



**Application Information Sheet – The Greater Birmingham Brownfield Coalition**

1. **Applicant Identification:** The Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham (RPCGB), REV Birmingham (REV), and St. Clair County have established the Greater Birmingham Brownfield Coalition (“the Coalition”), which requests consideration of the following EPA Brownfield Assessment Coalition Grant proposal. The RPCGB is the lead applicant that will receive the grant and be accountable to EPA for the proper expenditure of funds. RPCGB’s address is 2 20<sup>th</sup> Street North, Suite 1200, Birmingham, Alabama 35203.
2. **Website URLs:** RPCGB – <https://www.rpcgb.org/>; REV – <https://revbirmingham.org/>; St. Clair County – <https://www.stclairco.com/>
3. **Funding Requested:**
  - a. **Assessment Grant Type:** Assessment Coalition
  - b. **Federal Funds Requested:** \$1,500,000
4. **Location:** The RPCGB’s jurisdiction includes Blount, Chilton, Jefferson, St. Clair, Shelby, and Walker Counties of Alabama. REV Birmingham’s jurisdiction includes the City of Birmingham, Alabama. St. Clair County’s jurisdiction includes St. Clair County, Alabama.
5. **Coalition Member’s Target Areas and Priority Site Information:**
  - a. **Coalition Members and Associated Target Area(s):**
    - i. RPCGB: Tarrant Arts and Entertainment District Target Area (City of Tarrant, Jefferson County, AL) (Census Tract: 01073010900)
    - ii. REV Birmingham: The Switch District Target Area (City of Birmingham, Jefferson County, AL) (Census Tract: 01073002701)
    - iii. St. Clair County: Ragland’s Trout Creek Target Area (Town of Ragland, St. Clair County, AL) (Census Tracts: 01115040302 and 01115040301)
  - b. **Priority Site(s) Address(es):**
    - i. Tillman Warehouse Complex: The Switch District Target Area: 115 12th Street North (PID: 22 00 35 4 014 005.000), 1201 2nd Avenue North (PID: 22 00 35 4 014 004.000), 1215 2nd Avenue North (PID: 22 00 35 4 014 002.000), 1221 2nd Avenue North (PID: 22 00 35 4 014 001.000), Birmingham, Jefferson County, AL 35203
    - ii. Jr’s Union 76: Tarrant Arts and Entertainment District Target Area: 1600 Pinson Street, Tarrant, Jefferson County, AL 35217 (Parcel ID: 23-00-05-3-004-006.000)
    - iii. Pinson Street Lot: Tarrant Arts and Entertainment District Target Area: 1611 (PID: 23-00-05-3-003-009.000), 1613 (PID: 23-00-05-3-003-008.000), and 1615 Pinson Street (PID: 23-00-05-3-003-007.000) Tarrant, Jefferson County, AL 35217



iv. Champion Drug Rexall: Ragland’s Trout Creek Target Area: 650 Main Street, Ragland, St. Clair County, AL 35131 (PID: 19-03-07-0-010-030.000)

c. **Target Area Maps:** See attachments.

**6. Contacts**

- a. **Project Director:** Ms. Keya Kraft, RPCGB Director of Economic Development, will serve as the Project Director for this proposal. Ms. Kraft’s contact information is as follows: Phone: (205) 251-8139, Email: [kkraft@rpcgb.org](mailto:kkraft@rpcgb.org), mailing address: 2 20<sup>th</sup> Street North, Suite 1200, Birmingham, Alabama 35203.
- b. **Chief Executive:** Mr. Charles Ball, RPCGB Executive Director, will serve as the Chief Executive for this proposal. Mr. Ball’s contact information is as follows: Phone: (205) 251-8139, Email: [cball@rpcgb.org](mailto:cball@rpcgb.org), mailing address: 2 20<sup>th</sup> Street North, Suite 1200, Birmingham, Alabama 35203.

**7. Population:**

- a. City of Birmingham (Jefferson County) Population: 199,322 (ACS)
- b. City of Tarrant (Jefferson County) Population: 6,014 (2023: American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates)
- c. Town of Ragland (St. Clair County) Population: 1,601 (ACS)

**8. Other Factors Checklist:**

<b>Other Factors</b>	<b>Page #</b>
Community population is 15,000 or less.	2
The applicant is, or will assist, a federally recognized Indian tribe or United States Territory.	NA
The priority site(s) is impacted by mine-scarred land.	NA
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).	NA
The priority site(s) is in a federally designated flood plain.	4
The reuse of the priority site(s) will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy.	NA
The reuse of the priority site(s) will incorporate energy efficiency measures.	5,6
The proposed project will improve local resilience to the impacts of extreme weather events and natural disasters.	6
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).	11
The target area(s) is located within a community in which a coal-fired power plant has recently closed (2015 or later) or is closing.	NA

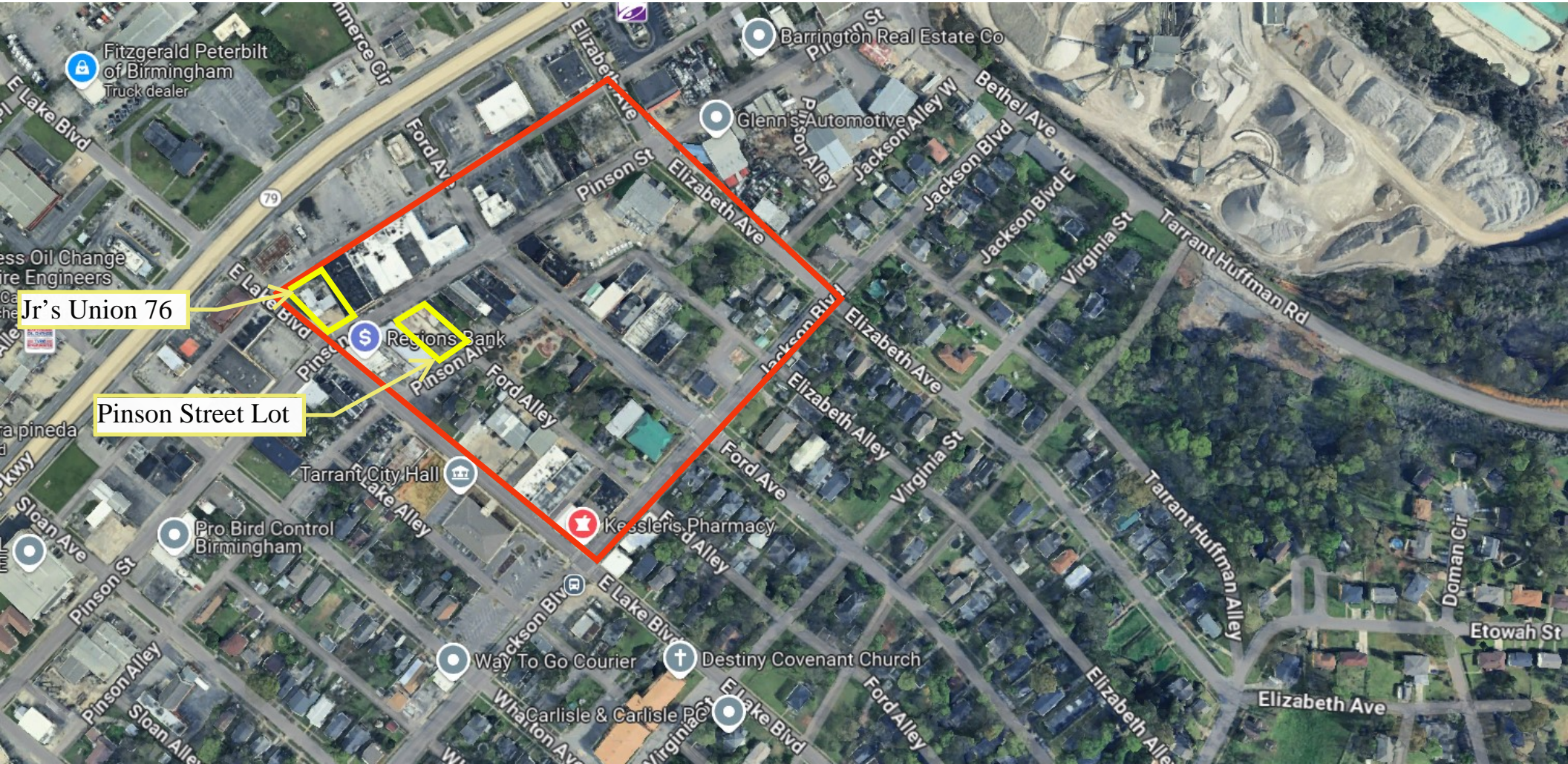
**9. Letter from the State or Tribal Environmental Authority:** See attachment.



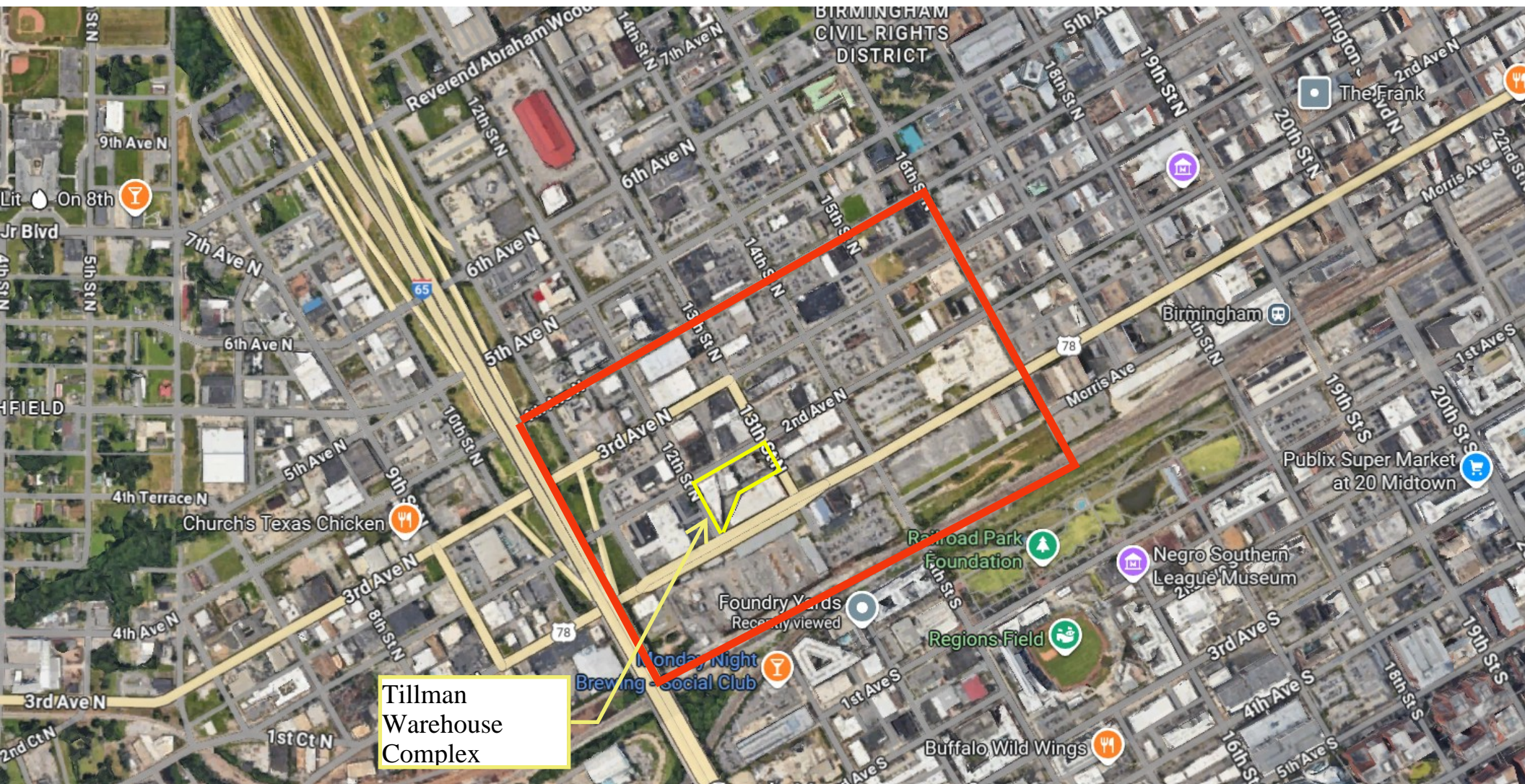
**10. Releasing Copies of Applications:**

Not applicable; no portions of the application are confidential.

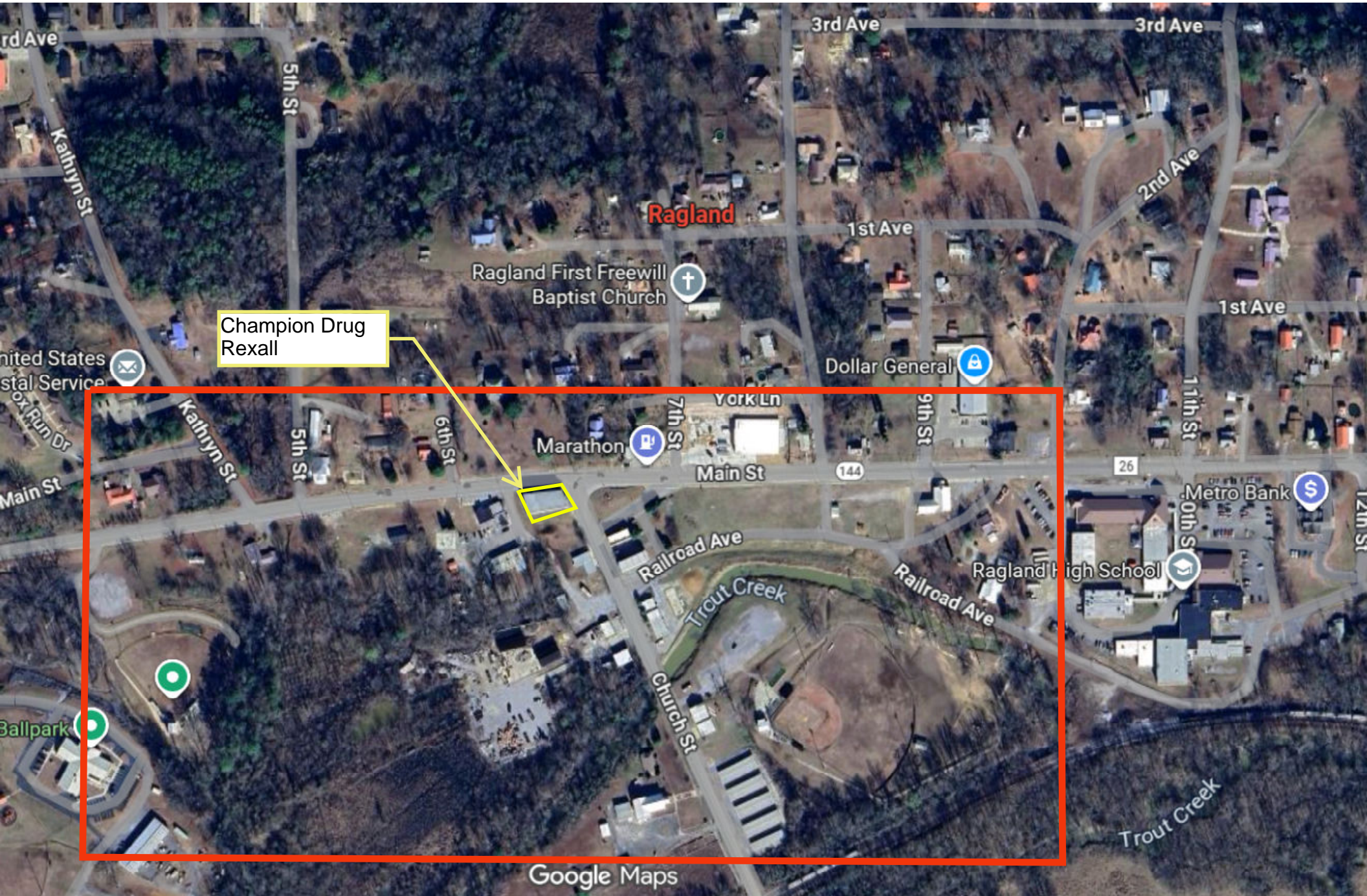
Tarrant Arts and Entertainment District Target Area: City of Tarrant, Jefferson County, Alabama



Birmingham's The Switch District Target Area: City of Birmingham, Jefferson County, Alabama



Ragland's Trout Creek Target Area: Town of Ragland, St. Clair County, Alabama



**EDWARD F. POOLOS**  
DIRECTOR

**JEFFERY W. KITCHENS**  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR



**KAY IVEY**  
GOVERNOR

**Alabama Department of Environmental Management**  
[adem.alabama.gov](http://adem.alabama.gov)

1400 Coliseum Blvd. 36110-2400 ■ Post Office Box 301463  
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-1463  
(334) 271-7700 ■ FAX (334) 271-7950

January 14, 2026

Keya Kraft  
Director of Economic Development  
Two Twentieth Street North, Suite 1200  
Birmingham, Alabama 35203

Re: FY26 Brownfields Assessment Coalition Grant – State Acknowledgement

Dear Ms. Keya Kraft:

The Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) is pleased to acknowledge and support the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham (RPCGB) in its pursuit of a \$1,500,000 US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Brownfields Assessment Coalition Grant.

ADEM understands that RPCGB intends to conduct brownfield inventory, assessment, and related planning activities in coordination with coalition members, including REV Birmingham and St. Clair County, Alabama, where underutilized and potentially contaminated properties present barriers to redevelopment and economic revitalization.

ADEM recognizes that numerous brownfield sites exist throughout RPCGB's service area and that assessment activities are a critical first step toward returning these properties to productive use. We commend RPCGB and its coalition partners for their coordinated approach to addressing brownfield challenges and supporting local redevelopment efforts.

Upon request, ADEM is prepared to coordinate with RPCGB and its partners on outreach activities, provide technical assistance, and support participation in the Alabama Voluntary Cleanup Program or other applicable state brownfield initiatives as appropriate. We appreciate the opportunity to acknowledge this application and look forward to continued coordination should this project be selected for funding. Please do not hesitate to contact us if additional assistance is needed.

For any questions regarding this letter, please contact Crystal L. Collins at 334-279-3067 or via email at [ccollins@adem.alabama.gov](mailto:ccollins@adem.alabama.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Crystal L. Collins".

Crystal L. Collins, Chief  
Redevelopment Unit  
Land Division  
Alabama Department of Environmental Management



**Birmingham Office**  
110 Vulcan Road  
Birmingham, AL 35209-4702  
(205) 942-6168  
(205) 941-1603 (FAX)  
(205) 941-1603 (FAX)

**Decatur Office**  
2715 Sandlin Road, S.W.  
Decatur, AL 35603-1333  
(256) 353-1713  
(256) 340-9359 (FAX)  
(256) 340-9359 (FAX)

**Coastal Office**  
1615 South Broad Street  
Mobile, AL 36605  
(251) 450-3400  
(251) 479-2593 (FAX)  
(251) 479-2593 (FAX)

## 1. PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION AND PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION

### a. Coalition Members

The Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham (the “RPCGB”) was established in 1963 to initially provide planning and research services to municipalities in Jefferson County, Alabama. Today, the RPCGB partners with 84 local governments in six counties with a total population exceeding 1.1 million people (2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (ACS)). The Region includes Blount, Chilton, Jefferson, Shelby, St. Clair, and Walker Counties, occupying a total of 4,745 square miles in North Central Alabama. RPCGB provides a wide range of services to local governments, including economic development, funding procurement, and comprehensive planning assistance to address regional economic challenges and opportunities. In FY22, RPCGB was awarded \$500,000 through an EPA Community-Wide Brownfield Assessment Grant, allowing RPCGB to develop a comprehensive brownfield inventory, pinpoint target communities in need of brownfield assistance, and complete environmental assessments and associated reuse planning. In just three years, the RPCGB utilized 100% of the FY22 brownfield grant and established a backlog of brownfield sites needing assessments. Through outreach and word of mouth, the RPCGB has successfully established a brownfield program that regularly fields brownfield funding requests from municipalities and nonprofits throughout the Region. It is estimated that the Greater Birmingham area has more than **3,900 brownfields**; thus, the RPCGB has only scratched the surface of the Region’s brownfield redevelopment potential.

To advance sustainable development and expand on the regional brownfield program, the RPCGB is applying for funding as the lead member of the Greater Birmingham Brownfield Coalition (GBBC). The Coalition includes REV Birmingham (REV) and St. Clair County as non-lead members. Established in 2012, REV is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit focused on place-based revitalization and economic development. Its mission is to create lively commercial districts, supporting “yaysayer’s” organizing efforts, helping local startups and small businesses in Birmingham, and assisting developers and investors contributing to the city’s renewal. St. Clair County is governed by the County Commission, a five-member elected body dedicated to providing essential public services including infrastructure maintenance (roads and bridges), public safety, sanitation, and health/welfare services to its citizens. It operates under a unit system to efficiently manage county resources, finances, and equipment while fostering economic development and growth for the County. Although REV Birmingham and the St. Clair County Commission both have administrative staff, they have very limited experience with EPA brownfield assessments and they currently lack the capacity and resources necessary to manage an assessment grant independently. Notably, in FY23, REV was awarded an EPA Brownfield Cleanup Grant for a property adjacent to their offices. The grant, now over 90% complete, proved successful; however, this effort placed considerable strain on REV’s resources. Staff acknowledged that overseeing an assessment grant involving coordination with multiple property owners and sites would not be feasible without significant administrative assistance. Consequently, these organizations are collaborating with RPCGB, which has been operating a successful brownfield assessment program for the past 5 years, to facilitate the assessment and redevelopment of brownfields across the region.

### b. Overview of Brownfield Challenges and Description of Target Area

Located in the Appalachian foothills of North-Central Alabama, the Greater Birmingham Region features flat farmland in its southern areas and rolling hills and mountains to the north. The discovery of significant iron ore, coal, and limestone deposits in the 19th century catalyzed the rise of the steel industry in the region. As a result, the local economy transitioned rapidly from agriculture to mining and steel production, permanently transforming the landscape. Birmingham soon emerged as Alabama’s cultural and industrial hub, becoming the state’s most populous city less than two decades after its founding in 1871. The steel industry continued to drive rapid growth in Birmingham well into the 20th century, earning the city the nickname “The Magic City.” Today, historic districts, notable architecture, and vibrant cultural organizations reflect Birmingham’s rich heritage and resilience. In recent decades, however, the region has faced steady population decline due to changing economic conditions and suburban migration. Following the 2020 Decennial Census, Birmingham lost its longstanding status as Alabama’s largest city for the first time in over a century. As steel production moved overseas and domestic facilities reduced or ceased operations, the communities originally established around these industries experienced stagnation and neglect. This shift created a pronounced divide between downtown Birmingham and its industrial communities, and the more affluent suburbs. Areas near former industrial sites struggled to diversify their economies, while downtown Birmingham contended with underutilized infrastructure, vacant properties, and financial pressures associated with depopulation. Legacy pollution, diminished tax bases, and environmental risks from thousands of brownfields have further challenged these communities. These factors were instrumental in the selection of the Target Areas for this application, including **Birmingham’s The Switch** (REV Birmingham), the **Tarrant Arts and Entertainment District** (RPCGB), and **Ragland’s Trout Creek** (St. Clair County).

The first Target Area is located in Downtown Birmingham. Although the Birmingham Metropolitan Area remains the largest in the state, due to a population shift to affluent suburbs, Birmingham (pop. 199,322) is now Alabama’s second largest city (ACS). The Switch lies within the northwest quadrant of downtown (Census Tract 01073002701 (CT 27.01)), between the Civil Rights District and Railroad Park. This area, spanning about 94 acres and 24 city blocks, is bordered by 4th Avenue North to the north, 16th Street North to the east, the CSX Railroad to the south, and Interstate 65 to the west. The Switch formerly supported businesses in the Historic 4th Avenue Business District with a railroad switchyard and roundhouse that changed train directions for coal, lumber, textiles, and other goods entering or leaving the city. As Birmingham expanded in the 1900s, both the platform and its roundhouse were removed to make way for various developments. Today, a portion of the abandoned railroad right-of-way cuts through the District with a distinctive arc.

The Switch is located in a **designated Opportunity Zone** and is one of three districts forming Downtown Birmingham’s **Business Improvement District (BID)**. A BID, authorized by state law and city ordinance, allows property owners to collectively fund additional services beyond what the city provides, such as security, litter control, graffiti removal, district events, and marketing. The BID operates somewhat like a homeowner’s association for businesses and aims to enhance competitiveness and identity through improved services. The Downtown Birmingham BID board, known simply as Downtown BHM BID, consists of property owners, with one-third of seats reserved for owners of lower-value properties. In collaboration

with residents and REV, Downtown BHM BID has identified several concerns within The Switch district, many associated with the substantial number of brownfields documented in a previous inventory, which recorded over 20 such sites in the district (including a bulk oil facility, former drycleaning plant, multiple auto repair facilities, old gas stations, and vacant aging commercial properties). Interspersed among the brownfields are small businesses that largely cater to the adjacent low-income neighborhoods of Titusville, Smithfield, and Fountain Heights, each with poverty rates exceeding 50% (ACS). Vacant properties in the district are subject to frequent break-ins, resulting in potentially hazardous temporary shelters for individuals experiencing homelessness. In January 2024, a significant three-alarm fire occurred in a large, two-story abandoned brownfield building in The Switch after it was entered by transient occupants seeking warmth. This incident, and others like it, pose risks to neighboring small businesses, which continue to be impacted by ongoing challenges arising from neglected properties throughout The Switch.

The second Target Area is located in the City of Tarrant (Jefferson County), an industrial city adjoining Birmingham's northern boundary. Tarrant encompasses 6.4 square miles and is home to 6,014 residents, 66.9% of which are minorities (ACS). The redlined area became an incorporated city, separate from Birmingham, in 1918. With proximity to cheap labor and the critical natural resources needed for steel production, Tarrant served as an industrial hub of Greater Birmingham for a century. Despite providing steady employment for generations, the steel industry has subjected the City and its residents to disproportionate negative environmental and health impacts. Of great concern is the 600-acre 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue Superfund Site which abuts the city limits. The Superfund Site is comprised of industrial facilities: coke ovens, asphalt batch plants, pipe and steel manufacturing facilities, and limestone quarries, as well as hundreds of residential properties which have soil exceeding Removal Management Levels for benzo(a)pyrene (BaP), lead, and arsenic (EPA). Steel plants and supporting facilities began closing in the early 1970s due to foreign competition, increasingly stringent air-quality requirements, and an industry-wide transition to smelting recycled scrap into ductile iron instead of utilizing raw materials. These factors forced foundries and related industries to close, including Jim Walter Coke (later Bluestone Coke) at Tarrant's western boundary that closed in 2021 and resulted in a loss of 81 jobs (peak workforce was 300), and the nearby US Pipe Foundry and McWane Cast Iron Pipe that closed in 2010 resulting in a combined loss of 449 jobs (Alabama Department of Labor). The City's current unemployment rate is still elevated at 8%, which is 1.7 times higher than Jefferson County as a whole. (ACS). Unemployment along with legacy contamination and high vacancy rates have contributed to severe, long-term financial instability in the city.

Despite these challenges, the City is working with regional partners to remake itself and embrace a new identity. As such, the City has requested assistance from RPCGB with economic development and planning related to the **Tarrant Arts & Entertainment (A&E) District**. This Target Area spans nine blocks within downtown Tarrant and is comprised of approximately 15 acres. The Target Area is located within Census Tract 01073010900 (CT 109) and home to 4,669 individuals (ACS). The majority (74.8%) of residents are minorities, and the median household income is only \$38,086 (ACS). Notably, 23.5% of the population has less than a high school education, and a staggering 17.8% of households are linguistically isolated (ACS). Additionally, the USDA considers the entire city a food desert, with limited access to adequate fresh food options. Geographically, the Tarrant A&E District is bounded by Pinson Valley Alley to the north, Elizabeth Avenue to the east, Jackson Boulevard to the south, and East Lake Boulevard to the west. Characterized by historic, one-and two-story commercial buildings and vacant lots, the Target Area is plagued by abandoned and derelict buildings, many of which have broken or missing windows and failing facades. Some lots are cluttered with scrap vehicles associated with nearby legacy auto garages. Despite the lack of private investment and nearby industrial areas, a fledgling arts and entertainment scene is coalescing along the main arteries of Ford Avenue and Pinson Street. A nondescript recording studio on Ford Avenue attracts both emerging and established recording artists to the area from around the country, and Gallery VOX on Pinson Street is a top destination for regional artists, often hosting exhibitions and events that spill out into the surrounding A&E District. Both spaces have been redeveloped as mixed-use artist spaces with residential on upper floors and have been instrumental in inspiring the city to embrace an organic rebranding from industrial center to arts hub. Plenty of redevelopment opportunities exist in the Target Area; an initial inventory has identified 33 brownfield sites in the A&E District. This inventory consists of underutilized retail, auto repair, abandoned gas stations, vacant lots, and former municipal buildings.

The third and final Target Area is located in the Town of Ragland (St. Clair County), approximately 50 miles northeast of Birmingham. Covering 16.9 square miles, Ragland has a population of 1,601 residents (ACS). Originally known as Trout Creek for its trout-filled waters, early community residents relied on agriculture, hunting, and fishing. The discovery of coal in the 1850s marked a shift in the local economy. Following the arrival of the East and West Railroad of Alabama in 1881, significant coal properties were acquired by George Ragland, for whom the Town was named upon its incorporation in 1899. The railroad facilitated the expansion of profitable industries including lumber and cotton alongside coal mining. As coal reserves diminished in the early twentieth century, the extraction of limestone, shale, and clay from "Brickyard Mountain" supported the development of brickmaking and cement manufacturing, which remain the town's largest employers today. The town experienced its highest recorded population during the 2000 decennial census with 1,918 residents, but, consistent with broader rural trends, has since faced population decline, leading to challenges associated with reduced tax revenues and increased vacancy rates. **Ragland's Trout Creek Target Area**, situated in the west-central portion of the town limits, extends along Main Street and Trout Creek on an east-west axis. The area is roughly bounded by York Lane to the north, 10th Street to the east, the Alabama and Tennessee River Railway to the south, and Fredia Street to the west, encompassing roughly 90 acres. Much of this land comprises floodplain surrounding Trout Creek, but also includes the town's downtown positioned at the intersection of Main & Church Streets, educational and municipal athletic facilities, small industrial facilities, mini storage units, several churches, and nine identified brownfields which include vacant retail establishments, a former drycleaner, and vacated municipal buildings. Narrow sidewalks intermittently run along a small portion of Main Street and border empty storefronts on Church Street. With industrial brick and cement plants to the south, the area features a fragmented street network and intermittent pedestrian pathways, resulting in the absence of a cohesive identity and making it difficult to attract businesses and residents to the mostly abandoned downtown. In response, and with the support of St. Clair County and regional partners, the Town aims to establish a **3,000-foot greenway** as the first phase of a trailway along the creek and an abandoned railroad

spur. The greenway will link the high school and downtown area at its eastern end to the Ragland Municipal Complex at its western terminus, fostering a unified sense of place within the currently segmented community. This greenway will serve as the sole pedestrian corridor linking the high school and eastern neighborhoods to the Municipal Complex, which houses athletic fields, the Ragland Senior Center, tennis and pickleball courts, and additional Town amenities. Multiple brownfields, including deteriorating structures abandoned due to recurrent flooding, are located directly along the proposed corridor. Given Ragland's limited population size and constrained tax base, the Town is seeking support to effectively address its brownfield challenges. The Trout Creek Target Area encompasses sections of Census Tracts 01115040302 (CT 403.02) and 01115040301 (CT 403.01). Owing to the town's compact geography, demographic data specific to Ragland offers a more accurate assessment of local needs than aggregated figures from the broader census tracts, which extend well beyond municipal boundaries. Ragland is clearly a low-income community, as its median household income (\$37,679) is less than half the national average, and 41% of residents make less than \$25,000 per year (ACS). Furthermore, Ragland's unemployment rate is 11.7%, and 51.7% of individuals under age 18 live below the poverty line, underscoring the significant socioeconomic challenges facing the community (ACS).

The RPCGB and GBBC are committed to providing assessment and reuse planning assistance to facilitate the redevelopment of brownfield sites within the Target Areas, thus enabling residents and stakeholders to reshape their community by diversifying the local economy and providing support to the regional population by ways of increased employment opportunities, retail tax revenue, affordable housing, social wellbeing, and improved health. Given both the significant demand and persistent need throughout the Region, as well as the prevalence of brownfield properties resulting from historic industrial activity, the Coalition is seeking a \$1,500,000 Coalition Assessment Grant to advance the projects outlined in this application and sustain the momentum of our established regional brownfield redevelopment program. Additionally, more than 50 brownfield sites situated outside the Target Areas are catalogued in a secondary inventory. Sites in this inventory will be prioritized for assessment in accordance with a decision matrix developed under RPCGB's FY22 Assessment Grant (see Section 1.d), contingent on receipt of funding.

### c. Description of the Priority Brownfield Sites

Driven by multiple factors, including community need and impact, redevelopment potential, and anticipated environmental concerns, priority sites were selected within each of the three Coalition member Target Areas. Located within **Birmingham's The Switch Target Area** is the first priority site; the **Tillman Warehouse Complex**. The Complex is comprised of four light industrial buildings, occupying nearly the entirety of the city block. Constructed between 1945 and 1950, the buildings span a combined total of 64,061 square feet. Significantly underutilized, all buildings are either vacant or used for storage. Previous operations included retail, a commercial commissary, department store storage, and an auto garage. Contamination concerns associated with the auto garage includes polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) from in-ground hoists, used motor oil, and degreasers used to clean engine parts. Exposure to PCBs can cause cancer, along with immune system, reproductive system, nervous system, and endocrine system complications (EPA). Additionally, used motor oil typically contains polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), most of which are known carcinogens (CDC). Trichloroethylene (TCE), a popular degreaser associated with auto repair operations, is a human carcinogen and is also associated with serious birth defects, male reproductive toxicity, conjunctival irritation, headache, nausea, damage to the liver, kidney, heart, central nervous system, and immune system (EPA). When improperly handled, these contaminants can permeate cracked concrete, seeping into the soil and groundwater, where it can migrate based upon underlying geology. Given the Priority Site's urban location, the primary human exposure concern is vapor inhalation from volatile constituents like TCE, which will work their way from the subsurface into the breathing zone of impacted buildings.

Because of when the buildings were constructed, it's likely that hazardous building materials such as Lead Based Paint (LBP) and Asbestos Containing Materials (ACMs) are present. During site walk-throughs, many building materials appeared to be in poor shape, which increases the risk of exposure. The property's long history of industrial use adds further environmental risks; for example, a 1911 Sanborn map shows the Ivy Leaf and Piper Coal Company, coal yards, and the Birmingham Southern Railroad previously operated on this site. The soil is likely contaminated with heavy metals and Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs) from past coal use. The abandoned railroad corridor may have introduced additional pollutants from creosote-treated railroad ties and herbicide applications along the tracks. Creosote, used to preserve railroad ties, is a known carcinogen (Agency for Toxic Substances & Disease Registry (ATSDR)). Herbicides, including those containing arsenic, were also likely applied along the rails to control vegetation; arsenical herbicides have been common since the 1950s, and arsenic is classified by the EPA as a confirmed human carcinogen (ATSDR). There is also a possibility that nontraditional herbicides such as diesel fuel, leaded gasoline, or waste oil were used as a cost-cutting measure. The EPA classifies diesel and leaded gasoline as probable human carcinogens, and exposure can damage the central nervous system and cause neurological issues in children (ATSDR). In addition, the former Phoenix Laundry Supply is situated across the street and at a higher elevation than the subject site. This facility previously distributed tetrachloroethylene (PCE), commonly referred to as "perc," to local drycleaning establishments and may represent an additional source of TCE contamination on the property, given that PCE degrades to TCE over time (EPA). The Tillman Warehouse Complex was selected as a priority site due to the probable degree of contamination, on-going redevelopment efforts in The Switch, and the targeted site-specific redevelopment plans that have been established for the Complex.

Within the northwestern portion of the **Tarrant A&E District Target Area**, the **Jr's Union 76** property was identified as the second priority brownfield site. The vacant gasoline dispensing station and auto repair building is situated on a 0.277-acre corner lot at the southern gateway to the District. The single-story building faces Pinson Street, featuring a red brick façade with a large plate-glass entryway and three white garage doors. Brick columns supporting the original 1930s canopy remain in place, although the canopy roof itself is missing. The building spans approximately 4,500 SF. Constructed primarily in 1930 and active until approximately 2001, a large portion of the station's operation preceded major environmental regulations, waste management, and disposal procedures. According to the Alabama Department of Environmental Management's (ADEM) Underground Storage Tank (UST) Database, the site has at least one UST still in place. Environmental hazards associated with

previous activities include both petroleum products and hazardous substances from vehicle servicing operations and former USTs, in-ground hoists, associated product lines, and dispensers. Pollutants of concern include gasoline, diesel fuel, PCBs, Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) including TCE, and PAHs, which present a multitude of potential exposure hazards as presented for the Tillman Warehouse Complex (EPA). Additionally, due to the date of construction, LBP and ACMs are likely incorporated within the building. With residents living as close as 400 feet from the site, Jr's Union 76 is a priority site due to proximity to residential homes, redevelopment potential, its prominent location in the District, and anticipated degree of contamination.

Across the street and east of Jr's Union 76, the **Pinson Street Lot** is the third priority site. Spanning three parcels, the vacant properties were previously occupied by commercial buildings built in 1925. Unauthorized access by transient populations and hazardous conditions from failing facades forced the city to demolish the buildings in 2023. Today, all that remains are uneven concrete slabs at the locations of the former buildings, some with former floor coverings intact. The combined parcels span approximately 0.24 acres. According to Sanborn maps dating between 1929 and 1969, stores, restaurants, and a drycleaner previously occupied the site. Depicted on the 1929 Sanborn and likely present until 1949, the drycleaner would have initially used class II petroleum distillates, such as Stoddard solvents as the primary cleaning agent. Perc (PCE) became a common drycleaning solvent in the mid-1930s and 1940s, and most drycleaners switched to perc during this time. The period that the drycleaner operated preceded major environmental regulations and current waste management and disposal procedures, and therefore, these operations may have caused subsurface contamination. PCE, a known human carcinogen can cause conjunctival irritation, headaches, nausea, damage to the liver, kidney, heart, central nervous system, and immune system (EPA).

The last priority site, near the northern boundary of **Ragland's Trout Creek Target Area**, is known as **Champion Drug Rexall**. This two-story tan masonry building, built in 1916 on a 0.30-acre lot at the southwest corner of Main and Church, serves as the centerpiece of the downtown area. Above an arched doorway, stone cornices hold up a small metal balcony. Flanking the main doorway, two additional entrances have been added to access the subdivided ground floor replacing large picture windows. The 9,450-square-foot building operated as a regional drugstore until its purchase in 1977, and it has remained empty for around three decades. Given the building's age, ACMs and LBP are likely present throughout the structure; information about their health effects is provided in earlier site descriptions. The southern portion of the property is located within Flood Zone A (FEMA). Champion Drug Rexall was selected as a priority site due to its pivotal role in community planning, especially within Ragland's Downtown Revitalization Plan. Redeveloping this central downtown building is expected to spark further renewal efforts, such as the Trout Creek Greenway, described in the Revitalization Plan.

#### **d. Identifying Additional Sites**

Due to the nature of the Region's economic climate and industrial past, there is no shortage of brownfield sites in our communities. An established database of sites includes 174 brownfields from across our six-county jurisdiction. This geospatial database is available online and is a compilation from various organizations, which includes data from EPA, ADEM, local nonprofits such as OPAL (see project partners), and individual communities. In order to prioritize sites for assessment and planning, the RPCGB developed a first draft site nomination form and accompanying evaluation matrix during the FY22 grant. Specifically, the form and evaluation process will allow the GBBC to appropriately rank and select candidate sites to ensure prioritization of projects that have the greatest likelihood of positively impacting the Target Areas and other disadvantaged communities in the Region. With input from Coalition members, project partners, and other stakeholders, the nomination form is a living document, allowing for beneficial edits upon consensus. Such revisions will be discussed at community meetings. The nomination form is used as a first step in gathering information about a project and at a minimum, requests the following information: A) site location and degree to which reuse will benefit a Target Area or other underserved communities, B) proposed re-uses and ability to address specific community needs (i.e., affordable housing, grocery stores, health care, etc.), C) site eligibility and history; perceived or known degree of contamination; D) level of future/obtained investment and E) future economic impact/ potential to catalyze additional redevelopment projects and estimated job creation and tax base increase. The established scoring rubric allocates greater weight to projects that 1) operate to serve the surrounding community and 2) have the greatest likelihood for success. Site nomination forms will be available to community members at public meetings (as described within Section 2.b), from Coalition members and partners, and online so that residents have easy access. Each public meeting will begin with an opportunity to identify and prioritize sites within the community. The resulting input will then be used to update the primary and secondary brownfield inventories.

#### **e. Reuse Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans**

Target Areas and priority sites were selected through consideration of both community feedback and demonstrated need, as well as their potential to further regional and area-specific planning objectives. In Birmingham, The Switch was designated a Target Area due to its strategic importance within the **Northwest Quadrant (NWQ) Master Development Plan**, which was released in early 2022 by Urban Impact and REV Birmingham, a member of the GBBC. This plan seeks to support enhancements within the downtown area located northwest of the city center, encompassing both the Civil Rights District and The Switch. The NWQ Plan includes three principal objectives: 1) enhancing connectivity between the Quadrant and neighboring districts; 2) promoting community investment with an emphasis on equitable development; and 3) cultivating a comprehensive support system for entrepreneurs and startups, positioning the Quadrant as Birmingham's leading innovation center. Within the scope of the NWQ Plan, the Tillman Warehouse Complex is recognized as one of five Catalytic Development Sites in The Switch. Detailed redevelopment strategies have been formulated for each building, specifying intended uses. Notably, the former Matthew's Foreign Car Parts, situated at the northeast corner of the Complex, will be reimagined as a mixed-use facility, offering 13,570 square feet of restaurant/retail space on the ground floor and an equivalent area of loft apartments above. The remaining buildings within the Complex are designated for retail and office functions, with flexible lease terms designed to attract minority, women-owned, and small or startup enterprises. Recruitment efforts will target businesses from Innovation Depot, a well-established small business incubator operating at the eastern gateway of The Switch. Office areas will feature expansive, flexible layouts to accommodate a variety of tenants. The redevelopment plan also

incorporates outdoor amenities such as landscaped courtyards, lawns, plazas, “office spill-out” seating, and outdoor dining spaces, all complementing the pedestrian-oriented Switch Trail slated to traverse the former railroad right-of-way adjoining the Tillman Warehouse Complex. Upon completion, the revitalized Complex will significantly improve inter-quadrant connectivity and foster broader links to neighboring districts via the Switch Trail, thus fulfilling the first objective of the NWQ Plan. The second and third objectives will be addressed through accessible leasing opportunities for office and retail spaces, benefiting both startups and established small businesses.

Although Tarrant currently lacks a dedicated downtown revitalization plan, the city has utilized relevant regional planning initiatives outlined in **RPCGB’s 2023-2025 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)** as a framework for its redevelopment objectives. The CEDS outlines several goals: (1) strengthening the regional economy by fostering a diverse business environment that includes both major employers and emerging startups; (2) cultivating and maintaining a workforce equipped with skills appropriate for the demands of the modern economy; (3) preserving and enhancing the region’s natural assets and cultural amenities through sustainable growth practices; and (4) focusing on the redevelopment of existing underutilized commercial and industrial sites. In addition to these strategic priorities, feedback from community stakeholders and elected officials during city council sessions consistently highlights the critical need to address food insecurity in the area. Consequently, preliminary designs for both priority sites within the Tarrant Arts & Entertainment District incorporate strategies to mitigate food scarcity. Jr’s Union 76 is envisioned as a compact neighborhood grocery and market housed within a 4,500-square-foot facility, offering fresh produce year-round alongside hot and cold pre-packaged meal options, with accessibility features such as SNAP acceptance for low-income residents. Across the street, the vacant Pinson Street Lot will be transformed into an “outdoor food court,” supporting food truck gatherings and a seasonal farmers market that celebrates the city’s diverse demographic profile. To reinforce the district’s identity as an arts hub, local artists will create murals on the interior walls of the Pinson Street Lot. A pocket park will connect the lot across Pinson Alley to Tarrant Nature Park, further enhancing the outdoor space with artistic lighting, picnic accommodations, sculptural installations, and a rain garden with permeable paving, resilient plantings, and native landscaping. This garden will not only beautify former blighted areas but also improve stormwater management and boost climate resilience. The redevelopment of Jr’s Union 76 and the Pinson Street Lot will nurture entrepreneurial ventures and deliver essential food and cultural resources to Tarrant, supporting the achievement of CEDS Goals 1 and 3. The successful activation of these sites will also meet CEDS Goal 4 by revitalizing longstanding vacant properties in the downtown area.

The **Downtown Revitalization Plan for the Town of Ragland**, published in 2019, articulates four primary objectives: 1) creating positive first impressions for visitors, 2) developing a convenient, walkable, and aesthetically appealing downtown, 3) creating a diverse mix of uses to support economic vitality, and 4) establishing a greenway along Trout Creek. The plan includes a targeted redevelopment strategy for the Champion Drug Rexall, recommending that the Town “renovate and occupy the Rexall Building (for pharmacy expansion, business incubator, or other uses)” as a mid-term priority. The community anticipates that Ragland Pharmacy, a locally owned business looking for a larger space, will relocate to the ground floor of the Rexall Building once it is positioned for redevelopment. Additionally, a general store offering local products and refreshments is proposed to share the premises, attracting pedestrian traffic. Plans also include a thoughtfully designed outdoor seating area south of the building to serve as a welcoming rest stop for greenway users. This redevelopment aims to integrate public and private spaces, creating an inviting environment for both residents and visitors, and furthering the broader initiatives along the Trout Creek corridor. Successful redevelopment of the Rexall property will advance Goals 1-3 of the Revitalization Plan. Investment in this gateway site will enhance first impressions for visitors, addressing Goal 1. While improvements to the Rexall property will improve downtown aesthetics and walkability at the main downtown intersection (Goal 2), additional investments are necessary to achieve comprehensive walkability throughout the Trout Creek Target Area (see funding sources in Section 1.g below). Progress toward Goal 3 will require further brownfield redevelopment in the Trout Creek Target Area; however, repurposing the Rexall property as a pharmacy and general store marks a significant step forward. To accomplish Goal 4, the development of a greenway along Trout Creek, additional funding will be necessary to assess abandoned brownfield properties within the floodplain and to conduct more comprehensive planning for the trail; both of which are eligible activities under this grant program.

#### **f. Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategy**

Transforming vacant and deteriorated properties into valuable community assets will notably improve connectivity and walkability within each Target Area, fostering a stronger sense of place and promoting community engagement. Redevelopment efforts in these areas are expected to stimulate commercial activities, generate employment opportunities, and increase property tax revenues. Furthermore, these investments are anticipated to act as catalysts for future redevelopment, thereby enhancing residents' quality of life while reinforcing the economic resilience of the Region. Specifically, redevelopment plans for the Tillman Warehouse Complex include the integration of sustainable and resilient construction methods. According to the FEMA National Risk Index for Natural Hazards, Jefferson County faces significant risks from tornadoes, strong wind events, and heat waves, each ranking in the 97th to 99th percentiles nationally. In response, proposed reuse strategies feature impact-rated glazing (reinforced window and door assemblies with enhanced roof connections), dedicated refuge zones (reinforced internal storm shelters), and the implementation of green infrastructure along the planned Switch Trail to mitigate urban heat island effects. The design will also include energy-saving components like advanced insulation windows, modern roofing solutions, LED lighting, and upgraded HVAC, electrical, plumbing, and mechanical systems. For the Pinson Street Lot Priority Site in Tarrant, preliminary designs include stormwater management measures to address recurrent street flooding on Pinson Street and Ford Avenue, a persistent issue caused by runoff channeling through downtown from elevated neighborhoods to the south. While detailed engineering plans for the Jr’s Union 76 and Champion Drug Rexall redevelopments remain forthcoming, established relationships with developers and investors will be utilized to encourage the adoption of energy-efficient design principles in future redevelopment projects. Additional projected outcomes and benefits associated with redevelopment of the priority sites are summarized in the table below.

Target Area	Correlating Coalition Member	Priority Site(s)	Building Reuse	Outcomes and Benefits
Birmingham’s The Switch	REV Birmingham	Tillman Warehouse Complex	Yes; 3 buildings (combined SF of 50,755) preserved and reused	23,615 SF of office/retail, 13,570 SF of restaurant/retail, 13,750 SF of loft apartments, affordable commercial space for small and startup business, creation of approximately 43 new jobs*.
Tarrant Arts and Entertainment District	RPCGB	Jr’s Union 76	Yes; 4,500 SF historic building preserved and reused	Neighborhood market providing fresh foods, directly addressing the area’s food desert status; will create approximately 5 new jobs*.
		Pinson Street Lot	NA	Food truck hub and seasonal farmers’ market; pocket park with rain garden features that address climate adaptation and mitigation through stormwater management and filtration. Will create economic opportunities for local farmers and restaurant entrepreneurs.
Ragland’s Trout Creek	St. Clair County	Champion Drug Rexall	Yes; 9,450 SF historic building preserved and reused	9,450 SF pharmacy/general store will renew interest in Downtown for locals and visitors; will provide space for Ragland Pharmacy to expand business operations; ~1,500 SF outdoor sitting space to create a sense of place; approximately 6 jobs retained and 5 new jobs created*.

\* U.S. Energy Information Administration

**g. Resources Needed for Site Reuse**

This grant will provide funding for property assessments to facilitate investment prioritization and identify any necessary remediation. The RPCGB and its partners will incorporate the incentives and grants listed below to maximize resources available in the Target Areas. The RPCGB can apply for these resources on its own or in partnership with another municipal entity or developer. All three Coalition members specialize in identifying/stacking sources of capital to achieve economic and/or community development goals and are well positioned to leverage this brownfield grant to ensure successful implementation of the proposed reuse projects. It’s important to note that the funding sources included below are not exhaustive and are not dependent on receiving the EPA assessment grant, unless stated otherwise.

Funding Source	Purpose/Role (Assessment/Remediation/Reuse)
Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) Area Development and POWER grants	<b>Reuse:</b> All of the sites in our region fall within the footprint of the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), an economic development partnership entity of the federal government and 13 state governments, including Alabama. These programs allocate grants, and in FY 2024, the max grant award through the area development program was <b>\$500,000</b> for construction projects. ARC funding could be utilized to support redevelopment of brownfield sites, provided the development will directly contribute to the local economy .
Sabre Finance	<b>Reuse:</b> Sabre Finance is a nonprofit lender and Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) that invests in small businesses across the state, including start-up and mid-life companies in manufacturing & distribution, healthcare, tech, specialized and emerging industries. Qualifying new and expanding businesses, such as new business tenants in the Champion Drug Rexall building and small and startup businesses at Tillman Warehouse Complex are encouraged to apply.
Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT): Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) Grant	<b>Reuse:</b> The TAP is a competitive federal grant program administered by ALDOT that funds community-based transportation projects, such as the installation of sidewalks and streetscape improvements within Ragland’s Trout Creek Target Area. Federal funding up to <b>\$800,000</b> is available and the grant typically requires a 20% cost share from the applicant. Annual deadlines vary.
Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA): Recreational Trails Program (RTP)	<b>Reuse:</b> The RTP was created in 1998 and is funded through the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration. Administered by ADECA, local units of government are eligible for RTP funding ( <b>\$200,000-\$400,000</b> ) to develop recreational trails and trail related resources. The competitive grant requires a 20% cost share from the applicant. Annual deadlines vary. The Town of Ragland will apply for funding to develop the Trout Creek Greenway.
ADEM: State Revolving Fund (SRF)	<b>Remediation:</b> Following assessment, if soil and/or groundwater contamination is identified at any priority or secondary site, the corresponding public body (county, incorporated city/town, board, and/or authority) can apply to ADEM’s ongoing SRF for remediation activities. The SRF is <b>20-year fixed-rate</b> loan with a <b>below market</b> interest rate (the rate is determined each year).
ADEM: Redevelopment and Voluntary Cleanup Program (VCP)	<b>Assessment/Remediation:</b> Alabama’s VCP is administered by ADEM’s Redevelopment Unit and was established with the goal of encouraging prospective purchasers to redevelop brownfield properties by limiting the liability for new owners and providing oversight in the investigation and clean-up process. The Redevelopment Unit also has funding to assist eligible entities (local governments and non-profits) with assessment, reuse planning, and remediation for priority site brownfields up to <b>\$375,000</b> . This available funding will be pursued for Champion Drug Rexall and Jr’s Union 76 for the abatement of hazardous building materials, following assessment.
Alabama Community Development Block Grant Funds (CDBG)	<b>Reuse:</b> Alabama’s CDBG program could be leveraged for demolition and clearance of deteriorated buildings, provided that this would directly support low- to moderate-income residents through the removal of blight. In some instances, demolition of warehouses and empty structures may be the best pathway to support redevelopment of the site. CDBG funding can also be used to support development of housing for LMI residents or infrastructure needs to encourage

economic development for low- to moderate-income places.
--

#### h. Use of Existing Infrastructure

In an effort to meet its goal of sustainable redevelopment in the Region (see Section 1.e), the GBBC will prioritize funding and sustainability by using existing municipal and building infrastructure whenever possible. All priority brownfield sites have direct access to municipal utilities, including municipal water, sanitary sewer, natural gas, electrical, and high-speed telecommunications. Lighting and sidewalks are in place at Jr’s Union 76, Pinson Street Lot, and Tillman Warehouse Complex priority sites. Funding from ALDOT’s TAP Grant will be pursued for sidewalk and streetscape improvements at Champion Drug Rexall. Street parking is available at all priority sites.

### 2. COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

#### a. The Community’s Need for Funding

All three Target Areas are situated within low-income communities, where local governments do not possess sufficient tax revenue to evaluate or remediate brownfield sites. **Nearly one-third (29.2%) of Tarrant residents live below the poverty line (ACS)**. Additionally, elevated tax delinquency rates combined with depressed property values have left the City with a surplus of over 100 properties (approximately one property per 60 residents). The City is unable to maintain these properties, much less fund environmental assessments. Highlighting this issue at a city council meeting in November 2025, the mayor noted that only \$17,000 remained in the City’s general fund. Similarly, at 25.2%, **Birmingham also faces a poverty rate more than twice the national rate**, resulting in reduced tax revenue and limited resources for nonessential projects like brownfield assessment (ACS). **Ragland’s small population (1,601), high poverty rate (35.2%), and low median income (\$37,679)** severely restrict its budget and tax base (ACS). Besides local governments, the non-profit Coalition partners also lack the financial means to support environmental work, as they must follow established protocols when funding outreach programs, prioritizing and limiting services based on capacity. RPCGB relies on grants and dues to serve its 84 member governments, but grant restrictions and member payment challenges reduce available capital for its brownfield programs. Following the full expenditure of funds from the FY22 assessment grant, RPCGB suspended brownfield assistance in the region until additional federal funding becomes available, despite continued requests for support.

#### b. Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations

Multiple sensitive populations have been identified within the Target Areas, including children, unhoused individuals, those with low incomes, minority groups, limited English-speaking households, the elderly, and disabled persons. Birmingham’s 01073002701, which includes The Switch Target Area, experiences a high housing cost burden, with 35.9% of households spending more than 30% of their income on housing (CDC Places). Adjoining census tracts fare no better with housing cost burdens ranging from 37.8% to 53.3%, exceeding the national average of 31.8% (CDC Places). The lack of sufficient affordable housing options in Birmingham has contributed to significant housing insecurity, with **23.6% of Birmingham residents experiencing housing insecurity** (CDC Places), and an elevated number of individuals experiencing homelessness. One Roof, which releases an annual Point-in-Time Count report on the homeless population of the area, counted 810 people experiencing homelessness in Birmingham in 2025, 46% of whom were unsheltered. The most recent Birmingham-specific data from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) put Birmingham’s unhoused at 1,153 individuals based on a point-in-time count conducted in 2015, the largest in the state. More recent state-level data in HUD’s 2024 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report (AHAR) notes that **Alabama has the third highest percentage of unsheltered homeless in the Country**, behind only California and Oregon. Furthermore, the AHAR highlights that Alabama experienced a 39.3% rise in homelessness between 2023 and 2024, one of only seven states with increases exceeding 25%. At 48%, Alabama also has the third highest percentage of unsheltered homeless children in the country. In The Switch Target Area, the elevated number of unsheltered individuals, coupled with a 30% building vacancy rate (based on a 2025 inventory), poses a significant risk to these vulnerable groups. A clear example of this risk occurred in January 2024, when a three-alarm fire in The Switch was accidentally set by unsheltered individuals seeking warmth in an abandoned brownfield property. To address these concerns, the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) released a white paper entitled “Ending Homelessness in Birmingham in 10 Years.” The study called for a “housing first” approach, that places individuals in permanent housing prior to offering services. This approach has resulted in a 90% reduction in homelessness over 10 years in some communities. In response to this and other studies, in December 2025 the City of Birmingham and One Roof released “Redefining Community: City of Birmingham Roadmap of Services for Unsheltered Residents,” which included a 12-point plan to cut long-term unsheltered homelessness by 40% over the course of 2026. The strategy includes boosting the number of shelter beds available (including in and around The Switch), improving coordinated efforts with partner agencies, and addressing factors that lead to homelessness, especially following incarceration.

The Tarrant A&E District Target Area is situated within Census Tract 01073010900 (CT 109), which is characterized by substantial minority representation (74.8%), a significant proportion of linguistically isolated households (17.8%), and a considerable low-income population (**35.5% of households earn less than \$25,000 annually**) (ACS). The affordability of rental housing attracts low-income families to the area, yet this affordability comes with widespread blight and various environmental hazards. Residents are subject to contamination exposure originating from nearby brownfields and the 35th Avenue Superfund Site, located less than one mile from the District. This challenge is further exacerbated by a lack of health insurance coverage, with 19.9% of residents uninsured (ACS). Other contributing factors include limited access to medical care, designation as a food desert, an unemployment rate of 6.2%, and low educational attainment, with **23.5% of residents lacking a high school diploma** (ACS). These conditions collectively result in a notably reduced life expectancy for individuals residing in the census tract. According to the CDC’s U.S. Small-Area Life Expectancy Estimates Project (CDC USALEEP), the **life expectancy for those living in CT 109 is just 69.3 years**, which is among the lowest in the nation and ranks in the 94<sup>th</sup> percentile statewide.

The Trout Creek Target Area is situated in two census tracts, 01115040301 (CT 403.01) and 01115040302 (CT 403.02). In CT 403.02, **the prevalence of adults living with a disability is a staggering 45.8%** (CDC Places). Additional sensitive populations in the Target Area include the elderly (25.2% in CT 403.01) and low-income individuals (**32.5% of Ragland residents are below the poverty level**) (ACS). Health outcomes associated with disabilities are further compounded by a lack of access to healthcare and support services within St. Clair County. St. Clair County has the 4<sup>th</sup> worst access to primary care in

Alabama, with a ratio of 1 physician for every 5,870 residents (County Health Rankings, 2025 (CHR)). Exposure to contaminants suspected to be present at the Town’s brownfields likely exacerbate health issues, leading to increased medical costs and decreased overall quality of life. Among elderly populations, health risks stemming from environmental contamination can exacerbate pre-existing conditions. Their increased susceptibility to illness, coupled with mobility limitations (evidenced by 23.4% of adults in CT 403.2 living with mobility disabilities) may hinder their ability to seek assistance or relocate should environmental circumstances deteriorate (CDC Places). Low-income individuals frequently lack adequate resources to address health concerns related to contamination. Economic constraints may limit access to nutritious food (as indicated by the 26.3% rate of food insecurity in Ragland), stable housing (17.8% experiencing housing insecurity), and necessary medical services, thereby intensifying the adverse effects of environmental hazards. As a consequence, brownfields and pollution may disproportionately impact these vulnerable groups, resulting in negative health outcomes, higher stress levels, and a diminished quality of life, as reflected by 22% of Ragland residents reporting mental distress and nearly 30.3% reporting fair or poor general health (CDC Places).

After the completion of successful assessments and planning exercises implemented under this grant, the planned redevelopment projects will boost the economy and equip communities with financial resources to reduce welfare challenges and support vulnerable groups. Every proposed redevelopment project at the four priority sites will create new jobs in those communities, improving access to health insurance for those currently uninsured and access to resources through increased income. The Switch redevelopment initiative will eliminate blighted areas by revitalizing nearly an entire city block, which will spark further investment in the district and lower the high vacancy rate. Reactivation of the district will limit unsafe temporary housing options for transient individuals, encouraging the use of one of six shelters bordering the district (including the newly constructed Firehouse Shelter in the adjoining census tract), a major goal outlined in the city’s “Redefining Community” initiative. Existing small business owners in the Downtown BHM BID stand to benefit from blight removal as well, due to a safer environment and a more appealing setting to attract customers. For both Tarrant priority sites, plans include increasing access to fresh food, which will improve community health and address food desert issues. In Ragland, restoring the central historic downtown building is expected to inspire additional development and foster community pride. Linking the downtown sidewalk system with the proposed Trout Creek greenway will promote outdoor activities and improve accessibility for people with mobility challenges. Finally, redevelopment in the Target Areas will be preceded by environmental remediation, protecting our sensitive populations from exposure risks and bringing positive change to the region.

**c. Greater Than Normal Incidence of Disease and Adverse Health Conditions**

In 2024, America’s Health Rankings (United Health Foundation) ranked Alabama as having the 5<sup>th</sup> worst overall health outcomes of all states. Alabama’s health outcomes have been consistently poor since tracking began in 2015, with rankings varying from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> worst nationally. America’s Health Rankings utilize four determinants of health: social and economic factors, physical environment, behaviors, and clinical care. On average, 20.2% of residents living within RPCGB’s jurisdiction experiences fair or poor health (CHR). Consequently, the Region’s average premature death rate is 37.3% higher than the U.S. average (CHR). Childhood health is widely regarded as an important measure of a community’s overall well-being. According to the March of Dimes 2025 Premature Birth Report Card (March of Dimes), the State of Alabama received a grade of “F.” The premature birth rate for the state is 12.7% and the infant mortality rate is 7.6 per 1,000 live births, which is 30% greater than the national average (March of Dimes). The March of Dimes also notes the dramatic inequality in health outcomes among infants born to Black families; “the infant mortality rate among babies born to Black birthing people is 1.6 times the state rate” (March of Dimes). This is especially tangible in the Tarrant Target Area which has a 74.8% minority population (ACS). Although infant mortality rates are not available at the census tract level, Jefferson County, where the Tarrant and Switch Target Areas are located, experiences 9 deaths per 1,000 live births, the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest rate in the state and 1.6 times higher than the national rate. The mortality rate jumps to a disturbing 14 deaths per 1,000 live births, or 2.5 times the national rate, for Jefferson County’s black families. A November 2024 report released by CDC’s ATSDR stated that occupational or environmental exposures to solvents in general, and to TCE or PCE in particular (which are potential contaminants associated with the Tarrant and Switch priority sites), can cause adverse pregnancy outcomes such as perinatal mortality, spontaneous abortion, cardiac anomalies, oral clefts, and neural tube defects.

Considering that each Target Area has a priority site that is a potentially significant source of friable ACMs, brownfields in these areas may be exacerbating pre-existing respiratory conditions such as asthma and triggering the onset of other diseases such as COPD and lung and bronchus cancer. It should be noted that residential homes are located mere feet from the Tarrant and Ragland priority sites. Proximity to these and other ACM sources may be contributing to the fact that on average, within the Tarrant, Birmingham, and Ragland Target Areas, 11% of adults have asthma, which is 12% higher than the national rate (CDC Places). Particularly concerning for Ragland, 12.4% of adults suffer from COPD, which is double the national percentage. Furthermore, U.S. Cancer Statistics published by the CDC (2018-2022), show that St. Clair County residents have a lung and bronchus cancer incidence rate 36.7% greater than the U.S. average with a mortality rate 56% greater than the U.S. average. Asthma, COPD, and lung and bronchus cancer can be a result of exposure to friable asbestos (cancer.org). The successful identification of contaminants at priority sites and following redevelopment will contribute to mitigating risks associated with elevated rates of disease, cancer, premature birth and infant mortality, and low life expectancy in the Target Areas, leading to long-term public health improvements within the Region.

**d. Economically Impoverished/Disproportionately Impacted Populations**

The South, particularly the Greater Birmingham Region, has grown rapidly and experienced economic success largely because of its history in coal mining and iron and steel production. These industries financed local infrastructure and transformed Birmingham into a major urban center. Iron and steel production has mostly taken place in Jefferson County areas like Birmingham and Tarrant, where minorities make up 76.8% and 69.6% of the population, respectively (ACS). Historically, these industries have relied on cheap labor from minority and immigrant communities, often exploiting them to maintain high profits. Workers have faced hazardous conditions, civil rights violations, and negative health effects, which are well documented. The most affected groups in Greater Birmingham are low-income residents living near Tarrant’s 35th Avenue Superfund Site. In

Tarrant, 29.2% of individuals and 44.5% of youth live below the poverty line (ACS). The nearby Superfund Site contains several industrial facilities that release emissions, resulting in the deposit of lead, arsenic, BaP, and PAHs in surrounding residential areas, contaminating the soil. Both BaP and arsenic are classified as carcinogens by the EPA. Although the Tarrant Target Area itself is outside the Superfund Site, it is less than a mile away. Despite efforts by the EPA and public concern, the contamination persists. Most Tarrant residents are low-income and at greater risk for illness, and they have been advised against growing their own food, worsening the area's food desert conditions. Moreover, one facility within the Superfund Site still operates intermittently, further harming the community.

This grant will support ongoing community outreach through RPCGB’s expanded brownfield program, helping to identify impacted populations and compile additional inventories. Funding will also aid coalition members in conducting environmental assessments of key sites within Target Areas. After these assessments, further financial resources will be sought to eliminate exposure risks. Redevelopment following cleanup will create jobs for local communities striving to compete in the regional economy. These new employment opportunities, along with the remediation of contaminated land, aim to reduce both environmental and economic challenges for low-income minority residents by offering fair jobs and livable wages in healthier, renewed neighborhoods.

**e. and f. Project Involvement and Project Roles**

Below is a table with contact information for partners who have committed to participating in the Coalition’s brownfield program. The Coalition will continually expand upon this list to ensure inclusion of all stakeholders.

Organization & Contact	Entity Description/Mission	Role
City of Birmingham Tim Gambrel, Chief Planner (205) 254-2211 timothy.gambrel@birminghamal.gov	The mission of the City of Birmingham is to "put people first" by fostering an inclusive, resilient economy, creating quality jobs, and providing essential resources to improve the quality of life for residents across our 99 neighborhoods.	The City will collaborate with neighborhood associations and community leaders to deliver project information to residents, businesses, and stakeholders. Additionally, the City will provide support throughout the site selection process in The Switch.
Urban Impact, Inc. Ivan Holloway, Executive Director (205) 328-1850 iholloway@urbanimpactbirmingham.org	Urban Impact is a non-profit organization, founded in 1980, whose mission is to preserve and promote business and tourism for the western side of downtown Birmingham, which includes the Civil Rights District and neighboring Switch Target Area.	Urban Impact will contribute extensively to the Birmingham brownfield inventory and assist in coordinating additional redevelopment opportunities for minority business owners within the Switch Target Area.
City of Tarrant Tracy Threadford, Mayor (205) 849-2800, ext. 1024 tthreadford@tarrant.gov	Tarrant’s Art and Entertainment District Target Area is represented under the RPCGB’s jurisdiction. Located in Jefferson County, Tarrant strives to improve the quality of life for all its residents.	As a project partner, the City agrees to assist in site selection and coordinating site access by acting as a liaison between the GBBC, property owners and the greater public. Additionally, Tarrant will relay project-specific information between the RPCGB and the public, ensuring open communication with an emphasis on garnering community-based input on site prioritization.
Gallery VOX Joseph and Karen Swann (205) 841-9694 galleryvox@gmail.com	Located within Tarrant’s Target Area, Gallery VOX is contemporary art space boasting unique culturally and historically relevant exhibitions by local and regional artists. Artist-owned, the studio also hosts events and workshops to garner public involvement and build local community.	Gallery Vox will assist the City of Tarrant and RPCGB by acting as a key partner in organizing public events in the Target Area. Such events will provide opportunities for public engagement related to the assessment grant and ongoing efforts to develop the Arts and Entertainment District.
St. Clair County Economic Development Council Don Smith, Executive Director (205) 847-3778 dsmith@stclairedc.com	The St. Clair County Economic Development Council exists to create jobs, increase wealth, and improve the quality of life for St. Clair County citizens.	The Council will support redevelopment in Ragland by recruiting a business with a general store model to Champion Drug Rexall. The Council will also assist the coordination of community engagement for future redevelopment projects in the Trout Creek Target Area.
Opportunity Alabama (OPAL) Alex Flachsbart, Founder & CEO alex@opportunityalabama.com	OPAL is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, founded in 2018 with the goal of de-risking impactful real estate projects, and improving economic resilience and quality of place for Alabama’s underserved communities.	OPAL will assist Opportunity Zone communities throughout the Greater Birmingham Region in leveraging funding sources through public and private investment partnerships as outlined in section 1ci to support a variety of projects, including new commercial and mixed-use development, workforce housing, and historic revitalization. OPAL will also participate in the Brownfield Advisory Committee (BAC).

The EPA, ADEM, and Jefferson and St. Clair County Health Departments are also established partners and will be involved throughout the grant cycle, each contributing to their capacity. Specifically, ADEM will assist in community engagement and

education, the technical review and approval of documents, including the Generic Quality Assurance Project Plan (GQAPP), and with assisting RPCGB and grant partners with applicable brownfield incentives.

**g. Incorporating Community Input**

Following the grant award, a project kick-off meeting will be held to provide an opportunity to re-engage the previously established Brownfield Advisory Committee (BAC), which consists of representatives from local stakeholders. The BAC will be engaged within one month of funding and BAC meetings will be held regularly throughout the project. The BAC will assist in reviewing projects and prioritizing site assessments based on priorities described in Section 1d. The kick-off meeting will outline the grant’s goals, how residents and business owners can provide public input, and how the funds can be utilized to ensure an educated public and allow for additional community involvement. Ongoing communication throughout the life of the grant will be conducted in various methods, including regularly held public meetings and charettes organized in partnership with community organizations such as those listed in Section 2e,f. Public meetings will be held in person at the RPCGB’s centrally located office in Birmingham, and/or at locations within or near Target Areas to ensure easy access for residents. One such additional meeting place includes the Ashville Administrative Center in St. Clair County. At this location, the St. Clair County, AL Commission regularly holds meetings twice a month on the second and fourth Tuesday at 9 AM. RPCGB’s grant manager will attend these meetings as needed, providing updates to the St. Clair County community regarding the Coalition’s brownfield program. Meetings will be held at hours agreeable to most schedules to ensure a high level of attendance and involvement. Additionally, those that cannot be present during live meetings can access recorded meetings online at RPCGB’s website and/or can utilize a call-in number to virtually attend meetings. Meetings will provide a platform for public comment to identify additional brownfield sites, reprioritize known brownfield sites based on established criteria, and voice potential concerns. Commentary will be collected both during public meetings and throughout the life of the grant by recording meeting minutes, distributing and collecting comment cards during meetings, and via email to the project manager at all other times. Commentary cards and email correspondence will allow public input to be captured and documented for future decision-making. This process will also ensure that input is not overlooked and can be addressed in follow up or subsequent meetings. Meetings addressing the Tarrant A&E District Target Area will provide materials in Spanish for the benefit of Tarrant’s high Spanish-speaking population. Public meetings will also be utilized to present potential redevelopment opportunities to interested developers and provide developers with technical assistance for obtaining additional financial incentives for redevelopment. Input will be considered during public meetings in an open manner that embraces the community’s diversity and focuses on a constructive, forward-looking vision for the Region. Additional communication regarding public meetings, grant updates, important health notifications from local county health departments, and opportunities will be conducted in a variety of ways including press releases with the local newspaper (both online and in print) which will include *The Birmingham Times* and AL.com. Brownfield related announcements will also be featured on local news stations, flier distribution via local businesses and community organizations, and on local stakeholder websites. The following social media pages will be used as well: “The Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham”, “The City of Birmingham Government” “Tarrant, Ala.”, “Town of Ragland”, and “What’s Going on in St. Clair County, AL” reaching over 128,500 followers.

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

**Task 1: Cooperative Agreement Oversight**

- a. Project Implementation: EPA-funded tasks: General grant management; develop BAC; Qualified Environmental Consultant (QEC) selection based on a competitive bid process (per 40 CFR 30); meeting facilitation with the BAC, ADEM, and EPA; required reporting; budget reconciliation. Non-EPA grant resources: None.
- b. Schedule: Quarters 1-16: The BAC will convene within one month of funding and meetings will be held at regular intervals throughout the project. A QEC will be selected within 1-2 months of funding. Quarterly reports will be submitted on a quarterly basis. ACRES will be updated appropriately throughout the grant period.
- c. Task Lead: RPCGB will oversee this task with assistance from the BAC and selected QEC.
- d. Outputs: BAC development, 1 Work Plan, 1 Community Involvement Plan, 16 Quarterly Reports, 1 Close-Out Report, regular ACRES reporting, and four submissions (once annually) of Federal Financial Reports SF-425.

**Task 2: Inventory and Community Outreach**

- a. Project Implementation: EPA-funded tasks: Develop marketing materials and make them available online and in hard copy; notify the community of public meetings and assessment schedules; advertise for public meetings online and in-person; hold public meetings to solicit input, inform, educate, and update the community regarding assessment and redevelopment activities; provide updates as necessary at local city council meetings. Coalition members will also attend various brownfield conferences. Non-EPA grant resources: None
- b. Schedule: Quarters 1-16: Community outreach will be performed for the duration of the grant period. The first public meeting will be held within three months. The second public meeting will be held after the first round of assessments. The third public meeting will be held when assessments are nearing completion and reuse planning begins.
- c. Task Lead: RPCGB will oversee this task, with assistance from BAC, ADEM, selected QEC, and community partners.
- d. Outputs: Public meeting advertisements; press releases and project updates; educational materials for public meetings; kick-off meeting; 3+ public meetings; one-on-one meetings with property owners as needed; updated brownfield inventory (additional site selection will utilize the previously described selection hierarchy); attend various brownfield conferences, including 2 EPA Region 4 Conferences and 2 National Brownfield Conferences.

**Task 3: Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs)**

- a. Project Implementation: EPA-funded tasks: ASTM-compliant Phase I ESAs; Phase II ESAs; ADEM and EPA reviewed Generic Quality Assurance Project Plan (GQAPP) and Site-Specific Quality Assurance Project Plans (SSQAPPs); Hazardous Material (Haz Mat) Surveys. Costs for these activities include contractual consulting and reporting expenses and printing. Non-EPA grant resources: None
- b. Schedule: Quarters 1-14: A GQAPP will be completed within one month of selection. Once approved by ADEM/EPA, site-specific assessment activities will begin within one month. Assessment and reporting will occur throughout the grant period to complete assessment activities by quarter 10.

- c. Task Lead: The selected QEC will oversee this task, with assistance from RPCGB and the BAC.
- d. Outputs: Priority Sites: 7 Phase I ESAs (5 Haz, 2 Petro), 7 Phase II ESAs (5 Haz, 2 Petro), 5 Haz Mat Surveys; Additional Sites: 36 Phase I ESAs (22 Haz, 14 Petro), 19 Phase II ESAs (12 Haz and 7 Petro), 11 Haz Mat Surveys

**Task 4: Cleanup Planning and Planning Activities**

- a. Project Implementation: EPA-funded tasks: Creation of cleanup plans and implementation strategies for developing and utilizing resources; development of Analysis of Brownfield Cleanup Alternatives (ABCAs) for sites that require remediation based on Phase II ESA data. The ABCAs will include remedial actions for each identified regulated contaminant that exceeds applicable guidelines. Remedial actions will be compared based on cost, feasibility, and effectiveness. ABCAs will be developed by considering each site’s potential reuse scenario(s). During this planning period, a meeting will be held to solicit input from the public and community partners; we envision this meeting as a design charette to encourage public participation. The estimated budget for this task includes travel to meetings with stakeholders, which will incorporate community input, market data, feasibility and analysis for various reuse scenarios. The Plans will provide financial projections/estimates, potential leveraging opportunities, input from project partners, stakeholders, and community members, and respond to the surrounding market, environmental conditions, and challenges. Non-EPA grant resources: None
- b. Schedule: Quarters 5-14: ABCAs will be completed within 3-6 months of finalizing the Phase II ESA reports. The public meeting/design charette will be held after the draft ABCAs are complete, but before they are finalized.
- c. Task Lead: The QEC will oversee the completion of ABCAs. With assistance from the QEC and BAC, RPCGB will oversee the public meeting/design charettes.
- d. Outputs: 20 ABCA reports; 3 public design charettes (and associated outreach/presentation materials); and 3 Community-Wide Revitalization Plans.
- e. Cost Estimates

All task costs were determined through input from a qualified consultant and other applicable grant management experience; costs per unit are included in the following table and breakdown below.

**Task 1: Cooperative Agreement Oversight: \$38,070**

- Personnel: 187.5 hours at an average rate of \$100/hour = \$18,750 for administrative tasks and reporting.\*
- Supplies: Office supplies will include copies, maps, and handouts. Estimated cost: \$1,320
- Contractual: 180 hours at an average rate of \$100/hour = \$18,000 to assist in reporting throughout the grant’s lifecycle.

Budget Categories		Project Tasks					TOTAL
		Task 1: Cooperative Agreement Oversight	Task 2: Inventory and Community Outreach	Task 3: Environmental Site Assessments	Task 4: Cleanup Planning and Planning Activities		
Direct Costs	Personnel	\$ 18,750	\$ 18,750	\$ 18,750	\$ 18,750	\$ 75,000	
	Fringe Benefits					\$ -	
	Travel		\$ 6,720			\$ 6,720	
	Equipment					\$ -	
	Supplies	\$ 1,320	\$ 1,320	\$ 1,320	\$ 1,320	\$ 5,280	
	Contractual	\$ 18,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 930,000	\$ 450,000	\$ 1,413,000	
	Construction					\$ -	
Total Direct Costs		\$ 38,070	\$ 41,790	\$ 950,070	\$ 470,070	\$ 1,500,000	
Indirect Costs							
Total Budget (Direct + Indirect)		\$ 38,070	\$ 41,790	\$ 950,070	\$ 470,070	\$ 1,500,000	

**Task 2: Inventory and Community Outreach: \$41,790**

- Personnel: 187.5 hours at an average rate of \$100/hour = \$18,750 for outreach coordination and meeting attendance.\*
- Travel: Estimating one staff member traveling for two national conferences averaging three days each; \$400 registration, \$900/round trip flight, \$200/hotel room per night (assuming three nights each), and \$60/day per diem (totaling \$4,160). Additionally, one staff member traveling for two local conferences averaging three days each; \$400 registration, \$100 in gas for travel, \$200/hotel room per night (assuming three nights each), and \$60/day per diem (totaling \$2,560) = \$6,720
- Supplies: Office supplies will include copies, maps, and handouts. Estimated cost: \$1,320
- Contractual: 150 hours at an average rate of \$100/hour = \$15,000 to assist in information gathering for inventory growth and community engagement presentations.

**Task 3: Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs): \$950,070**

- Personnel: 187.5 hours at an average rate of \$100/hour = \$18,750 for report reviews and securing site access.\*
- Supplies: Office supplies will include copies, maps, and handouts. Estimated cost: \$1,320
- Contractual: \$930,000 (62% of budget)
  - Priority Sites
    - 7 Phase I ESAs at an estimated cost of \$4,000/ESA (\$28,000); 7 Phase II ESAs at an estimated cost of \$23,000/ESA (\$161,000); 5 Hazardous Materials Surveys at an estimated cost \$10,000/survey (\$50,000) = \$239,000
  - Secondary Inventory
    - 36 Phase I ESAs at an average estimated cost of \$4,000/ESA (\$144,000); 19 Phase II ESAs at an average estimated cost of \$23,000/ESA (\$437,000); 11 Hazardous Materials Surveys at an estimated cost \$10,000/survey (\$110,000) = \$691,000

**Task 4: Site Specific Cleanup Planning and Planning Activities: \$470,070**

- Personnel: 187.5 hours at an average rate of \$100/hour = \$18,750 for programmatic expenses associated with cleanup planning, review of reports, and meetings. \*
- Supplies: Office supplies will include copies, maps, and handouts. Estimated cost: \$1,320
- Contractual: 9 ABCAs at an average estimated cost of \$5,500/ABCA (\$49,500); 3 Community-Wide Revitalization Plans at an estimated cost of \$133,500/Plan\*\* (total \$400,500 (\$370,500 consulting fees + \$30,000 supplies such as mapping, copying, publishing, mailing, etc.)) = \$450,000 (30% of budget)

\* Personnel costs have been developed based upon prior experience of similar scope.

\*\*EPA estimates community-wide revitalization plans to cost between \$50,000 and \$175,000.

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

Per the requirements of the EPA Assessment Grant, RPCGB will submit quarterly reports to the EPA Project Officer. These reports will cover work progress and current status, any difficulties that were encountered, a record of financial expenditures, data results, and anticipated further action. Quarterly reports will include a plan to address any financial or time-related challenges if RPCGB is not making progress as expected. If such a situation arises, RPCGB will hold an internal meeting with Charles Ball, RPCGB’s Executive Director, to discuss proactive measures to regain the program’s progress. However, we do not anticipate derailment of the program, as RPCGB is well equipped to handle a variety of unexpected hurdles. Take for example, under the FY22 grant, RPCGB’s lead grant manager stepped down and the role was seamlessly filled, allowing for a successful completion of the grant. Additionally, in the event of a property’s site access is revoked, RPCGB is prepared to quickly pivot priority to a different site with ease as an extensive inventory is already established. As required, RPCGB will submit reports in the ACRES database for each assessment site. These reports will outline specific achievements, identified contaminants, affected materials, the need for clean-up activities, the status of those activities, and any other resources used to complete the redevelopment of the site. The ACRES database will also be utilized to track acres of land assessed as part of this grant, as well as the total number and type of assessments completed, the amount of funds expended by project, the total project cost, and anticipated/actual jobs created; essentially acting as a tool for both the EPA and RPCGB to track and measure the grant’s progress in achieving the outputs, overall project results, and eventual outcomes. At the end of the four-year grant period, a final report similar to quarterly reports will be produced.

**4. PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE**

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

As BAC members, the City of Tarrant, OPAL, and the St. Clair County Commission, as well as other stakeholders, will be involved in reviewing project intake forms to determine proposed assessment work and project details such as potential reuse, investment, community input, and leveraging opportunities. The BAC will actively engage with the community and assist in decision-making for the grant through the public meeting process previously described. The BAC and grant management will be led by Keya Kraft, the RPCGB’s Director of Economic Development. With a background in grant writing and consulting, Ms. Kraft has secured more than \$36 million in grant funds and tax incentives for her clients. Ms. Kraft was previously employed by OPAL, providing her with a firm footing for her current position. During her time at OPAL, Ms. Kraft has familiarized herself with the leaders of underserved Alabama communities and non-profit organizations that provide aid. At RPCGB, she oversees the Economic Development staff, connects member governments to federal and state resources for economic development, leads planning initiatives for the Regional counties, and oversees the management of federal funding. These skills and relationships will prove to be invaluable for conducting community engagement related to the grant. Ms. Kraft will be assisted by the RPCGB’s Community Development Specialist, Sawyer Summers. Serving as the current EPA Brownfield Grant backup project manager, Mr. Summers will continue to assist in monitoring the project schedule, fund invoices, and expenditures, ensuring timely reporting. Mr. Summers’s current position and experience with the RPCGB have provided him with the administrative and financial literacy skills critical for this role. He also maintains social media updates on behalf of the RPCGB, which will be utilized in community engagement for the assessment grant. Both individuals are committed to redeveloping the Region’s brownfields to improve quality of life, and their experience will ensure timely expenditure of funds and administration of a coalition assessment grant.

**d. Acquiring Additional Resources**

RPCGB has extensive experience managing grant funds. and has completed the contractor procurement process. The selected consultant is experienced in brownfield programs, including the following services: assisting with Community Brownfield Inventories and Outreach, Phase I and II ESAs, ABCAs, and working with state regulators regarding brownfield assessment redevelopment planning and remediation. Additionally, the consultant will be expected to prepare the GQAPP within the first 60 days of the grant so that proposed assessments and activities are not delayed. We affirm that these services have been acquired in accordance with EPA’s selection protocol and RPCGB’s purchasing policies, which includes the publishing of a Request for Qualifications and/or re-evaluation of our existing Master Service Agreement with our selected Qualified Environmental Consultant (QEC). Firms were allotted guidelines with a deadline, and all submissions will be available as public records. Following receipt of proposals, each application was reviewed by an internal committee composed of RPCGB staff. The selected consultant was recommended to the RPCGB’s Deputy Executive Director and Executive Director for approval. RPCGB’s staff’s expertise and partnerships with the contracted QEC will ensure the timely and successful expenditure of funds and completion of all technical administrative, and financial requirements of the project and grant.

**e. Currently Has or Previously Received an EPA Brownfields Grant**

**(1) Accomplishments**

**FY22 Community-Wide Assessment Grant:** All funding from the FY22 assessment grant has been drawn down as of December 2025. Outputs included 1 Generic QAPP, 6 Phase I ESAs, 6 SSQAPPs, 6 Phase II ESAs, 4 Hazardous Materials Surveys, 1 ABCA, and 1 Downtown Revitalization Plan. 99.27 acres were designated as ready for reuse. The ABCA is being leveraged by a community 501c3 nonprofit to petition the EPA for cleanup funding as part of a \$5.5M arts, archives, and humanities redevelopment project. All outputs and outcomes for this grant have been recorded in ACRES.

**(2) Compliance with Grant Requirements**

As shown through our record of no audit findings, benchmark compliance goals on the above grant have been met. Required reporting and terms and conditions were met and conducted on time, which is an integral part of maintaining the grant’s timely implementation. Required reporting was completed including the GQAPP, ACRES updates, Minority-Owned Business Enterprises/Women-Owned Business Enterprises reporting, regularly held meetings with EPA personnel to discuss project progress, quarterly reports, and a final closeout report (in progress). 100% of the budget was expended and the grant work plan, schedule, and terms and conditions have been completed in accordance with awarding party requirements.

## **Threshold Criteria – The Greater Birmingham Brownfield Coalition**

### **1. Eligibility of Lead and Non-Lead Coalition Members:**

#### **a. Applicant Type and Eligibility**

- i.** The Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham (RPCGB), the lead coalition member, operates as an inter-local governing body between Walker, Shelby, St. Clair, Blount, Chilton, and Jefferson Counties in the State of Alabama. Please see the attached applicant eligibility documentation.
- ii.** REV Birmingham is a 501c3 non-profit. Please see the attached applicant eligibility documentation.
- iii.** St. Clair County is a local unit of government as defined under 2 CFR 200.64 and is an eligible entity.

- b.** No members of the coalition (RPCGB, REV Birmingham, and St. Clair County) are exempt from Federal taxation under section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code.

### **2. Target Areas:**

- a.** Tarrant Arts and Entertainment District Target Area (Census Tract: 01073010900; City of Tarrant, Jefferson County, AL)
- b.** The Switch District Target Area (Census Tract: 01073002701; City of Birmingham, Jefferson County, AL)
- c.** Ragland's Trout Creek Target Area (Census Tracts: 01115040302 and 01115040301; Town of Ragland, St. Clair County, AL)

### **3. Non-Lead Member(s) that Never Received an EPA MARC Grant**

St. Clair County has never received an EPA MARC Grant.

### **4. Legal Authority to Expend Grant Funds on Behalf of Non-Lead Coalition Members**

- a.** The lead coalition member, RPCGB has legal authority to expend grant funds on behalf of the non-lead members to conduct the proposed grant activities.
- b.** Not applicable.

### **5. Coalition Agreement:**

Letters of commitment from REV Birmingham and St. Clair County are attached.

### **6. Community Involvement:**

Following the grant award, a project kick-off meeting will be held to provide an opportunity to re-engage the previously established Brownfield Advisory Committee (BAC), which consists of representatives from local stakeholders. The BAC will be engaged within one month of funding and BAC meetings will be held regularly throughout the project. The BAC will assist in reviewing projects and prioritizing site assessments based on priorities described in Section 1d. The kick-off meeting will outline the grant's goals, how residents and business owners can provide public input, and how the funds can be utilized to ensure an educated public and allow for additional community involvement. Ongoing communication throughout the life of the grant will be conducted in various methods, including regularly held public meetings and charettes organized in partnership with community organizations such as those listed in Section 2e,f. Public meetings will be held in person at the RPCGB's centrally located office in Birmingham, and/or at locations within or near Target Areas to ensure easy access for residents. One such additional meeting place includes the Ashville Administrative Center in St. Clair County. At this location, the St. Clair County, AL Commission regularly holds meetings twice a month on the second and fourth Tuesday at 9 AM. RPCGB's grant manager will

attend these meetings, providing updates to the St. Clair County community regarding the Coalition's brownfield program. Meetings will be held at hours agreeable to most schedules to ensure a high level of attendance and involvement. Additionally, those that cannot be present during live meetings can access recorded meetings online at RPCGB's website and/or can utilize a call-in number to virtually attend meetings. Meetings will provide a platform for public comment to identify additional brownfield sites, reprioritize known brownfield sites based on established criteria, and voice potential concerns. Commentary will be collected both during public meetings and throughout the life of the grant by recording meeting minutes, distributing and collecting comment cards during meetings, and via email to the project manager at all other times. Commentary cards and email correspondence will allow public input to be captured and documented for future decision-making. This process will also ensure that input is not overlooked and can be addressed in follow up or subsequent meetings. Meetings addressing the Tarrant A&E District Target Area will provide materials in Spanish for the benefit of Tarrant's high Spanish-speaking population. Public meetings will also be utilized to present potential redevelopment opportunities to interested developers and provide developers with technical assistance for obtaining additional financial incentives for redevelopment. Input will be considered during public meetings in an open manner that embraces the community's diversity and focuses on a constructive, forward-looking vision for the Region. Additional communication regarding public meetings, grant updates, important health notifications from local county health departments, and opportunities will be conducted in a variety of ways including press releases with the local newspaper (both online and in print) which will include The Birmingham Times and AL.com. Brownfield related announcements will also be featured on local news stations, flier distribution via local businesses and community organizations, and on local stakeholder websites. The following social media pages will be used as well: "The Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham", "The City of Birmingham Government" "Tarrant, Ala.", "Town of Ragland", and "What's Going on in St. Clair County, AL" reaching over 128,500 followers.

**7. Expenditure of Existing Grant Funds:**

RPCGB, the lead coalition member, has an open EPA Brownfield Community-Wide Assessment Grant, which has been drawn down 100% as of December 16, 2025. Documentation of such is attached to this document. All funds were expended within the grant window.

**8. Contractors and Named Subrecipients:**

**a. Contractors:**

RPCGB's consultant was selected in compliance with the fair and open competition requirements in 2 CFR Part 200 and 2 CFR Part 1500. RPCGB conducted their procurement in accordance with the six good faith efforts discussed in 40 CFR Part 33, Subpart C. Additionally, as required by 2 CFR 200.320(b)(2)(iii), price reasonableness for the grant implementation work was a selection factor in the evaluation of proposals. RPCGB's contractor was selected under a "dual procurement process".

- A. RPCGB posted the Request for Qualifications on our website on November 25, 2025. Additionally, the Alabama Brownfields Association advertised the Request for Proposals/Qualifications on their website, social media, and via email list serve on the same day.
- B. The Request for Qualifications was advertised for 35 days and responses were due on December 29, 2025.
- C. Five firms responded to the Request for Qualifications and five offers were received and considered.
- D. RPCGB selected Pinchin, LLC as our Qualified Environmental Consultant.

E. A copy of the solicitation documents are attached. The signed executed contract is also attached.

**b. Named Subrecipients:**

Not applicable. No subrecipients have been named in this application.