monitor project scope, schedule, and budget. No non-EPA funds will be needed to conduct these tasks. Additional activities under this task include ten BAC meetings, five public outreach sessions (at minimum), distribution of approximately 1,000 project flyers/factsheets, utility bill inserts and eight semi-annual project updates, e-newsletters and the project website.
b. Anticipated Project Schedule: We will select a contractor upon notification of the award (Spring 2026) and will begin work as soon as the funds are released as pre-award funding in July 2026, up to October 2026. We anticipate completing work by Year 3 of the four-year grant period.
c. Task/Activity Lead: Planning Director Randy Williams, AICP with contractor support.
d. Outputs: Outputs will include completing ACRES database, preparing 16 Quarterly Reports and one Close Out Report, three annual and one final FFR report, and attendance at the 2026 EPA National Brownfields Conference.
Task/Activity: Public Involvement
a. Project Implementation: The City has realized efficiency by laying the groundwork for public outreach in preparation for this grant application. Outreach will continue under the prospective grant using methods described in Section 2.b to gain trust, educate citizens about the activities underway, and solicit input at project milestones. Anticipated activities include ten BAC meetings (minimum), five public outreach sessions (minimum) conducted semi-annually, development of approximately 1,000 project flyer/factsheets, eight bi-annual e-newsletters, and updates to the project website and/or project page on the City of Newton website. These activities will relate to both priority and the non-priority sites in our Target Areas 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 Area.
b. Anticipated Project Schedule: October 2026 through end of grant
c. Task/Activity Lead: Planning Director Randy Williams, AICP with Contractor support.
d. Outputs: Ten BAC meetings, five public outreach meetings, four business group and property owner meetings, six e-newsletters and the project website, updated quarterly.
Task/Activity: Site Inventory
a. Project Implementation: The City has developed an initial inventory of three Priority sites and 10 secondary potential sites, but the City intends to perform an in-depth, complete inventory of potential Brownfield properties. This process will include the development of a database providing the location of each brownfield property, detailed site observations, site photographs, and publicly available environmental data. The database will be used to prioritize sites for assessment using an algorithm that weights scores entered for identified redevelopment factors. The information will be presented on an easy-to-understand online platform, such as the ArcGIS Story Map that the City currently employs.
b. Anticipated Project Schedule: To be completed within 6 months of grant award.
c. Task/Activity Lead: Planning Director Randy Williams, AICP with Contractor support.
d. Outputs: Completed potential pollutant source inventory, completed site prioritization.
Task/Activity: ESAs
a. Project Implementation: Complete a minimum of 12 Phase I ESAs on eligible sites in accordance with ASTM 1527-21 and 40 CFR Part 312. Complete at least four Phase II ESAs in accordance with ASTM 1903-11 (three on priority sites and two on non-priority sites). Prior to any Phase II ESA work, a generic Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPP) will be prepared and submitted to EPA and NCDEQ for review and/or approval. A Site-Specific QAPP will be prepared and submitted for each Phase II ESA. Task 4 activities will not require non-EPA grant resources.
b. Anticipated Project Schedule: Phase I ESAs completed by month 24 with Phase II ESAs completed between months 12 and 40.
c. Task/Activity Lead: Contractor
d. Outputs: 12 Phase I ESAs; four Phase II ESAs; two NC Brownfield Agreements.
Task 5: Clean-Up & Reuse Planning (CUP)

a. Project Implementation: Clean-up Planning: Based on the number of Phase II ESAs that are completed and the results of those reports, the City will supervise the selected contractor in the performance of cleanup planning for three or more Brownfield sites, or as many as possible with the budget remaining. This will involve the preparation of an Analysis of Brownfield Cleanup Alternative (ABCA), including comparing site data with appropriate cleanup standards, identifying cleanup options and costs, identifying redevelopment options, performing marketing/outreach to prospective developers, and working with property owners or developers to devise a cleanup plan. Where applicable, cleanup planning will include applying data from the assessments to facilitate the acquisition of a Brownfield Agreement (BFA) through the NCDEQ. **Reuse (Redevelopment) Planning:** Funds will also be used to engage a Community Development Specialist to assist with the envisioning and community charettes. Visioning and community feedback will be evaluated in accordance with neighboring residential development and the goals and strategies developed in the 2023 Blueprint Newton Plan. In addition, ArcGIS StoryMaps will be created for two sites, along with Resource Roadmaps.

b. Anticipated Project Schedule: To be completed between months 46 and 50.

c. Task/Activity Lead: Contractor with oversight/assistance from City of Newton personnel.

d. Outputs: Two ABCAs; one NC Brownfield Agreement; one Community envisioning session/charette, two StoryMaps, two Resource Roadmaps.

3.e Cost Estimates (15 POINTS)

Budget Categories		Project Tasks (\$)					Total
		Task 1: Project Management	Task 2: Public Outreach	Task 3: Site Inventory	Task 4: Phase I/II ESAs	Task 5: Cleanup Planning	
Direct Costs	Personnel	\$8,500					\$8,500
	Fringe Benefits						
	Travel	\$4,500					\$4,500
	Equipment						
	Supplies		\$1,700				\$1,700
	Contractual	\$25,000	\$15,000	\$10,000	\$265,300	\$170,000	\$485,300
	Other						
Total Budget		\$38,000	\$16,700	\$10,000	\$265,300	\$170,000	\$500,000

Task 1, Project Management: Total Budget – \$38,000 *Personnel:* This task entails overseeing the cooperative agreement, reporting requirements, the grant budget, and managing project contractors. Labor is estimated at 100 hours at an average of \$85/hour. *Travel:* Expenses for travel to Brownfields training for staff is included, with \$4,500 budgeted for one City representative to attend the national conference. (The \$13,000 budgeted for personnel and travel for this task are approximately 2.6% of the overall Grant budget.) *Contractual:* this task includes monthly team meetings (48), assisting the City with programmatic requirements, project scheduling, project oversight, budget updates. Labor is estimated at 150 hours @ \$165)

Task 2, Public Involvement: Total Budget - \$16,700 *Contractual:* For our hired contractor’s assistance, this task includes participation in 6 BAC Meetings, 6 public outreach sessions, and an updated website (81 hours at \$185/hour); *Supplies:* 1,000 project flyer/factsheets (\$1,800).

Task 3, Site Inventory: Total Budget - \$10,000 *Contractual:* (51 hours @ \$185; \$500 travel).

Task 4, Phase I/II ESAs: Total Budget - \$265,300 *Contractual:* (16 Phase I ESAs at \$5,000 each; Generic QAPP at \$6,000; 4 SSQAPPs at \$5,000; 4 Phase II ESAs at \$21,000 each, plus the Carolina Associated Mill site Phase II ESA @ \$34,500). We estimate that 4 of the sites may require asbestos testing as part of the Phase I ESA costs (\$10,000 x 4).

Task 5, Cleanup Planning: Total Budget - \$170,000 *Contractual:* 4 ABCAs @ \$8,000 each; 1 NC Brownfield Agreement (\$16,000); \$12,600 for targeted cleanup/reuse planning Outreach specialist for visioning sessions (90 hours at \$140/hour); 2 StoryMaps @ \$15,000 each; 2 Resource Roadmaps @ \$39,700 each.

3.f Plan to Measure and Evaluate Environmental Progress and Results (5 POINTS)

Progress will be tracked, measured, and reported by Mr. Randy Williams, AICP using EPA’s Assessment, Cleanup, and Redevelopment Exchange System (ACRES). He will evaluate progress at least monthly in conjunction with our chosen contractor to ensure that we are achieving our outputs, results, and eventual outcomes and that funds are expended in a timely and efficient manner. This includes timely scheduling and completion of public outreach activities, completion of inventory activities by month 6, completion of Phase I ESAs by month 24,

completion of Phase II ESAs by month 40, and ABCAs and reuse planning completed between months 40-44. We will conduct monthly project update phone calls with our EPA Project Manager and submit quarterly reports to EPA, which will also be a mechanism to measure/track results. We will also hold quarterly meetings with representatives from the City, our contractor, BAC representatives, and other stakeholders as determined appropriate to evaluate the environmental progress by reviewing reports, visiting sites, and discussing potential redevelopment plans.

4. PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE (35 POINTS)

Programmatic Capability

4.a Organizational Capacity (5 POINTS) and 4.b Organizational Structure (5 POINTS)

Our planning department has successfully administered grant funds as demonstrated and detailed in Section 4.b by our record of successfully executed projects. As with all our grants, this project will be managed by a dedicated project director (PD). The PD will be supported by an assistant PD, our finance director, a qualified environmental firm, and our Brownfield Advisory Committee. Our PD, with the support of the Assistant PD, will be responsible for administration of the grant and reporting requirements, our finance director will oversee the financial administration of the grant, including meeting financial requirements, managing invoices, and drawing funds. Additional support will be provided by staff identified in 4.ii. This team will ensure the timely and successful expenditure of grant funds and timely completion of all technical, administrative, and financial requirements.

4.c Description of Key Staff (5 POINTS)

Randy Williams, AICP, Newton's Planning Director, will serve as Project Director for the prospective grant award. Randy has 40 years of municipal and private planning experience and has managed federal and state grants, on time, and on budget. He will be responsible for complying with the administrative and reporting requirements of the grant agreement. Randy will be assisted by Alex Fulbright, Assistant Planning Director, who has over 25 years' experience as a public planner, and Sean Hovis, Newton's City Manager. Sean served as Newton's Assistant City Manager for over a decade before being appointed City Manager in 2023. Kim Robinson, City of Newton Finance Director, has over 25 years of finance, audit and accounting experience. Under Kim's guidance, the Newton Finance Department received multiple awards of excellence from the Government Finance Officers Association for governmental accounting and financial reporting. Kim will provide administrative support and perform the necessary draws to EPA to acquire grant funding. Public Works Director Billy Johnson has more than 15 years' government experience directly responsible for infrastructure improvements in the City. Mr. Johnson will facilitate property assessments and communication between the City, its contractor, and property owners.

4.d Acquiring Additional Resources (5 POINTS)

The City has established relationships with engineering and environmental services firms, including experts in brownfields assessment and redevelopment. The City will hire a consulting firm, in compliance with federal, state, and local procurement standards, to help manage and address technical components of the grant, including identifying sites, conducting assessments, planning for redevelopment, and supporting outreach.

Past Performance and Accomplishments

4.e – Not Applicable – Newton has never received an EPA Brownfields Grant

4.f - Has Not Received an EPA Brownfields Grant but has Received Other Federal or Non-Federal Assistance Agreements (15 POINTS)

The City of Newton received funds from North Carolina Department of Commerce (NCDOC) and the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) to complete the Downtown Revitalization Streetscape Project and the East A Street Improvement Project.

The City was recently awarded a CDBG to repair and revitalize the historic African American Central High School/Recreation Center. Brownfields assessment funds will help the City implement the CDBG.

4.f.1 Purpose and Accomplishments (5 POINTS)

The NCDOC and NCDOT provided \$225,000 and \$330,000, respectively, to support underground utilities replacement, sidewalk extensions, bicycle lanes, on-street parking, an amphitheater, street furniture, and street trees. The CDBG award of \$950,000 will go to the repair, renewal and historic preservation of Central High School.

4.f.2 Compliance with Grant Requirements (10 POINTS)

Three road subsurface inspections and two annual progress reports have been completed. The full six-block project was completed in June 2025. State oversight of project scope, capability for completion, RFLOI selection process, and engineer selection approval was completed at project milestones. The City met NEPA, NCDOT, and State Historic Preservation Office reporting requirements.

Threshold Criteria – City of Newton, NC

(1) Applicant Eligibility:

- a. The City of Newton, North Carolina, is eligible to apply for an EPA Brownfields Community-wide Assessment Grant as a General-Purpose Unit of Local Government as defined under 2 CFR § 200.64.
- b. The City of Newton is not exempt from federal taxation under section 501(c)(4) of the IRC.

(2) Community Involvement:

City staff, including our City Manager, Sean Hovis, will contribute their knowledge of the community and their successful experience in community engagement to foster public involvement in each stage of the brownfields assessment, planning, and redevelopment process. City Staff will assist with site screening prior to assessment, guaranteeing property owners and prospective developers are engaged and informed. Local community partners will be involved in the project to ensure grant outcomes are in line with community goals. In anticipation of grant funding, the City formed a Brownfield Advisory Committee (BAC) comprised of key City of Newton representatives, community and business leaders, and economic development personnel. A key role for BAC members is to prioritize the assessment of properties identified in the inventory. During the first BAC meetings, we will facilitate the development of prioritization criteria based on community needs.

Our community input will make use of multiple media modes to accommodate Newton's diverse communication needs and preferences. We will create and maintain an interactive website using ArcGIS or equivalent to identify property locations, document project progress, highlight community accomplishments and provide a platform for communication. We will mail utility bill inserts (three per year) and send six semi-annual e-newsletters to community members and stakeholders. Annual public meetings will be held to share project progress and solicit community input. A Brownfields booth will be displayed at community events, including the annual Foothills Folk Art Festival in May. The City hosts a Summer Concert Series that will provide additional opportunities to educate our community about brownfields, to answer questions and provide updates, and to actively listen to our neighbors' thoughts, comments, and concerns. Given the lack of public transportation, virtual "town hall" meetings will be held in addition to or in lieu of the six annual public meetings. Outreach materials and meetings will be tailored to fit the specific needs of the community to ensure that all stakeholders have access to information and the ability to provide feedback despite barriers such as language or disability. At minimum, communications materials will be available in both English and Spanish.

(3) Expenditure of Existing Grant Funds:

The City of Newton does not have an open EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant or Multipurpose Grant.

(4) Contractors and Named Subrecipients:

- a) Contractors: N/A
- b) Named Subrecipients: N/A