

RiverValleyRC.org

(877) 819-6348

COLUMBUS OFFICE

710 Front Avenue
Columbus, GA 31901
Phone (706) 256-2910
Fax (706) 256-2940

AMERICUS OFFICE

228 West Lamar Street
Americus, GA 31709
Phone (706) 256-2910
Fax (229) 931-2745
(229) 931-2917

Chattahoochee
Clay
Crisp
Dooly
Harris
Macon
Marion
Muscogee
Quitman
Randolph
Schley
Stewart
Sumter
Talbot
Taylor
Webster

1. Applicant Identification

River Valley Regional Commission
710 Front Avenue, Suite A
Columbus, Georgia 31901

2. Website URL

- Lead: River Valley Regional Commission: <https://rivervalleyrc.org>
- Non-lead: Development Authority of Marion County: No website
- Non-lead: Industrial Development Authority of Talbot County: <https://www.talbotcountyga.org/community/page/industrial-development-authority>

3. Funding Requested

- a. Assessment Grant Type: Assessment Coalition
- b. Federal Funds Requested: \$1,500,000

4. Location

Non-lead member – Development Authority of Marion County

- a) City of Buena Vista, b) Marion County, c) Georgia

Non-lead member – Industrial Development Authority of Talbot County

- a) City of Junction City, b) Talbot County, c) Georgia

Geographic Boundary is the River Valley Regional Commission’s jurisdiction of 16 counties in Georgia, but with only the following 15 counties included for purposes of this grant: Chattahoochee, Clay, Crisp, Dooly, Harris, Macon, Marion, Quitman, Randolph, Schley, Stewart, Sumter, Talbot, Taylor, and Webster. Muscogee County (Columbus Consolidated Government) is also a member of the RVRC service area but will not be included in the grant due to receiving an FY24 Multipurpose Grant.

5. Coalition Members’ Target Area and Priority Site Information:

Target area (TA), census tract (CT)

- River Valley Regional Commission (lead) – TA 1: CTs 13259950100, 13259950400
 - Priority site 1: Downtown Lumpkin Suites, 300 & 314 Main Street, Lumpkin, GA 31815
 - Priority site 2: Singer Building, 32.04839, -84.793251, Lumpkin, GA 31815
- Development Authority of Marion County (non-lead) – TA 2: CTs 13197920100, 13197920200
 - Priority site 1: Marion County Industrial Site, 230 East 3rd Avenue, Buena Vista, GA 31803
 - Priority site 2: Former Tyson Plant, 250 Tyson Road, Buena Vista, GA 31803



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- Industrial Development Authority of Talbot County (non-lead) –
TA 3: CTs 13263960100, 13263960200, 13263960300
 - Priority site 1: Talbot Industrial Site, 32.658423, -84.539545,
Junction City, GA 31812
 - Priority site 2: Future Junction City Grocery, 500 Old Mauk
Road, Junction City, GA 31812

6. Contacts

a. Project Director:

Tracie Hadaway, Planning and Government Services Director
River Valley Regional Commission
706-256-2910
Thadaway@rivervalleyrc.org
710 Front Avenue, Suite A, Columbus, GA 31901

b. Chief Executive/Highest Ranking Elected Official:

Jim Livingston, Executive Director
River Valley Regional Council
706-256-2910
Jlivingston@rivervalleyrc.org
710 Front Avenue, Suite A, Columbus, GA 31901

7. Population

- Lumpkin, GA – 815
 - Buena Vista, GA – 1,966
 - Junction City, GA – 354
- (US Census: 2019–2023 American Community Survey)

Chattahoochee
Clay
Crisp
Dooly
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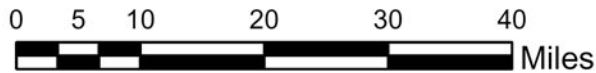
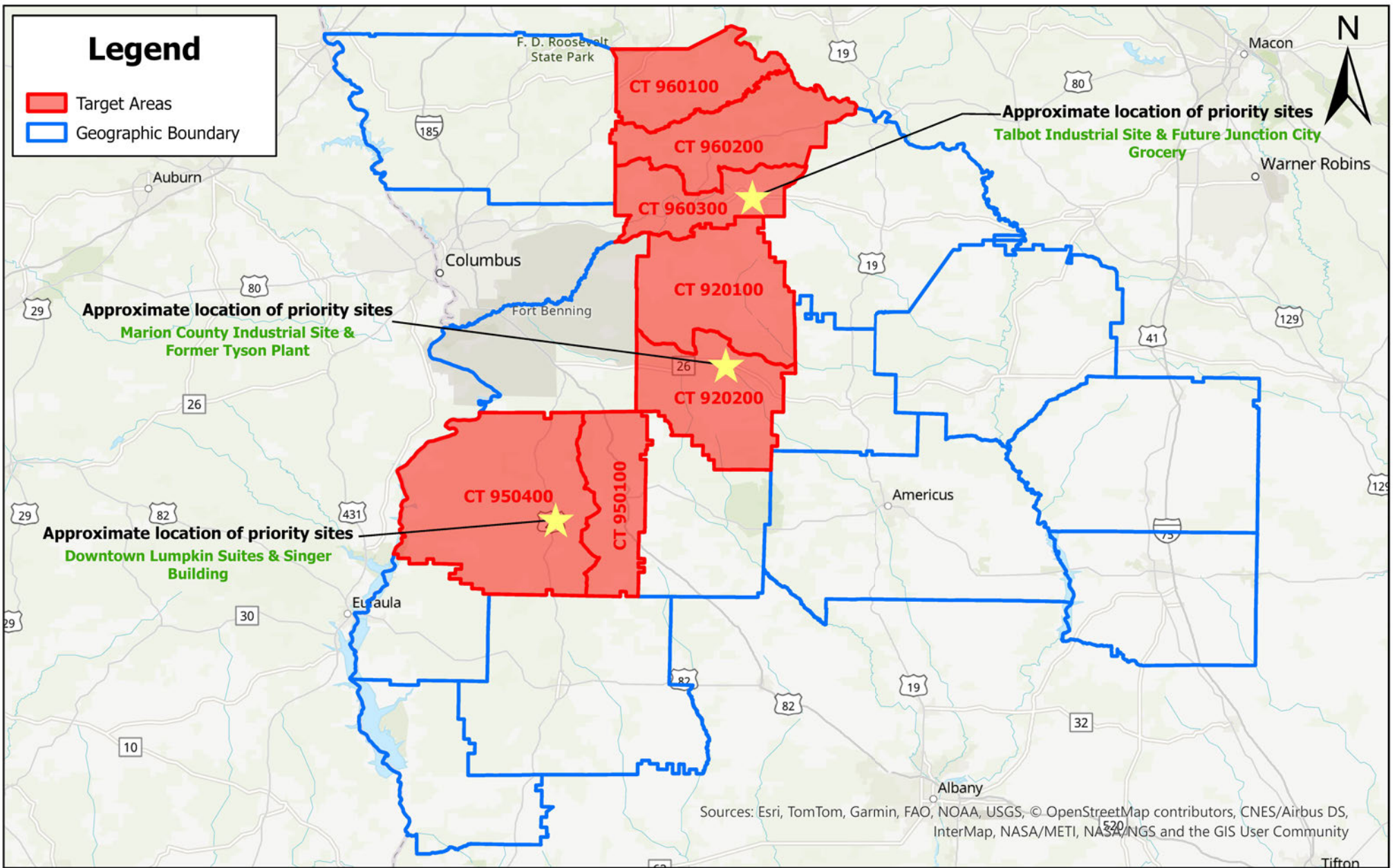
8. Other Factors

Other Factors	Page #
Community population is 15,000 or less.	1, 5
The applicant is, or will assist, a federally recognized Indian Tribe or United States Territory.	N/A
The priority site(s) is impacted by mine-scarred land.	N/A
The priority site(s) is adjacent to a body of water (i.e., the border of the priority site(s) is contiguous or partially contiguous to the body of water, or would be contiguous or partially contiguous with a body of water but for a street, road, or other public thoroughfare separating them).	N/A
The priority site(s) is in a federally designated flood plain.	N/A
The reuse of the priority site(s) will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy.	5
The reuse of the priority site(s) will incorporate energy efficiency measures.	4, 5
The proposed project will improve local resilience to the impacts of extreme weather events and natural disasters.	4, 5
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 sites within the target areas.	N/A
The target area(s) is impacted by a coal-fired power plant that has recently closed (2015 or later) or is closing.	N/A

9. Letter from the State or Tribal Environmental Authority
 See attached.

10. Releasing Copies of Applications
 Not Applicable.

Chattahoochee
 Clay
 Crisp
 Dooly
 Harris
 Macon
 Marion
 Muscogee
 Quitman
 Randolph
 Schley
 Stewart
 Sumter
 Talbot
 Taylor
 Webster



Approximate Scale: 1" = 15.5 Miles



Target Area & Geographic Boundary Map

FY26 EPA Brownfields Assessment
 Coalition Grant Application



Jeffrey W. Cown, Director

Land Protection Branch
2 Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive
Suite 1058, East Tower
Atlanta, Georgia 30334
404-657-8600

January 15, 2026

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL: jlivingston@rivervalleyrc.org

Mr. Jim Livingston
River Valley Regional Commission
710 Front Avenue
Suite A
Columbus, Georgia 31901

RE: State Acknowledgement Letter – Brownfield Assessment Coalition Grant Application
River Valley Regional Commission

Dear Mr. Livingston:

This letter serves as acknowledgement from the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) that River Valley Regional Commission will be submitting an application to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for funding assistance under the Brownfield Assessment Coalition Grant Program to conduct assessment activities. EPD understands that the River Valley Regional Commission is applying for \$1,500,000 on behalf of its coalition members, Chattahoochee, Clay, Crisp, Dooly, Harris, Macon, Marion, Quitman, Randolph, Schley, Stewart, Sumter, Talbot, Taylor and Webster counties, to be used for planning and conducting assessments of hazardous materials and petroleum.

EPD would like to take this opportunity to encourage EPA's positive decision in making a grant award to the Coalition for such an assessment. A successful award would greatly assist these communities in their redevelopment efforts. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Horwitz, P.E., CHMM
Brownfield Team Lead

File: FFY 26, EPA Grant Applicants, River Valley Regional Commission



**River Valley Regional Commission, GA
FY26 Brownfields Assessment Grant
Narrative**

1. PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION AND PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION

Coalition Members, Target Areas, and Brownfields. a. Coalition Members: The Development Authority of Marion County (Marion) and Industrial Development Authority of Talbot County (Talbot) are both development authorities in their respective counties in Georgia and will be the non-lead members of this coalition. These development authorities operate in partnership with other rural regional organizations to create public/private partnerships that meet the needs of businesses and communities and improve quality of life at every level in the counties they serve. Both Marion and Talbot were created upon the adoption and approval of the State of Georgia Development Authorities Law (O.C.G.A. § 36-62-1 et seq.) Both non-lead members are located within the 16-county service area of the lead member, River Valley Regional Commission (RVRC), and are committed to working in partnership with the RVRC to create a successful Brownfield Program.

Due to the extremely small population sizes of Marion (7,474) and Talbot (5,753) Counties and their inability to produce the necessary revenue and staff to apply for and manage EPA Brownfield Grant funds,¹ a partnership between the non-lead members and the RVRC will ensure that all the coalition members can address vacant, dilapidated brownfield sites within the proposed target areas, bringing prosperity back to the community through assessment and new redevelopment.

b. Overview of Brownfield Challenges and Description of Target Areas: **The geographic boundary for this Coalition Grant application is the RVRC service area, which includes the following 15 counties in Georgia:** Chattahoochee, Clay, Crisp, Dooly, Harris, Macon, Marion, Quitman, Randolph, Schley, Stewart, Sumter, Talbot, Taylor, and Webster. Muscogee County (Columbus Consolidated Government) is also a member of the RVRC service area but will not be included in the grant due to receiving an FY24 Multipurpose Grant. The service area has a rich history in agriculture focused on cotton, peaches, and peanuts as well as bricks, forestry, industry, manufacturing, and textile mills. This region, referred to as part of the Black Belt, was dominated by slave-dependent cotton plantations in the 19th century.² Following the emancipation of slave laborers after the Civil War, many former slaves found themselves tied to rural Georgia counties as sharecroppers and tenant farmers. The early 1900s brought devastation to the region's economy. The cotton boll weevil, a dramatic decrease in cotton prices, drought, foreign competition, and soil erosion led to a decrease in the region's population, which led to the stagnation of the RVRC service areas' economic growth, forcing business owners and manufacturers out of the region. This exodus of commercial employers from rural southwest Georgia left in its wake a landscape of blighted properties with numerous environmental hazards, **creating brownfield challenges** and an overall sense of disinvestment. The potential environmental hazards affecting residents based on this past agricultural use include **herbicides, pesticides, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), semivolatile organic compounds (SVOCs), asbestos-containing materials (ACM), lead-based paints (LBPs), Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) metals (arsenic, barium, cadmium, chromium, lead, mercury, selenium, silver), and per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS).**

Each coalition member has its own unique target area for this project. The **target area for the RVRC (lead member) is in Stewart County**, consisting of census tracts (CTs) 13259950100 and 13259950400 in the city of Lumpkin. The **target area for Marion (non-lead member) is in Marion County**, consisting of CTs 13197920100 and 13197920200 in the city of Buena Vista. The **target area for Talbot (non-lead member) is in Talbot County**, including CTs

¹ US Census 2019–2023 American Community Survey.

² <https://southernspaces.org/2004/black-belt>.

13263960100, 13263960200, and 13263960300 in the city of Junction City. The coalition requires additional funding to address the numerous contaminated and abandoned sites throughout the defined area. Access to Brownfield Grant funding will bring resources to assess and identify environmental hazards and generate revitalization to bring prosperity and hope for a brighter tomorrow to these distressed coalition communities.

c. Description of the Priority Brownfield Sites: A windshield survey has identified at least **32 potential brownfield sites, including 18 in the RVRC target area, 6 in the Marion target area, and 8 in the Talbot target area.** Beyond the six priority sites listed below, other potential brownfield properties include filling stations, vacant industrial facilities, former agricultural processing plants, vacant lumber mills, vacant school buildings, and commercial facilities. Potential environmental hazards include **underground storage tanks (USTs), PFAS/perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), petroleum hydrocarbons, VOCs, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), metals, phosphates, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), LBP, ACM, and other hazardous building materials.** These six priority sites were selected due to the immediate benefit they would add to the coalition member's economies and their proximity to sensitive populations. ***Site access has been granted by all six property owners for assessment.***

- **RVRC (lead member).** The **first priority site** is the **Downtown Lumpkin Suites (DLS)** site located on Main Street in Lumpkin. The DLS site consists of two 1,750-square-foot suites that are part of attached downtown buildings facing the historic Stewart County courthouse. These suites are part of an 11-unit "contributing building" to the Lumpkin Commercial Historic District, which was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1982. This contributing building was constructed around 1850 and contains the Stewart County Historical Commission and Lumpkin Library. Attached to either side are storefronts that are intact and secured, but showing decades of nonuse and lack of maintenance in the peeling paint on the exterior and poor condition of the interiors. The site has had additional uses over the past century, primarily retail, and underwent renovations during that time that added ACM and other hazardous building materials. The 1933 Sanborn map depicts an Oil Room at the southeast corner of the building, which likely held heating oil tanks known to leak due to lack of cathodic protection in that time. Additionally, within 100 feet of the sites are two former fuel stations and a mechanic shop, two of which are depicted as far back as 1933. Potential contaminants from these environmental concerns include **ACM, LBP, petroleum hydrocarbons, RCRA metals, and VOCs.**

- **RVRC (lead member).** The **second priority site** is the **Singer Property (Singer)** site in Lumpkin. This site is approximately 2.33 acres and is owned by the city of Lumpkin. The site originally consisted of multiple storage buildings built prior to 1980. The former buildings have been razed, leaving only cracked, dilapidated building slabs and former aboveground storage tank rings. The site is overgrown with vegetation and unfenced, with pedestrian trails throughout. Residential housing and a church surround the property. Prior uses for this site include dynamite and oil storage. The property has been vacant since the 1990s. Potential contaminants include **PFAS, RCRA metals, pesticides, VOCs, and SVOCs.**

- **Marion (non-lead member).** The **third priority site** is the **Marion County Industrial Site (MCIS)** located in Buena Vista. The 21-acre site is a heavily wooded area with solar panels present on a portion of the property. The MCIS is located within steps of residential neighborhoods, churches, and a school. Past land use has been years of agricultural activity. Currently the site is vacant. Potential contaminants include **PFAS, RCRA metals, pesticides, VOCs, and SVOCs.** **The property is thought to have wetlands with threatened and endangered species habitat.**

- **Marion (non-lead member).** The **fourth priority site** is the **Former Tyson Plant (FTP)** located in Buena Vista. Built in the early 1990s, Tyson processed chickens at this plant for over 20 years. The 27.31-acre site has abandoned buildings overgrown with vegetation, broken concrete slabs, and is partially fenced with small ponds located on property. The site is mostly unsecured and is a health threat to the community. The building has been vacant since May 2015 when Tyson ceased operation at this location. The potential contaminants include **RCRA metals, herbicides, pesticides, VOCs, SVOCs, ACM, and LBP.**
- **Talbot (non-lead member).** The **fifth priority site** is the **Talbot Industrial Site (TIS)** located in Junction City. The 97-acre site is a mix of vacant, partially wooded land. The site has been used for agricultural purposes. The site is not fenced or secured. Potential contaminants are **PFAS, RCRA metals, pesticides, and SVOCs.**
- **Talbot (non-lead member).** The **sixth priority site** is the **Future Junction City Grocery (FJCG)** located in Junction City. The 14-acre site is now an overgrown, **vacant** lot with three electrical transmission lines owned by Georgia Power. This land was historically used for surface mining through the late 1990s. The site is unsecured. Potential contaminants include **PFAS, RCRA metals, herbicides, pesticides, VOCs, SVOCs, ACM, and LBP.**

d. **Identifying Additional Sites:** Coalition members will focus on identifying additional eligible sites for assessment throughout **the target areas' seven distressed communities.** In preparation for this grant application, coalition members conducted a windshield survey of the target areas and identified an additional **32 potential brownfield sites.** During this grant project, a more in-depth, grant-funded site inventory and evaluation ranking criteria process will be established; coalition members will work diligently with target-area residents to identify and prioritize sites within sensitive communities. Those properties will be researched further by coalition members using the property appraiser's website. The evaluation ranking criteria used to determine the order in which sites will be assessed will be based on community need, project partner and resident input, redevelopment goals, and **US Census data** to ensure distressed communities are benefiting from the project. In the event all target areas have been fully addressed with grant funding, the coalition will work with project partners and residents **throughout the geographic boundary** of the RVRC's 15-county jurisdiction to identify additional abandoned and underused properties. Once identified, the coalition will apply the already established evaluation ranking criteria, **with priority given to sites that most benefit sensitive populations.**

Revitalization of the Target Areas. e. **Reuse Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans:** The RVRC's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and RVRC's Regional Plan 2023–2028 (RVRC Plan) aligns with each of the comprehensive plans for the coalition partners and their target areas, including plans from Stewart County and the city of Lumpkin's Comprehensive Plan 2022–2026 (Lumpkin Plan), Marion County & city of Buena Vista Comprehensive Plan for 2025-2030 (Buena Vista Plan), Talbot County Comprehensive Plan 2021 (Talbot Plan), and the River Valley Community Compatible Development Plan. All of these plans' goals include creating a direction for retaining and generating better-paying jobs, creating affordable housing and higher density housing, fostering diversified economies, implementing processes for stable economies, and maintaining and improving the quality of life.

RVRC worked closely with UGA's Carl Vinson Institute of Government, funded by the Department of Defense, to create the **River Valley Community Compatible Development Plan**, which focuses on downtown revitalization, infrastructure, outdoor recreation, and sustainable land use to benefit both military readiness and community prosperity.

The **Lumpkin Plan** states a vision and subsequent goals to fully restore the downtown historic area and attract people to shop, dine, and recreate. RVRC has been working with a developer regarding a planned ranch and resort on the outskirts of Lumpkin near Providence Canyon State Park. Development plans include a lodge, restaurant, 20 cabins, 18 tents, 22 wagons, and approximately 32 RV sites with utility hookups. As part of this same planned project, **the Lumpkin priority sites are slated by this developer for adaptive reuse as restaurants and shops** to provide a destination for ranch guests to visit during the day. With a planned investment of \$3 million for the camping resort and \$1 million for the downtown suite renovation, **the Lumpkin DLS priority site's adaptive reuse of existing building suites as restaurants and shops directly align with the Lumpkin Plan vision**. This is a potentially huge win for this target area to achieve the plan goals of a **diversified and stable economy, creating jobs, and preserving the historic buildings** in downtown Lumpkin. The **Lumpkin Plan** also identifies the **Singer site** area as a blighted area within the city limits, with a strong redevelopment potential for **energy-efficient affordable housing and sustainable greenspace**. The redevelopment of these sites into retail/restaurant development and affordable housing with greenspace will create an **energy-efficient, modern housing option for residents** who are looking to create a better life and a sense of ownership within their community along with key retail/restaurant development in the historic downtown.

The **Buena Vista Plan** identifies negative trends in future population predictions and high rates of poverty within the **MCIS and FTP priority site areas**. The plan recognizes a shift in the target area's economy to a service-based economy following the long-term decline of agriculture and manufacturing within Marion County. The planned redevelopment for the **MCIS and FTP** sites is to create **new industrial sites** through partnerships with regional development firms. These two sites **will provide much-needed job growth with new entry-level jobs to generate economic stability** within the target area, which will lead to community growth—elements that will help fulfill the mission of the Buena Vista Plan.

The **Talbot Plan** identifies the top priority of the residents, staff, and elected officials as accelerated economic development, including the construction of grocery/retail establishments and creation of an industrial park. The redevelopment of the **TIS and FJCG priority sites** aligns with the **Talbot Plan**, as **TIS** will become a **new industrial site** complex, bringing up to 50 entry-level employment opportunities to the area and generating new community interest. The **FJCG** site will bring **new retail to the distressed area, including a new grocery store** and retail and restaurant opportunities that will benefit this designated **USDA food desert** and create an estimated 30 new employment opportunities. Both site redevelopments will bring pride and hope back to a community that has become **distressed and forgotten**, generating hope for the future.

f. Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategy: The redevelopment stimulated by the use of Brownfield Grant funding within these six priority sites will create an impact felt across this distressed area for generations to come. While the priority sites are located in prime areas, RVRC lacks the necessary resources to assess and redevelop these sites to bring them back into productive reuse. By using EPA Brownfield Assessment Coalition Grant funds to assess and eventually remove any contamination found on these sites, coalition partners will make significant progress toward revitalization. Redevelopment of the **six priority sites** into affordable housing, greenspace, and industrial and retail spaces will create **economic benefits** such as an **increased tax base, new businesses, and new local employment opportunities** through construction jobs during redevelopment of the sites and in the new industrial and retail sites. Revitalization will also prompt many **noneconomic benefits** such as **better air quality with walkable communities, access to**

fresh food in areas once considered a food desert, new affordable housing with energy-efficient and modern designs, and new greenspace in an area free of blight and environmental hazards, providing distressed residents a new sense of community pride, vision, and empowerment for their future.

The coalition will work with developers to ensure planned redevelopment also improves local resilience to the impacts of extreme weather events and natural disasters. The target areas suffer from extreme weather challenges with a 92nd percentile expected agriculture loss rate and a 79th percentile projected wildfire risk.³ RVRC understands the risks associated with these extreme weather hazards and has included a Brownfield Area Wide Plan for each of these target areas to help mitigate these natural disaster and weather related factors during redevelopment. Improving greenspace and connecting and improving city walkability will reduce pollutants and improve the quality of life for all residents. The target area also is burdened by high energy costs as is shown by their ranking in the 93rd percentile for energy costs as related to their household income.³ By working to ensure developers are using energy-efficient measures in their redevelopment designs, promoting sustainability, and encouraging use of renewable energy through use of solar lighting or wind energy, the coalition will build a resilient community in each of the target areas that will continue to grow for many years to come.

Strategy for Leveraging Resources. g. Resources Needed for Site Reuse: RVRC, Marion, and Talbot are eligible to pursue private, state, and federal grant options to aid redevelopment efforts within the identified target areas. The coalition will utilize these additional funding opportunities to stimulate growth and support completion of assessments, remediations, and reuse strategies for the priority sites. Funding opportunities are available through the following:

Agency	Funding Purpose
US Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant	Demolish remediated brownfield sites; contribute to affordable housing initiatives; and improve infrastructure.
US EPA Brownfield Cleanup Grant	Assist with remediation.
Georgia Environmental Protection Division – Brownfield Revolving Loan Fund	Low-interest loans support the cleanup of brownfields that have already been assessed. Loans will pay for limited investigation, remediation, and demolition.
Georgia Environmental Protection Division – Land Protection Branch – Assessment Program	Helps fund additional assessments.
OneGeorgia Authority – Workforce Housing Initiative Program	Assist local communities with housing development to address a shortage of housing stock that impacts the workforce economy.

h. Use of Existing Infrastructure: The DLS priority site will reuse and redevelop the existing structures. The six priority sites are connected to existing infrastructure (sewer, water, utilities, roadways, broadband) sufficient for future redevelopment, with the exception of the redevelopment of the two Talbot sites, which will likely require their own sewer treatment plan due to location and size. If infrastructure upgrades are required in the redevelopment of the project, the RVRC and the non-lead coalition members will apply for additional funding from state and federal resources.

2. COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community Need. a. The Community’s Need for Funding: The sheer amount of blight, dilapidated and abandoned buildings, vacant lots, and poverty occurring in these communities illustrates the dim outlook of these distressed, sensitive populations. The coalition members have

³ <https://public-environmental-data-partners.github.io/j40-cejst-2/en/#9.97/32.7934/-84.5512>

small populations they are serving with this funding: Marion (7,474), Talbot (5,753), and RVRC’s Stewart County (4,978), with a total combined population of 18,205.⁴ **The following statistics are averaged for all three target areas.** Target-area incomes are extremely low, with an average **median household income of \$44,870** (US \$78,538) and **per capita income of \$26,056** (US \$43,289).⁴ Poverty rates are high, with **29% of all families with children under 18 living below the poverty level** (US 14%) and **22% of all people living below the poverty level** (US 12%).⁴

RVRC and the non-lead coalition partners do not have the funding to address and assess these properties in a safe and effective manner. RVRC is a nonprofit organization that serves 35 municipalities and 16 county governments. While the RVRC provides quality services to its jurisdiction, its budget is extremely limited. RVRC has no ability to increase taxes for additional project work and few options to increase the budget to fund new projects such as assessments and cleanup for the service area. County government budgets are already committed to fund essential services to their residents, such as maintenance of roads, bridges, and emergency services. With access to brownfield funding, RVRC and the coalition partners will be able to provide resources to assess, revitalize, and redevelop the distressed target areas to generate opportunities for current and future generations.

b. Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations: **The target areas’ sensitive populations are the elderly, Black, and impoverished residents.**

Sensitive Population (in percentages)	RVRC (Stewart Co) TA	Marion Co TA	Talbot Co TA	Target Area Avg	GA	US
Elderly	19	24	32	25	18	21
Black	62	31	56	50	31	12
All people in poverty	27	18	22	22	14	12
SNAP/Food Stamps	34	24	20	26	12	12

As shown in the Sensitive Population table, (US Census percentages),⁵ populations in the target areas are overwhelmed with high rates of impoverishment, evidenced by a target-area average of 26% for residents who use SNAP/food stamps (US 12%) and an average “All

people” living in poverty target area average of 22% (US 12%).⁵ The distressed communities have suffered from these disparities in combination with potential socioeconomic hardship indicators, averaged across the target area, like high unemployment (55th percentile), low educational attainment (82nd percentile), limited English-speaking households (50th percentile), and lack of affordable housing.⁶

Welfare issues such as lack of access to affordable fresh foods, affordable housing, and employment for the community’s educational attainment levels are present in the target areas. The target areas remain below state and national high school graduation rates, with the target areas in the **82nd percentile for residents with less than a high school education.**⁶ The need for entry-level employment is high, considering the target areas have a **55th percentile unemployment rate.**⁶ The redevelopment of the **FTP, MCIS, TIS, and DLS priority sites** into new industrial parks and retail/restaurant businesses will provide jobs for all education levels. The target areas are located in a **USDA food desert**. This is of concern as **10% of households do not have access to a vehicle** (US 8%) and **26% rely on government food stamp assistance** (US 12%).⁵

⁴ US Census: 2019–2023 American Community Survey.

⁵ US Census 2019–2023 American Community Survey

⁶ <https://pedp-ejscreen.azurewebsites.net/>

Redevelopment of the **FJCG priority site** into a new grocery store and retail center will combat this welfare issue of access to fresh food.

One of the most important welfare issues to consider is providing affordable housing to these distressed communities. The target areas' **average monthly rent is \$811** (US \$1,348), and the **median home value is \$106,871** (US \$303,400).⁵ While these rent and median home values seem low, for households living off less than \$45,000 a year (US \$78,538), having a home can seem unattainable.⁵ Additionally, the existing housing is beginning to age and deteriorate. The **target areas' average for lead paint is in the 64th percentile**.⁶ The redevelopment of the **Singer priority site** into affordable housing will help combat the current housing issues. With an inability to fund assessments and redevelopment, the coalition's ability to attract new businesses and residents to these areas is almost nonexistent. With the help of the Brownfield Assessment Coalition Grant, the RVRC and coalition partners will be able to identify contaminants, assess sites, and begin reinvesting in these distressed communities to create a brighter future for tomorrow.

c. Greater Than Normal Incidence of Disease and Adverse Health Conditions: Sensitive populations often face more significant risks of disease and health conditions such as cancer and asthma because of contaminants present at brownfield sites. The target areas are economically distressed due to the negative environmental conditions and disinvestment in their communities. These target areas are historic areas now burdened with deteriorating and dilapidated buildings that have been abandoned due to economic loss within the area. Contamination from LBP (64th percentile) and ACM are two of the main concerns, but there are numerous potential contaminants across the three target areas such as **accelerators, oils, benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, trichloroethene, USTs, petroleum hydrocarbons, VOCs, PAHs, metals, and agricultural chemicals**.⁷ Contamination of drinking water is also of great concern as the average drinking water noncompliance is in the **89th percentile** across the three target areas.⁸

Asthma within these distressed communities is a threat to all ages. The target areas show an average in the **76th percentile for people who have been told they have asthma**.⁸ Air pollution is of concern in the target area, as the West Central Health District Community Health Assessment shows that the average daily density is 8.9 compared to the US average of 7.5. **Cancer is the leading cause of death** across the target areas, followed by heart disease, as cited in the West Central Health District Community Health Assessment. Georgia's age-adjusted incidence rate for all **cancer is above average at 469/100K** versus the national average of 444/100K.⁹ Concern regarding the high mortality rate of **heart disease** is also elevated, with the target areas averaging in the **88th percentile for the state**.⁸ Without EPA Brownfield funding, the RVRC coalition will not be able to provide assessments or identify potential contaminants for these sensitive populations. By addressing the sites and their environmental concerns, revitalization that creates new businesses, affordable housing, and employment opportunities will provide a healthier environment for generations to come.

d. Economically Impoverished/Disproportionately Impacted Populations: The target areas carry the heaviest burden of brownfield challenges, rooted in historical industrial practices and decades of disinvestment. Daily life is shaped by blight, contamination risks, substandard housing, and extremely low incomes, leaving residents vulnerable to environmental health hazards. Socioeconomic indicators underscore systemic disadvantage, with poverty in the 74th percentile, unemployment in the 55th percentile, and poverty rates (22% vs. US 12%) and government

⁷ <https://pedp-ejscreen.azurewebsites.net/>

⁸ <https://public-environmental-data-partners.github.io/j40-cejst-2/en/#9.97/32.7934/-84.5512>

⁹ <https://statecancerprofiles.cancer.gov/quick-profiles/index.php?statername=georgia>.

assistance usage (26% vs. US 12%) far exceeding US averages.^{8,10} Brownfield revitalization presents a critical opportunity to reverse these conditions. Planned redevelopment—including affordable housing with greenspace, expanded commercial and retail opportunities, industrial employers, and new mixed-use districts—will directly benefit those most-affected, providing access to clean drinking water, fresh food in USDA-designated food deserts, and healthier living environments. With the support of this grant, these communities can begin to overcome entrenched environmental and socioeconomic barriers, and thrive in a more equitable, resilient future.

Community Engagement e. Project Involvement & f. Project Roles: Project partners will play a vital role in advancing brownfield revitalization by supporting site identification and prioritization, leading community outreach and education, and guiding cleanup and reuse planning.

Name of org.	Entity’s mission	Point of contact	Specific involvement in the project
Talbot County Chamber of Commerce	Support policies that provide opportunities for Georgia businesses to expand their market	Mary Stevens talbotco@pstel.net	Assistance/Decision Making: site identification, future site-reuse planning, community outreach, and education activities
Zion Historical Foundation of Talbot County (nonprofit)	Preserve their history of Zion and share it with future generations	David Johnson [REDACTED]	Assistance/Decision Making: site inventory, community outreach and education
Stewart County Historical Commission	Educate the community on the history of Stewart County	Randy Butts [REDACTED]	Assistance/Decision Making: site identification, site inventory, and community outreach and education
Stewart County Family Connections	Serve as a local decision-making body, bringing community partners together to develop, implement, and evaluate plans for local families	Edwina Turner stewartcountyc@gmail.com	Assistance/Decision Making: future site-reuse planning, community outreach, and education activities
Marion County Chamber of Commerce	Promote the interests of businesses within the county through creating local partnerships and engaging with the community	Cody Currington marionga@windstream.net	Assistance/Decision Making: site identification, future site-reuse planning, community outreach, and education activities
Marion County Library	Improve the community’s quality of life through reading and discovery	Bailey Carter bcarter@cvtlga.org	Assistance/Decision Making: future site-reuse planning, community outreach, and education activities
University of Georgia Carl Vinson Institute of Government	Inform, innovate and inspire so that governments can be more efficient and responsive to citizens, address current & emerging challenges, and serve the public with excellence.	Daniel Wyatt daniel.wyatt@uga.edu	Assistance/Decision Making: Assist with Brownfield Area-Wide Plans and Site Reuse Vision Plans

¹⁰ US Census 2019–2023 American Community Survey



g. Incorporating Community Input: The RVRC recognizes the importance of including community residents and stakeholders throughout project planning and implementation, especially **residents** most affected by the project. The RVRC regional council committed its intent to seek a Brownfield Assessment Coalition Grant during the December 10, 2025, meeting. A Community Involvement Plan (CIP) will be created to outline the planned community engagement activities, schedule, project background, and key players. The CIP will be available for review at each non-lead coalition members’ main office, the RVRC office, and on the RVRC’s website. To educate target-area residents on the Brownfield Program and help identify potential brownfield sites in the target areas, the RVRC will perform community outreach and solicit and review the community-member-suggested brownfield sites and feedback during quarterly meetings. Each of the coalition members will also publish meeting notices in its local newspaper and on its website. The **Brownfield Project Team** will review and evaluate comments and community input during quarterly meetings, record all community member suggestions and information in the minutes, and post them on the RVRC’s Brownfield Program webpage hosted on its website. All suggestions and input will be addressed on an individual basis within two weeks and promptly posted to the RVRC’s Brownfield Program webpage for further public review.

RVRC’s CIP will incorporate several forms of media. Brownfields updates will be posted to the RVRC’s Brownfield Program webpage. The RVRC will provide resident interaction via the website and social media as a supplement to in-person community engagement. For those without internet access, the RVRC will disseminate Brownfield Project information through press releases, local newspapers, and signage in government buildings and will update organizations and community members at community education meetings held throughout the target areas. All promotional materials will be available, and the names and contact information of the RVRC’s Brownfield Project Team will be posted on the RVRC’s brownfield webpage, facilitating community-member contact with the team.

3. TASK DESCRIPTIONS, COST ESTIMATES, AND MEASURING PROGRESS

Description of Tasks/Activities and Outputs:

Task 1: Outreach & Site Inventory	
a.	<i>Project Implementation: EPA funded:</i> Community Involvement Plan (CIP), outreach materials, Brownfield (BF) webpage, and social media posts will be developed by the RVRC’s BF Project Manager with assistance from the Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP). RVRC staff will lead the community/educational meetings discussing project plans and updates. The RVRC BF Project Manager will work with target-area residents during outreach events to add to the site inventory. Identified abandoned and underused properties will be researched further by RVRC staff using the property appraiser’s website. QEP will work with RVRC staff to create an evaluation ranking tool to determine the order the sites will be addressed. Supplies: printing of outreach materials (brochures/handouts) and office supplies to manage the grant.
b.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> CIP created in Q1. Community/educational meetings for each target area held Q3 in Y1–3 and Q2 in Y4. BF webpage and outreach materials created in Q1 and posted throughout the grant project. Meeting held in Q3 will continue the preliminary inventory process. Evaluation ranking process begins in Q3 and continues throughout the grant.
c.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> RVRC: Laura Schneider, Regional Planner, BF Project Manager
d.	<i>Outputs:</i> CIP, BF webpage, 12 community/educational meetings, brochures/handouts, social media posts, summary of community meetings in required quarterly reports, evaluation ranking tool, site inventory list.
Task 2: Assessment	
a.	<i>Project Implementation: EPA funded:</i> The QEP conducts Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs), starting with the priority sites listed in this application. ASTM-AAI-compliant Phase Is; Generic Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP); Phase IIs will include the Sampling and Analysis Plan (SAP). Prior to assessment, site access



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	agreements and property eligibility determinations approval will be obtained. National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 consultations will be addressed when applicable.
b.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> Assessments begin Q2 and continue throughout the grant project.
c.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> The QEP will implement the technical aspects of the project with oversight from the RVRC: Laura Schneider, Regional Planner, BF Project Manager.
d.	<i>Outputs:</i> 40 Phase I ESAs, 1 Generic QAPP, 22 Phase II ESAs including SAP, site access agreements, property eligibility determinations, Section 106 determinations (if applicable).
Task 3: Reuse Planning	
a.	<i>Project Implementation: EPA funded:</i> Projects identified for cleanup. The QEP will prepare the Analysis for Brownfield Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA) and/or Cleanup Plans, which include evaluating cleanup alternatives, calculating cleanup costs, and determining site-appropriate remediation and/or reuse planning to reduce health/environmental risks. The QEP will assist RVRC in hosting charrettes/visioning sessions. In-house RVRC planners will create the following EPA-approved planning documents: BF Area-Wide Plans, BF Revitalization Plan, Site Reuse Assessments, Market Studies, and Site Reuse Visions.
b.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> Plans and charrettes begin in Q6 and will continue throughout the grant.
c.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> In-house RVRC planners will create the plans, with the exception of the ABCAs prepared by the QEP with oversight from the RVRC: Laura Schneider, Regional Planner, BF Project Manager.
d.	<i>Outputs:</i> 9 ABCAs, 6 vision sessions/charrettes, 2 Site Reuse Assessments, 3 BF Area-Wide Plans, 1 BF Revitalization Plan, 3 Market Studies, and 2 Site Reuse Visions.
Task 4: Program Management	
a.	<i>Project Implementation: EPA funded:</i> RVRC will procure a QEP to assist with the BF Grant project. RVRC's BF Project Director will oversee grant implementation and administration to ensure compliance with the EPA Cooperative Agreement work plan, schedule, and terms and conditions. The QEP will assist in completing ACRES database reporting, yearly financial reporting, quarterly reporting, and additional programmatic support for the four-year term of the grant. The travel budget allows three staff to attend three BF training conferences/workshops.
b.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> Procure QEP in Q1. ACRES & quarterly reporting begins in Q1 and continues throughout the grant. Annual reporting and forms created in Q5, Q9, Q13, and final closeout.
c.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> RVRC: Tracie Hadaway, Planning/Government Services Director, BF Project Director
d.	<i>Outputs:</i> ACRES database reporting, 4 annual financial reports, 16 quarterly reports, and programmatic support for the four-year grant period. Three staff to attend three conferences.
Task 5: Administrative Indirect Cost: a. – d. See below for the cost breakdown.	

e. Cost Estimates: Below are the anticipated cost estimates for this project based on past brownfield projects as determined by local market standards with contractual hourly rates based on the skills needed for the specific tasks.

- The budget for this project includes travel, supplies, contractual costs, conference registration (other) and the allowable 5% administration costs.
- **Sixty percent (60%) of the budget will be spent on site-specific work.**
- Personnel pay rates average \$100 inclusive of fringe, which includes in-house planners.

Task 1 Outreach & Site Inventory: Personnel (\$100/hr): CIP \$4,000 (40 hrs); BF webpage, outreach brochure/handouts, social media posts \$10,000 (100 hrs); 12 community/educational meetings \$24,000 (20 hrs per meeting to include preparation and execution; \$2,000 each meeting); site inventory management \$12,000 (120 hrs). Contractual: CIP Support \$1,120 (7 hrs × \$160); BF webpage, outreach brochure/handouts, social media posts \$800 (5 hrs × \$160); 12 community/educational meetings \$12,000 (\$1,000 per mtg.; 6.25 hours per meeting to include preparation and execution × \$160); BF site inventory and evaluation ranking tool creation \$19,200



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(120 hrs × \$160). Supplies: \$1,460 (\$600 [600 printouts at \$1 each]; \$400 [4 display board printouts at \$100 each]; pens, markers, paper \$460).

Task 2 Assessment: Personnel (\$100/hr): Report review \$6,300 (1 hr per report; 63 reports). Contractual: 40 Phase I ESAs \$188,000 (\$4,700 each); 1 Generic QAPP \$7,000; 22 Phase II ESAs including SAP \$660,000 (\$30,000 each).

Task 3 Reuse Planning: Personnel (\$100/hr): Vision sessions/charettes \$7,800 (13 hrs/each x 6 sessions x \$100/hr); ABCA review \$1,600 (2 hrs/ABCA; 9 ABCAs); 2 Site Reuse Assessments \$30,000 (\$15,000 each: 150 hrs x \$100/hr); 3 Market Studies \$48,000 (\$16,000 each: 160 hrs x \$100/hr); 2 Site Reuse Vision \$40,000 (\$20,000 each: 200 hrs x \$100/hr); 3 BF Area Wide Plans \$180,000 (\$60,000 each: 600 hrs x \$100/hr); 1 BF Revitalization Plan \$50,000 (500 hrs x \$100/hr). Contractual: 9 ABCAs \$48,640 (\$6,080 each).

Task 4 Program Management: Personnel (\$100/hr): \$40,000 ACRES database reporting, yearly financial reporting, quarterly reporting (400 hrs). Contractual: ACRES database reporting, yearly financial reporting, quarterly reporting \$17,500 (100 hrs × \$175). Travel: 3 staff attend 3 conferences for a total of \$17,100 (flights at \$600, 3 nights in hotel at \$300/night, incidentals and per diem at \$100 per day × 4 days × 3 staff × 3 events). Other: \$1,800 conference registration (\$200 per person x 3 events).

Task 5 Administrative Indirect Costs: Costs of operating and maintaining facilities \$25,000 (based on average costs), general administration consisting of the salaries of executive officers, personnel administration, and accounting \$50,000 (\$100 × 500hrs).

Category	Tasks					Totals
	<i>Outreach & Site Inventory</i>	<i>Assessment</i>	<i>Reuse Planning</i>	<i>Program Management</i>	<i>Administrative Indirect Costs</i>	
Personnel	\$50,000	\$6,300	\$348,000	\$40,000	\$50,000	\$494,300
Travel				\$17,100		\$17,100
Other				\$1,800	\$25,000	\$26,800
Supplies	\$1,460					\$1,460
Contractual	\$33,120	\$855,000	\$54,720	\$17,500		\$960,340
Total Budget	\$84,580	\$861,300	\$402,720	\$76,400	\$75,000	\$1,500,000

f. Plan to Measure and Evaluate Environmental Progress and Results: To ensure this EPA grant is on schedule, the RVRC Brownfields Team, which will include the QEP and coalition members, will meet quarterly to track all **outputs identified in 3.d.** using an Excel spreadsheet and will report all progress in fulfilling the scope of work, goals, and objectives to the EPA via quarterly reports. In addition, project expenditures and activities will be compared to the project schedule to ensure the grant project will be completed within the four-year time frame. Site-specific information will be entered and tracked in the ACRES database. The outputs to be tracked include the number of neighborhood meetings, public meetings, meetings with community groups and community partners, environmental assessments, ABCAs, and cleanup redevelopment plans. The outcomes to be tracked include community participation, acres assessed, acres ready for reuse, redevelopment dollars leveraged, and jobs created. In the event the project is not progressing in an efficient manner, the RVRC has countermeasures in place to address this. The RVRC will make monthly calls to its EPA Project Officer and, if needed, will create a Corrective Action Plan to help the project get back on schedule.

4. PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE



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Programmatic Capability. a. Organizational Capacity, b. Organizational Structure, & c. Description of Key Staff: The River Valley Regional Commission (RVRC) is a nonprofit planning organization that supports orderly growth, economic prosperity, and regional development across a 16-county region in west central Georgia. Governed by a 40-member council with an executive board and chair, the RVRC has extensive experience managing federal, state, regional, and local grants. Three key RVRC staff members will manage the BF Assessment Coalition Grant.

Ms. Tracie Hadaway, RVRC Planning and Government Services Director, will serve as **Brownfield Project Director**. With over two years in her current role and extensive experience as a Planning and Economic Development Director and County Planner, she oversees comprehensive plans, regional economic development strategies, urban redevelopment plans, and state and federal grants. She will oversee overall project implementation. **Ms. Laura Schneider**, RVRC Regional Planner since 2017, will be the **Brownfield Project Manager**. Her responsibilities include regional planning, grant administration, project mapping, and project oversight. She will manage day-to-day activities, ensure timely expenditure of funds, and fulfill administrative requirements. **Ms. Tammy Collins**, RVRC Finance Officer with over 33 years of experience, will serve as **Brownfield Finance Director**. She oversees all RVRC financial management obligations, including annual budgets, indirect cost plans, compliance, and inventory. She will manage grant drawdowns through ASAP.gov. A qualified environmental professional (QEP) will support the technical components of the Brownfields Project.

The coalition will be supported by the **Brownfield Advisory Board (BAB)**, a committee with representatives from each coalition member and project partner. The BAB will guide grant implementation and fund use based on the coalition's MOU. Coalition partners will jointly identify assessment sites; support local communities; fund assessment needs; engage private, public, nonprofit, and local stakeholders; raise awareness of coalition resources; and provide required reporting. RVRC will administer and distribute funds in alignment with the MOU and best practices. The BAB will ensure representation from coalition members and other essential groups so sensitive populations are included. Together, the coalition will collaborate to address brownfield sites across the region.

d. Acquiring Additional Resources: Using local contracting requirements and procurement process, the RVRC will procure a QEP to assist with technical and reporting portions of the grant, and any other contractors needed for the project. RVRC will ensure compliance with the EPA's "Professional Service" procurement process, including compliance with 2 CFR § 200 and 1500.

Past Performance and Accomplishments e. Currently Has or Previously Received an EPA Brownfields Grant: (1) Accomplishments: RVRC received and successfully executed an FY2019 EPA Brownfield Assessment Coalition Grant in the amount of \$600,000. The grant was highly successful resulting in 31 Phase I ESAs, 11 Site-Specific QAPPs, 6 Phase II ESAs, 5 Hazardous Material Inspection Reports, 5 Wetlands Surveys, 2 Threatened and Endangered Species Surveys, 2 Geophysical Investigations, and 1 ABCA. The grant period ended on September 30, 2024, and was closed out in compliance on March 4, 2025.

(2) Compliance with Grant Requirements: The RVRC FY19 grant has been closed out with all funding expended. The RVRC has maintained compliance and successfully completed all the grant work plans, schedules, and terms and conditions and has an excellent history of timely reporting. The Brownfield Project Team is skilled in project management and will monitor all grant activities to ensure compliance with all financial and other reporting requirements, such as ACRES database reporting and using the ASAP.gov system.



**River Valley Regional Commission, GA
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Threshold Criteria & Attachments**



Threshold Criteria

1. Eligibility of Lead and Non-Lead Coalition Members

- a. The River Valley Regional Commission, GA (RVRC), the Development Authority of Marion County (Marion), and the Industrial Development Authority of Talbot County (Talbot) are eligible to apply for the EPA Brownfields Assessment Coalition Grant as a regional commission form of governments as created by Georgia state statute pursuant to 2 CFR § 200.64. **Please see attached documentation for each coalition member.**
- b. RVRC, Marion, and Talbot are not exempt from Federal taxation under section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code.

2. Target Areas

The target areas (TAs) do not overlap, and they are located in three distinct jurisdictions in census tracts (CTs) representing different municipalities within the geographic boundary.

- Lead member RVRC – TA 1: CTs 13259950100, 13259950400 located in Lumpkin, GA
- Non-lead member Marion – TA 2: CTs 13197920100, 13197920200 located in Buena Vista, GA
- Non-lead member Talbot – TA 3: CTs 13263960100, 13263960200, 13263960300 located in Junction City, GA

3. Non-lead Member(s) that Never Received an EPA MARC Grant

Neither non-lead member, Marion or Talbot, has ever received an EPA Brownfields Multipurpose, Assessment, Revolving Loan Fund, or Cleanup (MARC) Grant.

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

- a. RVRC attests as the lead member of this coalition that it has the legal authority to expend grant funds on behalf of the non-lead members to conduct the proposed grant activities. RVRC is a planning and economic development agency serving a 35-municipality and 16-county geographic area, 15 of which are included in this EPA Brownfields Assessment Coalition grant. The RVRC was established in 2009 in accordance with Georgia House Bill 1216. Membership in the regional commission is required for each county and municipality in the River Valley region.

- b. Not Applicable.

5. Coalition Agreement

Letters signed by each non-lead coalition member citing the agreement to participate in the EPA Brownfields Assessment Coalition Grant are attached.

6. Community Involvement

The RVRC recognizes the importance of including community residents and stakeholders throughout project planning and implementation, especially **residents** most affected by the project. The RVRC regional council committed its intent to seek a Brownfield Assessment Coalition Grant during the December 10, 2025, meeting. A Community Involvement Plan (CIP) will be created to outline the planned community engagement activities, schedule,

project background, and key players. The CIP will be available for review at each non-lead coalition members' main office, the RVRC office, and on the RVRC's website. To educate target-area residents on the Brownfield Program and help identify potential brownfield sites in the target areas, the RVRC will perform community outreach and solicit and review the community-member-suggested brownfield sites and feedback during quarterly meetings. Each of the coalition members will also publish meeting notices in its local newspaper and on its website. The **Brownfield Project Team** will review and evaluate comments and community input during quarterly meetings, record all community member suggestions and information in the minutes, and post them on the RVRC's Brownfield Program webpage hosted on its website. All suggestions and input will be addressed on an individual basis within two weeks and promptly posted to the RVRC's Brownfield Program webpage for further public review.

RVRC's CIP will incorporate several forms of media. Brownfields updates will be posted to the RVRC's Brownfield Program webpage. The RVRC will provide resident interaction via the website and social media as a supplement to in-person community engagement. For those without internet access, the RVRC will disseminate Brownfield Project information through press releases, local newspapers, and signage in government buildings and will update organizations and community members at community education meetings held throughout the target areas. All promotional materials will be available, and the names and contact information of the RVRC's Brownfield Project Team will be posted on the RVRC's brownfield webpage, facilitating community-member contact with the team.

7. **Expenditure of Existing Grant Funds**

RVRC and the non-lead coalition members affirm that they do not have an open EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant or Multipurpose Grant.

8. **Contractors and Named Subrecipients**

Not Applicable.