

1. Applicant Identification

Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission

5405 Oak Street

Eastman, Georgia 31023

R04-26-A-062

2. Website URL

- Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission (HOGARC): <https://www.hogarc.org/>
- City of Eastman, GA: <https://www.cityofeastman.com/>
- Dublin-Laurens County Development Authority (DLCDA): <https://dlcda.com/>

3. Funding Requested

a. Assessment Grant Type: Assessment Coalition

b. Federal Funds Requested: \$1,500,000

4. Location

a. Cities:

Non-Lead Members:

- Eastman: Eastman
- DLCDA: Alcorns, Brewton, Cadwell, Cedar Grove, Dexter, Dublin, Dudley, East Dublin, Garretta, Lovett, Montrose, Rentz, Whipples Crossing

All geographic boundaries: Abbeville, Achord, Adrian, Ailey, Akin, Alamo, Alcorns, Aline, Altamaha, Ararat, Avants, Baxley, Bay Branch, Bellville, Blun, Blundale, Brewton, Cadwell, Canoochee, Cary, Cedar Crossing, Cedar Grove, Center, Chauncey, Charlotteville, Chester, Claxton, Cobbtown, Cochran, Colemans Lake, Collins, Covena, Daisy, Dellwood, Denton, Dexter, Doctortown, Dublin, Dudley, East Dublin, Eastman, Excelsior, Garfield, Gardi, Garretta, Gillis Springs, Glennville, Glenwood, Gresston, Graham, Hagan, Hazelhurst, Higgston, Jacksonville, Jesup, Kibbee, Kite, Lothair, Lovett, Lumber City, Lyons, Madray Springs, Manassas, McKinnon, McRae-Helena, Mendes, Metter, Milan, Modoc, Montrose, Mt. Vernon, Norristown, Normantown, Nunez, Oak Park, Odum, Ohoopee, Oliffstown, Petross, Pineview, Pitts, Plainfield, Pulaski, Rentz, Rhine, Rochelle, Roper, Santa Claus, Satilla, Scotland, Screven, Seville, Snipesville, Soperton, Stillmore, Stevens Crossing, Stuckey, Summertown, Surrency, Swainsboro, Tallahassee, Tarrytown, Toombs Central, Tom, Twin City, Uvalda, Vidalia, Wesley, Whipples Crossing, Workmore, Wrightsville, Yonkers, Zaidee

b. County/Parish:

Non-Lead Members:

- Eastman: Dodge
- DLCDA: Laurens

All Geographic Boundaries:

Appling, Bleckley, Candler, Dodge, Emanuel, Evans, Jeff Davis, Johnson, Laurens, Montgomery, Tattnall, Telfair, Toombs, Treutlen, Wayne, Wheeler, Wilcox

c. State: Georgia

5. Coalition Members' Target Areas and Priority Site Information

Target Areas:

- HOGARC: Lumber City Downtown District
- Eastman: Eastman Railway/Downtown/Courthouse (RDC) Area
- DLCDA:

Priority Sites:

- In the Lumber City Downtown District:
Former Amercord Plant- W. Industrial Blvd., Lumber City, Georgia 31509
- In the Eastman RDC Area:
Closed Cotton Mill- 5922 Main Street NW, Eastman, Georgia 31023
Former Rayonier Lumber Facility- Ben Giddens Road, Eastman, Georgia 31023
- In the Dublin and East Dublin Target Area:
Former Mohawk Building- 443 Nathaniel Drive, East Dublin, Georgia 31027
Madison 2-20 Property – E. Madison Street (Tract 2 City Block 20), Dublin, Georgia, 31021

6. Contacts

a. Project Director

Rich Bennett, Director of Economic and Community Development, HOGARC

912-244-2947

rbennett@hogarc.org

5405 Oak St. Eastman, Georgia 31023

b. Chief Executive/Highest Ranking Elected Official

Brett Manning, Executive Director

478-374-4771



manning@hogarc.org

5405 Oak St. Eastman, Georgia 31023

7. Population

- Lumber City Downtown District: 967
- Eastman RDC: 5,660
- Dublin and East Dublin: 15,950

8. Other Factors

Sample Format for Providing Information on the Other Factors	Page #
Community population is 15,000 or less.	1, 2, 7
The applicant is, or will assist, a federally recognized Indian Tribe or United States Territory.	
The priority site(s) is impacted by mine-scarred land.	
The priority site(s) is adjacent to a body of water (i.e., the border of the priority site(s) is contiguous or partially contiguous to the body of water, or would be contiguous or partially contiguous with a body of water but for a street, road, or other public thoroughfare separating them).	3
The priority site(s) is in a federally designated flood plain.	
The reuse of the priority site(s) will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy.	5
The reuse of the priority site(s) will incorporate energy efficiency measures.	5
The proposed project will improve local resilience to the impacts of extreme weather events and natural disasters.	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.	
The target area(s) is impacted by a coal-fired power plant that has recently closed (2015 or later) or is closing.	

9. Letter from the State or Tribal Environmental Authority

State Letter attached on the following page.

10. Releasing Copies of Applications

Not Applicable.





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: manning@hogarc.org

Mr. Brett Manning
The Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission
5405 Oak St.
Eastman, Georgia 31023

RE: State Acknowledgement Letter – Brownfield Assessment Coalition Grant Application
The Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission

Dear Mr. Manning:

This letter serves as acknowledgement from the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) that The Heart of Georgia Altamaha 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 Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission is applying for \$1,500,000 on behalf of its coalition members, the City of Eastman and the City of Lumber City, 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, The Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission

(1) PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION AND PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION, 1.a. Coalition Members: The Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission (HOGARC) is the lead applicant and fiscal agent for this EPA Brownfields Assessment Coalition Grant. HOGARC is a regional planning organization and political subdivision of the State of Georgia. The non-lead coalition members are the City of Eastman, and the Dublin–Laurens County Development Authority (DLCDA). The City of Eastman is eligible for the grant as a general-purpose unit of local government. The DLCDA is eligible as a quasi-governmental entity under the supervision and control of the City of Dublin and Laurens County. The non-lead coalition members lack the capacity to independently apply for and manage an EPA Brownfields grant due to limited staffing, constrained administrative resources, and lack of experience administering federal cooperative agreements. Neither entity has a brownfields program, and neither has staff with experience managing EPA Brownfields requirements. The non-lead members also lack access to EPA Brownfields resources, as neither holds an open EPA Brownfields grant, and no related county governments, regional entities, or known nonprofit organizations within their jurisdictions hold grants to conduct environmental site assessments (ESAs). The coalition structure enables the non-lead members to access capacity, resources and Brownfields funding that would otherwise remain unavailable.

1.b. Overview of Brownfield Challenges and Description of Target Areas: The geographic boundary for this grant includes the HOGARC service area, a predominantly rural region encompassing 17 counties, 62 municipalities, and 6,904 square miles in south central Georgia, approximately 200 miles south-east of Atlanta. The HOGARC serves as the lifeline to the area’s development and growth. The rural communities throughout the Heart of Georgia were once thriving small town centers, built around a strong combination of manufacturing plants, agricultural production, and a prominent railroad system. Local plants (like Amercord Inc.) in Lumber City, provided stable, well-paying jobs, agriculture supported both employment and regional trade, and the railroad that ran through many cities in the Heart of Georgia connected producers to larger markets. It was a perfect blend of producers and transportation that generated a reliable tax base, supported downtown businesses, and allowed families to remain in the community across generations. Schools, local services, and commercial corridors grew alongside a stable workforce, reinforcing long-term economic self-sufficiency. Over time, industrial restructuring, automation, and shifts in transportation and logistics led to the closure of plants and a decline in railroad activity. At the same time, the construction of larger regional highways and interstate systems redirected freight and passenger travel away from rural town centers, significantly reducing through traffic that once supported local businesses and services. As major employers left, remaining job opportunities became increasingly limited and often lower wage, while transportation barriers made commuting to distant jobs more difficult. With few viable employment options available locally, working-age adults were forced to relocate in search of stable work. This continued outmigration reshaped community demographics, leaving behind an aging population and a shrinking labor force. As the workforce declined, so did the local tax base and the community’s capacity to invest in infrastructure, redevelopment, and economic diversification. Former industrial, agricultural, and rail-adjacent properties became underutilized or abandoned, and documented or suspected environmental contamination, including potential soil or groundwater impacts, has discouraged private investment and reuse, creating barriers to revitalization. Uncertainty around site conditions, potential cleanup costs, and liability concerns have left these properties idle, further limiting economic recovery. As a result, many rural communities within the area served by the HOGARC face significant barriers to growth, making targeted brownfield assessment and remediation essential to restoring economic opportunity, attracting reinvestment, and supporting long-term community resilience. This Brownfields grant will provide the resources necessary to assess and remediate underutilized or environmentally impacted properties throughout the HOGARC service area, removing barriers to redevelopment and investment. By identifying contamination, guiding cleanup, and supporting safe reuse, the program will help unlock the economic potential of industrial, agricultural, and rail-adjacent sites, paving the way for new businesses, job creation, and community services. Revitalized properties will strengthen downtown corridors, support local agriculture, and enhance quality of life, while preserving the region’s cultural and historic assets. By facilitating strategic redevelopment, the grant will help reverse the cycle of disinvestment, attract private and public investment, and foster long-term economic resilience and sustainability for rural communities across the Heart of Georgia. As part of this grant, each coalition partner has pinpointed key target areas that are primed for redevelopment and can serve as catalysts for broader community revitalization. These sites were selected based on their strategic location, current condition, and potential to generate economic activity, support local businesses, and enhance quality of life. By focusing assessment and planning efforts on these priority areas, the coalition can guide cleanup, encourage investment, and create visible, early successes that demonstrate the value and impact of Brownfields redevelopment across the region.

Target Area 1: Lumber City Downtown District Target Area (Telfair County – HOGARC Lead)– Lumber City’s growth was driven by its early access to the Ocmulgee River, which supported timber, cotton, and supply traffic long before the town’s incorporation in 1889. The town was named to reflect the impact of a busy sawmill. The arrival of the railroad later transformed Lumber City into a regional industrial center, attracting additional industries and expanding employment opportunities. For decades, the Amicord Plant served as the city’s primary employer, but its closure in 2002 eliminated 392 jobs, a significant loss for a city of 1,319 residents at the time and marked a major turning point in Lumber City’s economic history. For the purposes of this EPA Brownfields Grant, the focus area has been defined to encompass the industrial and railroad corridor, which extends into the downtown area. To the east, the area stretches past Highway 23 and adjacent properties. To the north, it includes Main Street along Highway 117 and properties up to

Boyd Street. To the west, the focus area covers the industrial areas along West Industrial Boulevard and Ocmulgee Street, extending to the outskirts of town. To the south, it includes the environmentally sensitive areas of the Ocmulgee River, which played a crucial role in the early timber and lumber industries that were foundational to the city’s development.

Target Area 2: Eastman Railway/Downtown/Courthouse (RDC) Target Area (Dodge County – City of Eastman’s Target Area) - The City of Eastman, the county seat and largest municipality in Dodge County, serves as the administrative, cultural, and economic hub of the region. Its growth and development have been historically tied to the railroad and surrounding industrial activity, which positioned the city as a center for commerce and employment and contributed to its early prominence as a regional destination known for both industry and quality of life. Highway 341 runs through the heart of town, serving as a major travel corridor to Macon, Georgia, as well as a direct route to the Georgia coast and Brunswick. Decades of sustained traffic and associated commercial and automobile-oriented uses along this corridor have resulted in underutilized and dilapidated properties with perceived or actual contamination, creating economic and aesthetic challenges within Eastman’s historic core, including areas surrounding the Courthouse. While the City has successfully developed modern industrial parks and significant regional assets on its outskirts, such as the Heart of Georgia Regional Airport, higher education facilities, and advanced healthcare services, the focus of this EPA Brownfields Grant is on properties that directly affect the heart of Eastman. Specifically, the target area encompasses approximately three-quarters of a mile north and south along Highway 341, and approximately three-quarters of a mile east and west along 5th Avenue. By focusing on these strategically located sites, HOGARC can leverage its regional expertise and long-standing presence to revitalize areas that are critical to Eastman’s economic vitality, aesthetic appeal, and community identity.

Target Area 3: Dublin and East Dublin Target Area (Laurens County – DLCDA’s Target Area) - Dublin, Georgia, has long served as the economic center of Laurens County, rising to prominence during the cotton boom and maintaining significance through the Civil War and Reconstruction. Sister City, East Dublin although a unique city with their own municipalities, historically they were very similar, just separated by the Oconee River. The cities had a number of large paper mills along the rivers that employed many of the residents. When the paper mills and many of the industrial businesses closed down, the cities began to die. However, Dublin picked itself back up again, reinvented themselves pivoting to advanced manufacturing, light industrial, logistics and distribution. The city demonstrates remarkable resilience and growth, with a wealth of cultural and historic landmarks, and has been recognized as one of Georgia’s Exceptional Main Street Communities. Its historic architecture, civic institutions, and vibrant downtown contribute to a sense of place that celebrates both its heritage and ongoing vitality. Unfortunately, East Dublin never did adapt or overcome the financial hardships from those plant closures and today looks far different than its sister City. The DLCDA has taken a proactive role in supporting these revitalization efforts, actively inventorying properties throughout both cities. Their work has identified over 100 properties in Dublin with redevelopment potential, including sites along Highway 441 north and south of town, Jackson Street from the Courthouse crossing the river into East Dublin past Nathaniel Drive where the many paper mills were located, and Madison Street from the Farmers Market to the river. These identified parcels represent key opportunities to strengthen the economic, cultural, and aesthetic vitality of Dublin and East Dublin while supporting long-term community sustainability.

1.c. Description of the Priority Brownfield Sites Previous coalition efforts focused on identifying vacant or underutilized properties, particularly areas where clusters of distressed sites contributed to blight. Coalition partners submitted over 100 candidate sites, and HOGARC has worked with them to select an initial set of priority locations. Sites were prioritized based on community importance, redevelopment potential, public health and environmental concerns, visibility, and alignment with local revitalization goals. Upon award, HOGARC will expand the inventory to identify additional sites for assessment and remediation. The table below provides an overview of currently identified brownfield sites, followed by detailed descriptions of the selected priority sites.

Target Area 1: Lumber City Downtown District Target Area (Telfair County) – HOGARC Target Area
Priority Site (PS) 1: Former Amercord Plant – W. Industrial Blvd., Lumber City, Georgia 31509
Amercord, Inc. operated one of the most significant wire manufacturing facilities in North America, producing tire bead wire, tire cord, and high- and medium-carbon wire products for the tire, automotive, electronics, fiber-optics, and industrial markets. For decades, the Amercord plant served as Lumber City’s primary employer; however, its closure in 2002 resulted in the loss of 392 jobs, a substantial economic impact for a community of just 1,319 residents at the time. A 4.501-acre portion of the former facility located at Pine Street and Central Avenue in Lumber City, Telfair County, Georgia, has been designated as requiring corrective action and is listed under EPA Registry ID 110042026045. The Toxic Release Inventory Program identified historical releases of metals, acids, solvents, and other chemicals associated with wire manufacturing and plating operations, including lead, cyanide compounds, and chlorinated solvents, which present ongoing concerns due to their persistence in soil and groundwater. Amercord remains the owner of the property. This site is designated as High Priority due to its location near the downtown district, but also the redevelopment could be a catalyst for employment opportunities that is a dire need for the small city of Lumber City.
Target Area 2: Eastman (RDC) Target Area (Dodge County) – City of Eastman Target Area
PS 2: Closed Cotton Mill – 5922 Main street NW, Eastman, Georgia 31023
The property consists of approximately 6.87 acres located on Main Street along the railroad corridor in Eastman’s downtown area, north of the courthouse. The site contains two dilapidated structures that have been plagued with storm and fire damage

and are currently non inhabitable structures. One historical building that possibly was a commercial/retail front is noted to be approximately 7,600 square feet. The second structure was an irregularly shaped distribution warehouse totaling approximately 88,300 square feet. Historically, the property was used as a cotton mill, reflecting Eastman’s role as a center of cotton production in Dodge County during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Specific historical operations at the property are not fully documented; however, based on its use as a former cotton mill, potential environmental concerns may include residual machine lubrication oils, greases, and equipment cleaning solvents, as well as metals such as lead, copper, chromium, and zinc historically associated with textile dyeing and processing. In addition, asbestos-containing materials may be present due to building construction practices common at the time the facility was developed. The property is currently owned by the Downtown Development Authority and has been identified as a high-priority site due to its strategic downtown location, proximity to the railroad corridor, and significant potential for catalytic redevelopment.

PS 3: Former Rayonier Lumber Facility – Ben Giddens Road, Eastman, Georgia 31023

The property was most recently operated by Rayonier Performance Fibers LLC, a lumber and forest products company, until ownership was transferred to the Dodge County–Eastman Development Authority in 2023. The site encompasses approximately 239.67 acres located on the northern outskirts of the City of Eastman, situated along U.S. Highway 23 and an active railroad corridor. Existing development on the property is minimal and consists of a single small structure of approximately 1,800 square feet, with the remaining acreage historically used as the source of timber and raw materials supporting lumber operations. The area could have petroleum impacts from historic logging equipment, residual herbicides used for silvicultural management, limited metals associated with treated wood handling, and debris or ash from historical site operations. Due to its size, transportation access, and current public ownership, the property represents a significant opportunity for future industrial or economic development, contingent upon environmental assessment and planning.

Target Area 3: Dublin and East Dublin Target Area (Laurens County – DLCDA’s Target Area) -

PS 4: former Mohawk Building – Paper Mill Road (443 Nathaniel Drive), East Dublin, Georgia 31027

The property previous owned and operated by the Mohawk Industries contains over 1,015 acres stretching from Nathaniel Drive to the Oconee River. It is currently owned by Westrock Southeast LLC, however the property has not been occupied for over since it 2011. The property has 12 buildings, most of which built in 1978 and comprising of 1.66 million square feet of Unoccupied building space. 4 buildings are described as office buildings ranging in size from 3,580 to 170,010 square feet. There are 6 storage buildings from 2,576 to 804,971 square feet. Lastly, there are 3 Heavy Industrial/Manufacturing buildings ranging in size from 6,512 Square feet to 419,662 square feet. Although the buildings were constructed in 1978, the existing infrastructure remains in fair condition and is suitable for renovation rather than full demolition and reconstruction. The uncertainty of contaminants provides a deterrent for any private investor that is not a similar industrial nature. A significant advantage of the property is that the facility is largely self-contained, with substantial electrical capacity, on-site wastewater infrastructure, stormwater management, utilities, existing cooling systems., flat and on the railway that eases transportation. It is ready for the right new industrial partner to move in. This facility is the top priority of the DLCDA.

PS 5: Madison 2-20 Property – E. Madison Street (Tract 2 City Block 20), Dublin, Georgia, 31021

The Madison Street property consists of a 22,720-square-foot storage building on approximately 2.67 acres, located near downtown Dublin and City Hall. While the downtown core has experienced successful revitalization with improved streetscapes, restaurants, and cultural venues, conditions along Madison Street east of the courthouse toward the river remain largely vacant, dilapidated, and distressed. Despite recent City investments in streetscape improvements, surrounding properties remain underutilized. The site was selected due to its proximity to City Hall and its size within the Madison Street corridor, and its redevelopment into a community-serving use has the potential to catalyze reinvestment and better connect downtown to the riverfront. In preparation for future redevelopment, the City of Dublin has acquired the property.

Priority sites were selected using a transparent, multi-factor approach that considered proximity to disadvantaged communities, potential impacts to sensitive populations, redevelopment feasibility, alignment with local revitalization goals, visibility and contribution to blight, and potential human health and environmental concerns. This approach ensures that assessment resources are focused on sites where EPA investment can generate the greatest community benefit. **1.d. Identifying Additional Sites.** While HOGARC is confident that the initially selected Target Areas and Priority Brownfield Sites represent significant redevelopment opportunities, the work will extend beyond these locations. To systematically identify additional sites, HOGARC, in coordination with non-lead coalition members, will establish a Brownfields Action Committee (BAC). The BAC will assist in gathering site data using standardized criteria, including environmental contamination, reuse potential, current site status, and community need. HOGARC’s GIS Department will play a central role, integrating parcel maps, aerial imagery, utilities, zoning, and environmental features into a cloud-based system for real-time mapping, analysis, and updates across the 17-county region. Using this data alongside local knowledge and community input, the BAC will prioritize sites in disadvantaged communities with high redevelopment potential to maximize both economic and non-economic benefits. Each coalition member will nominate at least two sites for EPA-funded assessment, with HOGARC overseeing site screening, sequencing, and overall program management.

1.e. Reuse Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans. HOGARC serves as a designated Economic Development District and is responsible for administering the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the 17 counties within the Heart of Georgia region. The CEDS provides a coordinated, region wide framework for economic development by identifying challenges, setting priorities, and guiding strategic investment across the region. Through collaboration with local governments, economic development organizations, and community stakeholders, the CEDS aligns planning efforts with actionable strategies. The primary focus of this work is to revitalize small communities, strengthen local economies, and ensure a thriving and sustainable future for the Heart of Georgia region. By targeting

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redevelopment, infrastructure improvements, workforce development, and strategic investment, HOGARC uses the CEDS as a tool to support resilient communities, attract opportunities, and improve quality of life for residents throughout the 17-county service area. In addition, there are other community plans that address the revitalization of specific areas, that also align with the HOGARC CEDS, it further defines unique areas of focus. Reuse strategies developed through this project will also align with local comprehensive plans, downtown master plans, and redevelopment strategies adopted by coalition member communities, ensuring that brownfields assessment and reuse planning directly support locally defined land use and economic development priorities.

Site/Reuse/Eligible Planning Activities	Alignment with Revitalization Plans
<p>PS1: Former Amercord Plant Reuse: Industrial</p> <p>Brownfields Revitalization Plan</p>	<p>Although the City of Lumber City does not have an adopted comprehensive plan, the proposed reuse aligns with the HOGARC CEDS and the City’s goals to redevelop underutilized industrial and commercial properties, expand employment opportunities, and stimulate reinvestment within the existing city footprint. The Former Amercord Plant, a former major employer, is targeted for redevelopment as a hub for industrial or commercial activity, including light manufacturing, food or agricultural processing, distribution, or small-scale assembly. Redevelopment of this site is expected to generate stable, local jobs, strengthen regional supply chains, and serve as a catalyst for broader economic revitalization, while leveraging the plant’s existing infrastructure and strategic location to restore its historic role as an economic anchor for Lumber City.</p>
<p>PS2: Closed Cotton Mill Reuse: Retail Shopping and Commercial Services</p> <p>Evaluation of Market Viability</p>	<p>The property will be redeveloped as a farmers’ market, providing local agricultural producers with a dedicated venue to sell their goods and giving residents a convenient way to support the surrounding farming community. Its strategic location at the transition between the downtown core and rural areas makes it a natural gathering place, linking Eastman’s agricultural heritage with a vibrant, community-centered future. The farmers’s market aligns directly with the HOGARC CEDS and the Dodge County Joint Comprehensive Plan, which positions Eastman to remain the governmental, educational, commercial, industrial, and civic center of Dodge County while continuing as a progressive rural leader with exceptional amenities, community facilities, and quality of life. The Comprehensive Plan envisions Eastman as a charming, engaged small town with a supportive, family-friendly atmosphere that fosters growth for both residents and businesses.</p>
<p>PS3: Former Rayonier Lumber Facility Reuse: Commercial</p> <p>Site Reuse Vision</p>	<p>The proposed reuse aligns with the HOGARC CEDS and the Dodge County Joint Comprehensive Plan, which designates Eastman as the governmental, educational, commercial, industrial, and civic hub of Dodge County, while emphasizing its role as a forward-thinking rural community offering exceptional amenities, robust facilities, and a high quality of life. The site, located on the outskirts of Eastman yet connected to downtown via the primary thoroughfare, is ideally positioned to serve the region. In keeping with the Comprehensive Plan, this property will be developed as an Agricultural Center and Expo, providing a permanent venue to celebrate the area’s agricultural heritage and serve as a hub for education, training, and innovation, strengthening the region’s agricultural economy and supporting long-term community and economic development.</p>
<p>PS4: Former Mohawk Plant Reuse: Industrial</p> <p>Brownfields Revitalization Plan</p>	<p>The former Mohawk property presents two potential redevelopment pathways that both are outlined in the HOGARC CEDS and the Vision 2050, a Joint Comprehensive Plan for Lauren’s County. One option would be the recruitment of a heavy industrial user to occupy the facility and reintroduce employment opportunities for local residents. Historically, when East Dublin was at its peak, industrial employment was the community’s primary economic driver, with large facilities providing both jobs and the supporting infrastructure that sustained daily life. Following the closure of the Mohawk facility and neighboring plants, residents gradually transitioned to other employment opportunities, and today job creation is no longer the community’s most pressing need. The site’s greatest asset lies in its approximately 1,200 acres of flat land, substantial electrical capacity, and access to millions of gallons of water for cooling. These characteristics make the property particularly well suited for development as a large-scale data center supporting the growing demands of the artificial intelligence economy, offering a significant fiscal benefit to East Dublin without requiring the extensive population growth or public infrastructure expansion typically associated with major employment centers.</p>
<p>PS5: Madison 2-20 Property Reuse: Commercial</p> <p>Evaluation of Market Viability</p>	<p>The Madison Street property will be redeveloped to celebrate Dublin’s historic character and strengthen the downtown district, in alignment with the HOGARC CEDS and the Laurens County Joint Comprehensive Plan. The project advances concentrated, infill development that fosters walkable, vibrant, and connected communities. Positioned as a key link between the revitalized downtown and the river, the Madison 2-20 property will be adaptively reused for cultural and community-oriented purposes, including an art gallery or museum highlighting the area’s history. This redevelopment will remove blight, enhance the corridor’s aesthetic and cultural appeal, and serve as a catalyst for extending a future riverwalk, creating a seamless, engaging connection between downtown residents, visitors, and the riverfront while supporting long-term economic and community revitalization.</p>

1.f. Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategy. The HOGARC Brownfields Coalition will stimulate economic development across the Heart of Georgia region by preparing priority brownfield sites for productive reuse through assessment, cleanup, and targeted redevelopment. Many small communities in the target areas feature historic downtowns and distinctive community character, yet underutilized, blighted, or environmentally impacted properties limit local economic potential. By addressing environmental uncertainties and stabilizing these sites, the project will reduce redevelopment risk, attract investment, and position these properties to support sustainable economic growth, new employment opportunities, and increased local revenues. Redevelopment of these sites will also help retain residents in their hometowns while attracting visitors, new residents, and complementary private investment. Using the EPA Brownfields Industrial Employment Density Model—which estimates full-time equivalent (FTE) employment based on site acreage, building footprint, and proposed land use—HOGARC projects that redevelopment of the five priority sites will generate approximately 1,625–2,310 direct FTE jobs across industrial, commercial, retail, and community-oriented uses. Specifically, the Former Americord Plant in Lumber City, GA, for light manufacturing, processing, and distribution on a 4.5-acre site is projected to create 70–110 FTE jobs, restoring the property’s historic role as an economic anchor and catalyzing downtown revitalization. The Closed Cotton Mill in Eastman, GA, will be redeveloped as a permanent farmers’ market and commercial hub on a 6.87-acre site, supporting 40–70 FTE jobs and providing a dedicated venue for local agricultural producers while enhancing community gathering spaces. The Former Rayonier Lumber Facility in Eastman, GA, will be transformed into an Agricultural Center and Expo across 239 acres, expected to generate 1,100–1,500 FTE jobs and creating a regional hub for agricultural innovation, training, and trade. The Former Mohawk Plant in East Dublin, GA, will be redeveloped across 1,015 acres for a large-scale data center or advanced industrial use, projected to generate 400–600 FTE jobs, leveraging existing infrastructure, electrical capacity, and transportation access to deliver high-value employment and fiscal benefits. The Madison 2-20 Property in Dublin, GA, will be adaptively reused on a 22,720-square-foot building on 2.67 acres for cultural and community purposes, including an art gallery or museum, supporting 15–30 FTE jobs, strengthening the downtown corridor, and connecting the revitalized downtown to the riverfront. In addition to employment impacts, these projects will provide substantial financial benefits. Increased payroll will expand disposable income in rural markets, while new businesses and community facilities will enhance municipal revenue through property, sales, and business taxes. Revitalized sites will stimulate surrounding commercial activity, strengthen regional supply chains, and generate recurring economic activity that reinforces downtown districts and rural corridors. Cleanup and redevelopment will remove long-standing environmental liabilities, stabilize infrastructure, and enable energy-efficient construction and renewable energy integration, including modern HVAC systems, LED lighting, and solar-ready sites. Projects will also incorporate resilient site designs, including improved stormwater management, adaptive reuse of existing structures, and environmentally sustainable construction practices, strengthening both environmental and economic resilience across the 17-county region. Collectively, these priority site projects are expected to catalyze broader regional reinvestment, demonstrating the economic potential of brownfield redevelopment and supporting long-term fiscal stability, community vitality, and workforce sustainability across the Heart of Georgia.

1.g. Resources Needed for Site Reuse. HOGARC is well positioned to obtain and leverage additional public and private funding to support site reuse following EPA-funded environmental assessment. HOGARC has a demonstrated track record of administering more than \$13 million in federal and state financial assistance, so the likelihood of obtaining funding from other resources is high. Completion of EPA-funded site assessments and remediation planning will reduce environmental uncertainty, increase site readiness, and enable HOGARC and its coalition partners to competitively pursue established funding sources, as well as local government contributions and private redevelopment capital, to advance reuse at priority sites such as those described in the table below.

Site/Reuse	Funding Opportunity and Purpose	Phase for Use	Applicability/Likelihood to Obtain
Former Americord Plant (Lumber City Target Area) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Industrial Reuse ● Privately owned ● Downtown ● Rural area 	Private developer (all purposes)	Remediation & Reuse	Most likely opportunity as a privately owned site
	Economic Development Administration Economic Adjustment Assistance Grant (enable job creation and private capital investment)	Reuse	Likely due to job creation from reuse and private investment potential
	Georgia Department of Community Affairs Grant (industrial development in rural downtown areas)	Remediation & Reuse	Likely due to industrial reuse and location
	Georgia Rural Zone Tax Credits (incentivize job creation)	Reuse	Highly likely due to job creation in rural area and wide availability
Closed Cotton Mill (Eastman Target Area) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Farmers Market Reuse ● Publicly owned 	EPA Cleanup Grant (cleanup publicly owned sites)	Remediation	Likely due to public ownership and not being the party responsible for contamination
	USDA Rural Development Community Facilities Grant (supports food access,	Reuse	Highly likely due to reuse alignment with grant purpose

Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission FY26 Brownfield Assessment Grant Application

	agricultural marketing and community facilities)		
Former Rayonier Lumber Facility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Agriculture Center and Expo Reuse ● Publicly owned ● Rural area 	EPA Cleanup Grant (cleanup publicly owned sites)	Remediation	Likely due to public ownership and not being the party responsible for contamination
	USDA Cooperative Extension (practical education that strengthens agriculture and economic development in rural areas)	Reuse	Highly likely due to reuse alignment with grant purpose
	USDA Rural Development (supports agricultural marketing and community facilities)		Highly likely due to reuse alignment with grant purpose
Former Mohawk Building (Dublin/East Dublin Target Area) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Data Center Reuse ● Privately Owned ● DOZ location 	Private developer (all purposes)	Remediation & Reuse	Most likely opportunity as a privately owned site
	Opportunity Zone tax credits (incentivize economic development in low-income areas)	Reuse	Highly likely due to job creation in low-income area and wide availability
Madison 2-20 (Dublin/East Dublin Target Area) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Art Gallery and Museum Reuse ● Publicly owned ● DOZ location 	Opportunity Zone tax credits (incentivize economic development in low-income areas)	Reuse	Highly likely due to job creation in low-income area and wide availability
	Dublin-Laurens County Land Bank Authority assisted Business Improvement District Funds (incentivize blight removal)	Remediation & Reuse	Highly likely due to location and reuse alignment with funding purpose

1.h. Use of Existing Infrastructure. PS1: Former Amercord Plant, PS4: Former Mohawk Building, and PS5: Madison 2-20 Property are fully served by existing infrastructure, including roadway access, water, sewer, and electrical capacity. These sites are positioned for immediate reuse, supporting industrial, advanced manufacturing, and cultural/community-oriented redevelopment without significant new infrastructure investment. The presence of functional utilities and transportation access reduces project costs, accelerates redevelopment timelines, and maximizes the return on prior public and private investment, consistent with EPA Brownfields program goals. PS2: Closed Cotton Mill and PS3: Former Rayonier Lumber Facility will require substantial site preparation and new infrastructure to support their planned reuse. The Closed Cotton Mill in Eastman, GA, is a fully dilapidated structure with no habitable space remaining and likely requires extensive cleanup and modernization of utilities to accommodate its redevelopment as a permanent farmers’ market and commercial hub. Upgrades may include new electrical, water, and sewer systems, along with building improvements to meet code and operational needs. Similarly, the Former Rayonier Lumber Facility on the outskirts of Eastman, GA, currently has minimal development, and the planned Agricultural Center and Expo will require new construction and associated infrastructure installation, including road access, water, sewer, and electrical utilities. By focusing assessment and cleanup efforts on sites with existing infrastructure while strategically planning for infrastructure investment at PS2 and PS3, HOGARC’s approach maximizes efficiency, directs growth to previously developed land where feasible, and establishes a strong foundation for sustainable, long-term redevelopment across the coalition’s target areas. EPA-funded environmental assessments will define site-specific requirements and feasibility, informing subsequent infrastructure investments and enabling alignment with state and federal funding programs.

(2) COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT.

a. The Community’s Need for Funding: The communities within the coalition’s geographic boundary(ies) have a documented inability to draw on other sources of funding to carry out environmental assessment or remediation, and subsequent reuse in the target areas because the community has a small population and/or is low-income. Lumber City (population 967) and Eastman (population 5,660) are small rural jurisdictions, while Dublin/East Dublin (population 15,950) functions as a small regional center; all three target areas have experienced disinvestment and constrained local capacity to self-fund Phase I/Phase II ESAs and cleanup planning. Economic indicators show limited local ability to generate redevelopment-ready capital: labor force participation is 34.84%–49.30% in the target areas compared with 63.70% statewide; per-capita income ranges from \$18,101–\$27,556 compared with \$39,524 (Georgia) and \$43,288 (U.S.); and SNAP participation is elevated (17.81%–39.63% vs. 12.27% statewide). These conditions suppress private predevelopment investment and keep potentially contaminated, blighted properties in place—particularly in the very corridors the coalition is targeting for reinvestment. This EPA Brownfields Assessment Coalition Grant is therefore the practical “first-dollar” tool in these markets: it will reduce uncertainty, clarify environmental conditions, and produce decision-ready information that local governments, property owners, and lenders typically require before reuse planning, financing, and redevelopment can proceed. Without EPA grant support, Coalition members and their target areas face substantial barriers to conducting environmental assessments and remediation. Limited local resources, small population sizes, and a high prevalence of low-income households constrain their ability to attract private or

alternative public funding. As a result, underutilized and potentially contaminated properties remain idle, delaying community revitalization, economic recovery, and job creation. If awarded the FY26 Assessment Coalition grant, Brownfields assessments would provide a critical first step toward redeveloping properties in a manner that increases local revenue stimulates economic activity and begins to reverse the adverse conditions reflected in these indicators.

b. Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations Sensitive populations in the target areas include **older adults (55+ is 28.30%–34.23%** of residents in the target areas), **children and pregnant women and low-income households** (as reflected by elevated SNAP participation). These populations face health and welfare issues that are directly aggravated by vacant, underutilized, and potentially contaminated sites: exposure risk from legacy industrial and commercial contamination; physical safety hazards from dilapidated, fire- and storm-damaged structures; reduced walkability and fewer safe community destinations; and heightened concern for water and environmental stressors (the target areas’ wastewater discharge indicator exceeds the state benchmark in each community—e.g., **179.00** in Dublin/East Dublin vs. **52.70** statewide). This grant and reuse strategy/projected site reuse(s) will address these issues and/or help identify and reduce related threats by (1) completing Phase I/II ESAs and, where appropriate, cleanup planning that identifies exposure pathways (soil, dust, groundwater, vapor intrusion) and supports risk-reduction decisions; and (2) advancing reuses intentionally tied to sensitive-population welfare—most notably: redeveloping the **Closed Cotton Mill** as a permanent **farmers’ market/community-serving commercial hub** to improve practical access to fresh foods; repositioning the **Madison 2-20 Property** for **cultural/community use** that creates a safe, walkable destination and strengthens connections to the riverfront; and stabilizing / assessing industrial-legacy sites (Amecord, Mohawk, Rayonier) to reduce blight-driven safety concerns and enable controlled, safer reuse aligned with local plans. Importantly, the coalition will use assessment results to match cleanup and engineering controls to the proposed reuses so that sensitive populations, especially older adults and children, benefit from reduced uncertainty and reduced potential exposure in places where they live, work, and access services. **c. Greater Than Normal Incidence of Disease and Adverse Health Conditions** Populations in the coalition’s service area experience a greater-than-normal incidence or burden of adverse health conditions that are plausibly associated with environmental stressors and limited access to health-supportive infrastructure, including asthma and cancer, as well as adverse birth outcomes that implicate birth defects concerns in broader public health research. Baseline public health data show that heart disease hospitalizations (15.3–18.2 vs. 10.3 GA and 9.6 U.S.), infant mortality (8.6–10.4 vs. 6.5 GA and 5.5 U.S.), Years of Potential Life Lost, Rate per 100,000 Population (13,527–14,993 vs. 9,406 GA and 8,367 U.S.), and child mortality (79–151 vs. 61 GA and 51.5 U.S.) all exceed state and national benchmarks, indicating broad health burdens requiring contextual attention. Model-based small-area prevalence data from CDC’s PLACES public health estimates show that adult current asthma prevalence in rural Georgia counties similar to the target areas (e.g., Laurens, Dodge, and Telfair Counties) exceeds state averages and national adult asthma prevalence, reflecting a higher local burden of respiratory conditions that can be exacerbated by air pollutants and legacy contamination sources. Similarly, cancer prevalence and mortality patterns in Laurens and Dodge Counties—particularly for lung and bronchus cancers, where age-adjusted

Demographic Indicators	Target Area			Georgia	US
	Dublin and East Dublin	Eastman RDC	Lumber City Downtown District		
Population ¹	15,950	5,660	967	10,822,590	332,384,540
Population Change - 2010 - 2020 ²	2.35%	-8.58%	-24.38%	10.57%	7.73%
Population Change - 2000 - 2010 ³	-0.91%	12.99%	15.14%	18.36%	7.93%
Labor Force Participation ⁴	49.30%	46.99%	34.84%	63.70%	63.52%
Families earning over \$75,000 ⁴	25.98%	43.43%	26.38%	58.66%	62.05%
Average Household Income ⁴	\$61,473	\$91,014	\$65,173	\$103,617	\$110,490
Per Capita Income ⁴	\$24,826	\$27,556	\$18,1014	\$39,524	\$43,288
Children Below 100%FPL ⁴	85.36%	55.10%	77.16%	18.66%	16.32%
Population Below 100% ⁴	55.10%	77.16%	13.48%	12.44%	42.50%
Bachelor's Degree of Higher ⁴	16.09%	22.68%	6.35%	34.23%	35.00%
Household Receiving SNAP ⁴	39.63%	22.08%	17.81%	12.27%	11.77%

¹ US Census Bureau, Population and Housing Unit Estimates. 2024
² US Census Bureau, Decennial Census. 2020
³ US Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 2000-2010
⁴ US Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2019 - 23

stressors (the target areas’ wastewater discharge indicator exceeds the state benchmark in each community—e.g., **179.00** in Dublin/East Dublin vs. **52.70** statewide). This grant and reuse strategy/projected site reuse(s) will address these issues and/or help identify and reduce related threats by (1) completing Phase I/II ESAs and, where appropriate, cleanup planning that identifies exposure pathways (soil, dust, groundwater, vapor intrusion) and supports risk-reduction decisions; and (2) advancing reuses intentionally tied to sensitive-population welfare—most notably: redeveloping the **Closed Cotton Mill** as a permanent **farmers’ market/community-serving commercial hub** to improve practical access to fresh foods; repositioning the **Madison 2-20 Property** for **cultural/community use** that creates a safe, walkable destination and strengthens connections to the riverfront; and stabilizing / assessing industrial-legacy sites (Amecord, Mohawk, Rayonier) to reduce blight-driven safety concerns and enable controlled, safer reuse aligned with local plans. Importantly, the coalition will use assessment results to match cleanup and engineering controls to the proposed reuses so that sensitive populations, especially older adults and children, benefit from reduced uncertainty and reduced potential exposure in places where they live, work, and access services. **c. Greater Than Normal Incidence of Disease and Adverse Health Conditions** Populations in the coalition’s service area experience a greater-than-normal incidence or burden of adverse health conditions that are plausibly associated with environmental stressors and limited access to health-supportive infrastructure, including asthma and cancer, as well as adverse birth outcomes that implicate birth defects concerns in broader public health research. Baseline public health data show that heart disease hospitalizations (15.3–18.2 vs. 10.3 GA and 9.6 U.S.), infant mortality (8.6–10.4 vs. 6.5 GA and 5.5 U.S.), Years of Potential Life Lost, Rate per 100,000 Population (13,527–14,993 vs. 9,406 GA and 8,367 U.S.), and child mortality (79–151 vs. 61 GA and 51.5 U.S.) all exceed state and national benchmarks, indicating broad health burdens requiring contextual attention. Model-based small-area prevalence data from CDC’s PLACES public health estimates show that adult current asthma prevalence in rural Georgia counties similar to the target areas (e.g., Laurens, Dodge, and Telfair Counties) exceeds state averages and national adult asthma prevalence, reflecting a higher local burden of respiratory conditions that can be exacerbated by air pollutants and legacy contamination sources. Similarly, cancer prevalence and mortality patterns in Laurens and Dodge Counties—particularly for lung and bronchus cancers, where age-adjusted

Demographic Indicators	Dublin and East Dublin	Eastman RDC	Lumber City DD	Georgia	US
55+ ¹	29.28%	34.23%	28.30%	27.27%	29.36%
People of Color (Not Non-Hispanic White)	77.89%	41.38%	62.02%	50.16%	41.83%
Air & Water Quality - Wastewater Discharge ³	179.00	88.80	57.42	52.70	69.00

¹US Census Bureau. Decennial Census.2020
² US Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2019 - 23
³ Environmental Protection Agency, EPA - EJScreen, 2024

that implicate birth defects concerns in broader public health research. Baseline public health data show that heart disease hospitalizations (15.3–18.2 vs. 10.3 GA and 9.6 U.S.), infant mortality (8.6–10.4 vs. 6.5 GA and 5.5 U.S.), Years of Potential Life Lost, Rate per 100,000 Population (13,527–14,993 vs. 9,406 GA and 8,367 U.S.), and child mortality (79–151 vs. 61 GA and 51.5 U.S.) all exceed state and national benchmarks, indicating broad health burdens requiring contextual attention. Model-based small-area prevalence data from CDC’s PLACES public health estimates show that adult current asthma prevalence in rural Georgia counties similar to the target areas (e.g., Laurens, Dodge, and Telfair Counties) exceeds state averages and national adult asthma prevalence, reflecting a higher local burden of respiratory conditions that can be exacerbated by air pollutants and legacy contamination sources. Similarly, cancer prevalence and mortality patterns in Laurens and Dodge Counties—particularly for lung and bronchus cancers, where age-adjusted

incidence rates (e.g., ~72.3 and 71.0 per 100,000, respectively) exceed both Georgia’s (56.8) and the U.S. average (53.1)— demonstrate elevated community cancer burden that may be associated with historic industrial exposures and social determinants of health. While birth defects data at the local level are not routinely published with the same geographic resolution, elevated infant mortality and adverse birth outcomes observed locally, combined with the known association of hazardous exposures with congenital anomalies and developmental effects, raise plausibility that birth-defect-related risks constitute a local public health concern meriting environmental characterization as part of a comprehensive risk profile. This application does not claim that assessment alone eliminates these health burdens; rather, the proposed EPA Brownfields Assessment Coalition Grant will produce actionable environmental data and cleanup alternatives that help identify and reduce exposure pathways (soil, groundwater, vapor, dust) at priority sites with documented or suspected contaminants (e.g., industrial chemicals, solvents, metals at the Amercord site; asbestos and residues at the Closed Cotton Mill; petroleum and agricultural chemicals at other legacy properties). By focusing EPA resources on these sites and aligning site reuse strategies with health-promoting outcomes—such as a community farmers’ market to improve access to nutritious food, cultural and recreational reuse to support active living, and blight reduction to minimize hazards—the project directly addresses the evaluation criteria’s requirement to demonstrate how the grant and reuse strategy will help reduce or identify threats to populations with greater-than-normal incidence of conditions including asthma, cancer, and birth-defect-associated outcomes, thereby supporting risk reduction and safer community redevelopment. **d. Economically Impoverished/Disproportionately Impacted Populations** Populations in the

target areas are economically impoverished and/or disproportionately share the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, governmental, and/or commercial operations or policies. The region’s legacy economy— manufacturing, rail-adjacent industry, and river- and timber-related operations—left behind underutilized properties where the presence or potential presence of hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or petroleum continues to complicate reuse and depress nearby investment. Economic vulnerability is evident in multiple measures: labor force participation is well below the state level (as low as **34.84%** in Lumber City); per-capita income is substantially lower (**\$18,101–\$27,556** vs. **\$39,524** GA); and SNAP reliance is elevated (**17.81%–39.63%** vs. **12.27%** GA). At the same time, communities of color comprise a substantial share of residents (up to **77.89%** in Dublin/East Dublin), which heightens the equity importance of ensuring redevelopment decisions reduce—not shift—risk. This grant and reuse strategy/projected site reuse(s) will address, or help identify and reduce, related threats by directing assessments to visible, high-impact properties in the community cores (downtown districts, corridors, and river/rail-adjacent areas), producing the eligibility determinations, environmental data, and cleanup

Demographic Indicators	Target			Georgia	US
	Dublin and East Dublin	Eastman RDC	Lumber City DD		
Hospitalizations - Heart Disease ¹	15.30	17.50	18.20	10.30	9.60
Infant Mortality (HSRA) ²	10.30	10.40	8.60	6.50	5.50
Mortality - Premature Death ³	14,993	13,999	13,527	9,406	8,367
Mortality - Child Mortality ⁴	79.00	110.00	151.00	61.00	51.50

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC-Atlas of Heart Disease and Stroke. 2019-21
² Health Resources & Services Administration, HSRA - Maternal and Child Health Bureau. 2020-22
³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC - National Vital Statistics System. Assessed via County Health Rankings. 2020-22
⁴ University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, County Health Rankings 2019 - 22

planning that lower-risk the sites for reinvestment. In practical terms, the project reduces the likelihood that disadvantaged neighborhoods remain “stuck” with vacant, hazardous structures and uncertainty-driven disinvestment by making sites financeable and reusable for community-serving functions (food access, cultural/community use) and job- and revenue-supporting uses (industrial/light manufacturing, agricultural expo/training, data-center/industrial reuse where feasible and appropriate). **e. Project Involvement f. Project Roles.** he coalition will involve a variety of local organizations/entities/groups that are relevant to the proposed project and will ensure each identified local organization/entity/group has a meaningful role in the project and is involved in decision-making for site selection, cleanup, and future reuse of the brownfield sites, including the priority sites. Core involvement will be structured through a **Brownfields Advisory Committee (BAC)** that includes representation from HOGARC and each non-lead member (City of Eastman and Dublin—Laurens County Development Authority), plus residents, downtown stakeholders, and site-area partners. Technical and implementation partners identified for active project involvement include the **Carl Vinson Institute of Government** (capacity-building and implementation support), the **Georgia Department of Economic Development** and **OneGeorgia Authority** (reuse feasibility, incentives, and redevelopment financing alignment), the **Georgia Tech Enterprise Innovation Institute** (data-driven market and redevelopment analysis), **Visit Dublin** and the **Southeast Tourism Society** (placemaking and heritage/tourism-informed reuse concepts), the regional **Area Agency on Aging** (ensuring accessibility and age-friendly design in reuse planning), and the **Georgia Agribusiness Council** (strengthening agricultural-market alignment for the farmers’ market and agricultural center concepts). Property owners and quasi-public site stewards (e.g., development authorities and downtown entities holding priority properties) will be engaged for access agreements, redevelopment constraints, and reuse realism. Each non-lead

member will be effectively engaged and informed throughout the project through standing BAC participation, shared site nomination and prioritization responsibilities, and transparent sequencing decisions tied to published criteria (environmental risk, community benefit, redevelopment feasibility, and alignment with adopted local plans). The table below shows an initial list of partnerships, their mission, and potential involvement in this project:

g. Incorporating Community Input. The coalition’s plan to communicate project progress to the local community—including residents directly affected by the project work—and the involved organizations/entities/groups will be frequent, accessible, and will include an alternative to in-person engagement. In Quarter 1, HOGARC will launch a **Community Engagement Plan (CEP)** and convene initial community meetings in each target area to confirm priorities and recruit BAC participants, followed by **quarterly BAC meetings** and periodic public workshops timed to key decision points (site nomination windows; Phase I findings; Phase II scope confirmation; reuse concept refinement). Communication methods will include a maintained brownfields program webpage with plain-language updates,

Organization	Mission	Point of Contact	Specific Role in Project
Carl Vinson Institute of Government (UGA)	Improve community quality of life through effective governance	Rob Gordon (gordon@uga.edu)	Provide technical assistance and capacity-building to inform site selection and reuse strategies.
Georgia Department of Economic Development	Promote economic growth and diversification in Georgia	Pat Wilson (pwilson@georgia.org)	Provide economic analysis, redevelopment guidance, and connections to state incentives and developer networks to inform site selection and reuse.
OneGeorgia Authority	Support economic development in distressed communities	Lynn Ashcraft (Region9@dca.ga.gov)	Assist communities in leveraging assessment results to pursue state funding for infrastructure and redevelopment.
Georgia Tech Enterprise Innovation Institute	Support business and community innovation through applied research	David Bridges (david.bridges@innovate.gatech.edu)	Conduct data-driven market and redevelopment analysis to inform feasible, job-supporting reuse options.
Visit Dublin	Promote Dublin and Laurens County as a tourism destination	Miriam Lewis (info@visitdublinga.org)	Provide tourism and placemaking input to inform reuse concepts that support downtown vitality and heritage-based redevelopment.
Southeast Tourism Society	Support tourism professionals through education and advocacy	Adrienne Gadling (adrienne@southeasttourism.org)	Offer regional tourism perspective to guide reuse concepts that strengthen small-town revitalization.
Area Agency on Aging	Coordinate services for seniors and people with disabilities	Lisa Livingston (livingston@hogarc.org)	Advise on accessibility and age-friendly considerations in reuse planning to ensure sites serve all residents.
Georgia Agribusiness Council	Promote agriculture through economic development and stewardship	Bill Brim (bbrim@ga-agribusiness.org)	Provide guidance on agribusiness-aligned reuse concepts, including food access and agricultural market opportunities.

meeting notices, and posted summaries; partner-channel distribution (city/community announcements and stakeholder networks); and targeted outreach in disadvantaged neighborhoods nearest candidate sites. To offer an alternative to in-person engagement, HOGARC will use virtual meeting options, online surveys, and written comment opportunities (including paper-based options distributed through partner locations when needed). The coalition will meaningfully solicit, consider, and respond to community input by (1) documenting input by theme and site/area, (2) reporting back “what we heard / how it changed decisions” after each major engagement round, and (3) using BAC review to ensure community priorities directly inform site selection sequencing, reuse assumptions used in planning, and communication of risk-reduction decisions for sensitive populations.

(3) TASK DESCRIPTIONS, COST ESTIMATES, AND MEASURING PROGRESS. HOGARC, in coordination with its Coalition partners, will implement a sequenced set of tasks to administer the EPA Brownfields Grant, engage stakeholders, assess priority brownfield sites, and support cleanup and reuse planning across the 17-county region. Tasks are designed to ensure regulatory compliance, transparent site selection, effective use of funds, and measurable progress toward EPA Brownfields program objectives. Each task includes defined implementation steps, schedules, responsible parties, and outputs to track performance and document outcomes throughout the grant period.

Task 1: Program Management
Implementation: HOGARC has competitively procured a Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP) to support implementation of the EPA Brownfields Grant. HOGARC will provide overall grant administration and project management to ensure full compliance with the EPA Cooperative Agreement, including adherence to the approved work plan, schedule, reporting requirements, and all applicable terms and conditions. The QEP will provide technical and administrative support as needed, including ACRES database reporting, quarterly and annual performance reporting, financial documentation, Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) reporting, and ongoing programmatic assistance throughout the four-year grant period. Grant funds allocated for travel will support the Program Director and up to two additional HOGARC staff or coalition members to attend national, regional, or grantee-focused brownfields conferences and training workshops, strengthening program capacity, regulatory knowledge, and implementation effectiveness.

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Schedule: ACRES reporting will begin in Quarter 1 following completion of the first Phase I ESA. Quarterly reporting will begin in Quarter 2, with annual reports and DBE forms submitted in accordance with EPA requirements throughout the grant period.
Lead: Rich Bennett, HOGARC PM with assistance from the QEP, BAC, partners, and developers.
Output: (4) Annual Financial Reports, (16) Quarterly Reports, (4) DBE Annual Report Forms, and continuous ACRES database reporting over the four-year grant period. Up to three HOGARC staff or coalition members will attend three brownfields-related training conferences each during the grant term.
Task 2: Community Engagement & Outreach
Implementation: Community engagement activities will begin with outreach and education to increase public understanding of brownfields and the EPA Brownfields Program. HOGARC will conduct community meetings to establish a Brownfields Advisory Committee (BAC) and develop a Community Engagement Plan (CEP) outlining project goals, engagement strategies, and methods for incorporating public input. The BAC will guide outreach efforts, assist in identifying and prioritizing brownfield sites, and facilitate visioning workshops to gather community perspectives on reuse and revitalization priorities. Engagement activities will be designed to ensure assessment and reuse strategies align with community needs, with focused outreach to disadvantaged and underserved populations to promote equitable revitalization outcomes.
Schedule: Community engagement will occur iteratively throughout the grant period, with the first BAC or community meeting held in Quarter 1 and additional meetings conducted quarterly. Outreach methods and schedules will be adjusted as needed to best serve community and coalition partner needs.
Lead: Rich Bennett, HOGARC PM with assistance from the QEP, BAC, and key partners
Outputs: (1) CEP, (7-10) Community Meetings, development and maintenance of a brownfields program website, informational brochures and handouts, and social media content including meeting notices and summaries. BF Website, brochures, handouts, social media posts including meeting summaries. A Regional brownfields inventory and prioritization matrix will be created and updated throughout the grant period.
Task 3: Assessments
Implementation: HOGARC's Project Manager will coordinate with the Qualified Environmental Professional to conduct Phase I Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs) for brownfield sites selected and prioritized through the site inventory and community engagement process, beginning with the priority sites identified in this application. Prior to initiating assessment activities, HOGARC will secure site access agreements and obtain EPA site eligibility determinations (SEDs). Where Phase I ESAs identify recognized environmental conditions, Phase II ESAs will be conducted to characterize site conditions and determine the nature and extent of contamination. Phase III ESAs will be completed, as warranted, to further delineate contamination and support cleanup planning, redevelopment decision-making, and pursuit of future cleanup or redevelopment funding. Assessment sequencing will ensure that a minimum of two sites within each coalition member's geographic boundary are assessed during the grant period, with additional sites selected based on inventory prioritization and community input.
Schedule: SEDs and initial Phase I ESAs are anticipated to begin in Quarter 1 and will continue throughout the grant period. Phase II and Phase III ESAs will be initiated based on Phase I findings and completed within the grant performance period. HOGARC anticipates completing approximately 10–12 Phase I ESAs during Year 1, with Phase II and Phase III ESAs initiated beginning in Year 2 based on assessment findings, and progressing with a logical sequence after that.
Lead: Rich Bennett, HOGARC PM with assistance from the QEP, BAC, and key partners
Outputs: (1) QAPP with (3) annual updates, (29) Phase I ESAs, and (16) Phase II ESAs, and (5) Supplemental Assessment (aka Phase III ESAs), (29) AAI Checklists. Electronic versions of documents will be prepared and hard copies will be generated for entities when requested. Executed site access agreements and completed EPA SEDs for assessed sites will be collected and prepared.
Task 4: Cleanup and Eligible Reuse Planning
Implementation: For sites requiring cleanup, the QEP will prepare Analysis of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives (ABCAs) to evaluate remediation options, estimate cleanup costs, and identify site-appropriate strategies to reduce environmental and human health risks. Cleanup and reuse planning activities will support informed decision-making by local governments, developers, and community stakeholders. In addition, the QEP will assist HOGARC in developing a regional Brownfields Revitalization Plan (BFRP) to guide long-term redevelopment across the 17-county region. Visioning sessions will also be conducted for select priority sites, resulting in Site Reuse Vision plans that identify feasible redevelopment concepts aligned with local economic and community goals.
Schedule: ABCAs may be initiated at appropriate stages of the assessment tasks if it is pre-assumed sites will proceed to cleanup, but in general, will follow completion of the Phase II ESAs and Phase III ESAs. BFRP will be initiated after the completion of the Phase I ESAs, and updated throughout the grant performance period. Site Reuse Vision plans will be conducted in concert with ABCAs and BFRP to complete forward-facing initiatives towards the end of the grant period.
Lead: Rich Bennett, HOGARC PM with assistance from the QEP, BAC, and key partners
Outputs: (6) ABCAs, (1) BFRP, (3) Site Reuse Visions for sites within the three Target Areas. Electronic versions of documents will be prepared and hard copies will be generated for entities when requested.

e. Cost Estimates Project cost estimates were developed through a comprehensive assessment of site-specific needs, a review of comparable brownfields grant projects, and consultation with an environmental consulting firm. This approach ensures that estimates are realistic, include potential contingencies, and align with the project's objectives.

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The table below presents the anticipated costs for implementing project tasks, followed by a detailed explanation of how these costs were determined. HOGARC has structured the proposed budget to comply with the CERCLA §104(k)

Budget Categories	Project Tasks					Total
	Task 1: Program Management	Task 2: Community Engagement & Outreach	Task 3: Environmental Assessments	Task 4: Cleanup and Reuse Planning	Total Administrative	
Personnel	\$40,001.00	\$21,539.00	-	\$23,077.50		\$84,617.50
Fringe Benefits	\$32,364.29	\$17,426.92	-	\$18,671.70		\$68,462.92
Travel	\$27,450.00	-	-	-		\$27,450.00
Supplies	-	\$652.31	-	-		\$652.31
Contractual	\$35,000.00	\$35,000.00	\$1,079,500.00	\$124,900.00		\$1,274,400.00
Other						
Total Direct Costs	\$134,815.29	\$74,618.23	\$1,079,500.00	\$166,649.20		\$1,455,582.73
Total Indirect Costs					\$44,417.27	\$44,417.27
BUDGET TOTAL	\$134,815.29	\$74,618.23	\$1,079,500.00	\$166,649.20	\$44,417.27	\$1,500,000.00

administrative cost limitation, with combined direct and indirect administrative costs incurred by the applicant totaling 3%, which is less than five percent (5%) of the total EPA funds requested; all contractor costs for environmental assessments and cleanup and reuse planning are treated as programmatic costs.

Task 1: Program Management (\$155,808.33) – Personnel: 1,300 hours at \$30.77/hour = \$40,001.00; Fringe Benefits: 80.9% of Personnel Costs = \$32,364.29; Travel: 3 staff to attend 3 conferences and workshops (Total Travel for 1 staff: air/mileage: \$1,000, hotel: \$300 x 4 nights = \$1,200, food: \$125 per day x 4 days = \$500, Conference Registration = \$350. Total Travel for 1 staff = \$3,050, Total Travel per conference: \$3,050 X 3 = \$9,150. Total Travel: \$9,150 X 3 = \$27,450); Supplies: no cost; Contractual: 175 Hours at \$200/hour = \$35,000 for QEP to support HOGARC in Program Management Activities. Indirect Costs: 52.49% of personnel = \$20,997.26.

Task 2: Community Engagement & Marketing (\$85,631.09) – Personnel: 700 hours at \$30.77/hour = \$21,539.00; Fringe Benefits: 80.9% of personnel costs = \$17,426.92; Travel: None; Supplies: \$652.31 for brochures & handouts and audio visual supplies; Contractual: 175 Hours at \$200/hour = \$35,000 for QEP to support HOGARC in community Engagement & Marketing Activities; Indirect Costs: 52.49% of personnel = \$11,306.22.

Task 3: Assessments (\$1,079,500.00) – Personnel: None. Fringe Benefits: None. Travel: None. Supplies: None. Contractual: HOGARC will utilize the QEP to conduct Assessments. Budget includes: 1 QAPP = \$6,500, 30 Phase I ESAs at \$7,000 = \$210,000.00, 16 Phase II ESAs at \$45,000.00 = \$720,000.00, 5 Supplemental Assessments (delineation) ESAs at \$30,000 = \$150,000. Total QEP: \$1,079,500.00.

Task 4: Cleanup and Reuse Planning (\$178,763.01) – Personnel: 750 hours at \$30.77/hour = \$23,077.50. Fringe Benefits: 80.9% of personnel costs = \$18,671.70; Travel: None; Contractual: 7 ABCAs at \$6,200 = \$43,400, Brownfield Revitalization Plan for HOGARC Region at \$50,000, 3 Site Reuse Visions at \$10,500 each = \$31,500. Total Contractual = \$124,900.00; Indirect Costs: 52.49% of personnel = \$12,113.79. **f. Plan to Measure and Evaluate Environmental Progress and Results** HOGARC will implement a structured performance management system to track, measure, and evaluate progress toward expected outputs and outcomes. Project performance will be monitored using a centralized tracking system that documents site inventory status, site eligibility determinations, site access agreements, completed Phase I, Phase II, and Phase III ESAs, and cleanup and reuse planning deliverables. Key performance indicators will be reviewed monthly and include the number of sites added to the inventory, assessments completed by type, sites advanced within each coalition member’s jurisdiction, and planning documents finalized. Progress will be reported through EPA’s ACRES system, quarterly performance reports, and public updates posted to HOGARC’s website. Corrective actions will be implemented as needed to address schedule or performance deviations in coordination with EPA and coalition partners. As this will be HOGARC’s first EPA Brownfields grant, the Commission have leveraged the expertise of a qualified environmental consulting firm with demonstrated experience in managing EPA Brownfields programs. Cost estimates were developed based on site-specific needs and comparable brownfields projects to minimize administrative expenses while prioritizing funding for Phase I and Phase II ESAs, which are critical to reducing uncertainty and attracting future developers and investors. Drawing on experience from other regional planning and redevelopment initiatives, HOGARC has ensured that the proposed budget is realistic, well-supported, and sufficient to achieve the project’s environmental and economic revitalization objectives.

4) PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE 4.a. Organizational Capacity, 4.b. Organizational Structure, 4.c. Description of Key Staff.

HOGARC, as the lead coalition member, has the organizational capacity to administer the EPA Brownfields Assessment Coalition Grant and to oversee all programmatic, administrative, and financial requirements on behalf of the coalition. HOGARC routinely manages federal and state grants requiring compliance with 2 CFR Part 200, competitive procurement, financial tracking, and performance reporting, and maintains established internal controls to ensure timely expenditure of funds and full compliance with cooperative agreement requirements. HOGARC will employ a clear organizational structure to support timely implementation and accountability. A designated Project Manager will oversee day-to-day grant administration, coordination with the Qualified Environmental Professional, schedule management, reporting, and EPA coordination. Financial management will be handled through HOGARC’s centralized finance function, which is responsible for budgeting, reimbursements, financial reporting, and audit compliance. Governance and decision-making among coalition members will occur through a standing Brownfields Advisory Committee with representation from HOGARC and each non-lead member, ensuring meaningful involvement in site nomination, prioritization, assessment sequencing, and reuse planning decisions affecting their communities. Key staff assigned to the project have experience administering multi-year grant programs, coordinating with local governments and technical consultants, and managing federal compliance requirements. The Project Manager will serve as the primary EPA point of contact and will oversee grant execution. Supporting staff will provide procurement, financial administration, and data management support, including ACRES reporting and performance tracking. Specialized environmental assessment work will be conducted by a competitively procured Qualified Environmental Professional under HOGARC oversight to ensure quality and compliance.

d. Acquiring Additional Resources. HOGARC is well positioned to address funding constraints by leveraging its 17-county regional network and long-standing community partnerships. By coordinating with local governments, development authorities, and public and private stakeholders, HOGARC maximizes funding sources and identifies complementary investments to support project activities. This regional approach reduces financial risk, promotes cost efficiency, and provides the capacity to implement and sustain EPA Brownfields initiatives without disruption. HOGARC has a strong track record of managing grant funded projects that serve as catalysts for redevelopment. These projects have total development costs of \$156,009,959.36 and have leveraged \$328,901,000 in private investment, demonstrating the organization’s ability to align grant funding with additional resources for long term success. HOGARC has competitively procured a QEP to support implementation of the EPA Brownfields Assessment Coalition Grant. The QEP has specialized experience in successfully completing numerous Brownfields Grant efforts and will apply their expertise to ensure the HOGARC is successful at not only implementing the objectives outlined by the CEP. Through collaborative partnerships and experienced grant administration, HOGARC uses grant funding to unlock additional investment, ensuring projects are positioned to advance redevelopment goals and achieve sustainable outcomes beyond the grant period.

e. Has Not Received an EPA Brownfields Grant but has Received Other Federal or Non-Federal

Financial Assistance Agreements. HOGARC has not previously received an EPA Brownfields grant. (1) Accomplishments Since 2014, HOGARC has successfully administered 38 grants totaling \$13.3 million across a wide range of funding programs. These grants have supported the organization’s work in comprehensive planning, community and economic development, historic preservation, local government administration, and workforce investment across its 17-county service area. Recent grants are included in the table below.

Community Development Block Grant – Georgia Department of Community Affairs/HUD - The City of Eastman Received \$1,000,000 for sewer improvements in a low to moderate-income neighborhood. The total project cost was \$1,265,980.28. The project served 52 homes with 80 residents, of whom 66 were low- to moderate-income. The sewer system in this neighborhood was in desperate need of repair; several sewer line breaks caused sewage to spill into residents’ yards and into a creek. Residents report sewage backing up into the bathrooms.
Improving Neighborhood Outcomes in Disproportionately Impacted Communities – Governor’s Office of Planning & Budget/ARPA. Emanuel County received \$6,428,507 in three grants for recreation improvements. The total project cost is \$8,691,162. The funding is being used to support the construction of a new community pool, extensive renovations to the Connie Kight Gymnasium, and a total overhaul of the Ronnie Wommack Ballfields and concession stand. These projects were designed to provide modern, safe athletic facilities for residents in disproportionately impacted areas.

While the development and revitalization of the Heart of Georgia’s communities is important, it is the people who make these cities thrive. Not only do these efforts improve the physical and economic landscape, but they also increase employment opportunities, which are critical to sustaining the region’s workforce. These initiatives have resulted in the creation of 871 jobs and the upgrading of 110 existing positions. In small communities, maintaining and expanding employment opportunities is essential to retaining skilled workers and preventing outmigration to larger cities, which can slow local economic growth and weaken community vitality. By supporting Brownfields redevelopment, HOGARC’s initiatives not only revitalize underutilized properties but also generate sustainable employment, strengthen the local workforce, and stimulate broader economic development throughout the region. (2) Compliance with Grant Requirements. All grants have been managed in full compliance with grant requirements, work plans, schedules, and terms and conditions, and were completed within required timeframes. The successful administration of these funds has strengthened HOGARC’s capacity to carry out its mission and provide meaningful support to the communities it serves.

THRESHOLD CRITERIA

Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission (HOGARC)

1. Eligibility of Lead and Non-Lead Coalition Members

a. Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission (HOGARC) is one of 12 regional commissions in Georgia established under H.B. 1216 (O.C.G.A. 50-8), therefore, HOGARC is eligible to apply for an Assessment Grant.

There are two non-lead members. The first non-lead member is the City of Eastman, which is a local city government entity and therefore is eligible for funding. The second quasi-governmental entity under the supervision and control of the City of Dublin and Laurens County, and is eligible for funding.

Neither HOGARC or any of the non-lead coalition members are exempt from Federal taxation under section 501(c)(4) of the IRC.

2. Target Areas

Target areas for each coalition member do not overlap and are in three distinct jurisdictions. The target areas for each coalition member are identified as a response to Section 4.B.(5) in the Application Information Sheet.

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

The City of Eastman, Georgia and DLCDA have never received an EPA MARC Grant.

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

HOGARC has legal authority to expend grant funds on behalf of the non-lead members to conduct the proposed grant activities.

5. Coalition Agreement

Letters of intent to be part of the coalition from the non-lead coalition members are provided in Attachment A.

6. Community Involvement

HOGARC's established network of member communities, state and local agencies, and community-based organizations provides a strong foundation for sustaining an active Brownfields program. As this is HOGARC's first EPA Brownfields grant, initial efforts will emphasize community education on brownfields and related revitalization opportunities. Community meetings will be used to form a Brownfields Advisory Committee (BAC) made up of diverse stakeholders, including representatives from local government, businesses, nonprofits, and residents. The BAC will guide the creation and implementation of a Community Engagement Plan (CEP) that outlines project objectives, engagement strategies, and approaches for prioritizing disadvantaged populations. Meeting quarterly, the BAC will lead visioning workshops and offer input on site selection and redevelopment strategies. This inclusive, participatory process will ensure that assessment and redevelopment activities align with community priorities, maximize economic and social benefits, and strengthen local capacity for long-term revitalization.

7. Expenditure of Existing Grant Funds

None of the coalition members have an open EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant or Multipurpose Grant.

8. Contractors and Named Subrecipients

HOGARC has already selected a contractor (Environmental Professional) to help implement the grant if awarded. Our organization does not have the technical environmental knowledge to prepare such an application, so we elected to procure a firm to assist us prior to submission. Award of this grant is an important part of our redevelopment, and it was necessary for us to secure the technical support needed to assist with the effort.

For 30 days, HOGARC posted the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) on the Georgia Procurement Registry (a state run website that lists bid opportunities from state and local government entities with wide subscription), beginning on Wednesday, August 13, 2025. This procedure is consistent with our normal procurement processes. HOGARC does not send RFQs for professional services to individual firms, as we believe advertising our needs in a widely-distributed procurement source is the most fair and open way to procure services and make it available to all. We received four responses to the RFQ, which were reviewed by our selection committee. The qualifications of the submitting firms were evaluated against the rating criteria listed in the RFQ, which included price reasonableness, and the committee selected a firm (PPM Consultants, Inc.) that best met those criteria and entered into a contract with the firm. A copy of the RFQ and the signed contract are included in Appendix B.

We are confident that our procurement procedures were fair and open, consistent with the RFQ process we routinely employ when seeking professional services; the federal

procurement standards at 2 CFR Part 200, 2 CFR Part 1500, and 40 CFR Part 33, as well as the EPA's guidance documents: Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance Agreements and the Brownfields Grants: Guidance on Competitively Procuring a Contractor. The RFQ was advertised and readily available to interested firms.

No subrecipients will be named during the grant period.