

R05-26-A-006



**APPLICANT INFORMATION SHEET:  
City of Freeport, Illinois**

**1. Applicant Identification:**

City of Freeport, Illinois  
314 W. Stephenson Street  
Freeport, Illinois 61032

**2. City of Freeport, Illinois website:** <https://cityoffreeport.org/>

**3. Funding Requested:**

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

**4. Location:**

- a. City: City of Freeport
- b. County: Stephenson County
- c. State: Illinois

**5. Target Areas and Priority Site Information:**

- Target Areas:
  - Downtown Riverfront Area
  - Census Tracts: 17177000700, 17177000800, and 17177001300
- Priority Site Addresses:
  - 123 S. Adams Avenue, Freeport, Illinois 61032
  - 239 E. Stephenson Street, Freeport, Illinois 61032
  - 1205 S. Chicago, Freeport, Illinois 61032

**6. Contacts:**

- a. **Project Director:** Ms. Gertrude Heimerdinger, Director of Community and Economic Development  
314 W. Stephenson Street, Freeport, Illinois 61032  
Phone: 815.235.8221  
Email: [cddirector@cityoffreeport.org](mailto:cddirector@cityoffreeport.org)



**b. Chief Executive:** Ms. Jodi Miller, Mayor  
 314 W. Stephenson Street, Freeport, Illinois 61032  
 Phone: 815.235.8200  
 Email: [jmiller@cityoffreeport.org](mailto:jmiller@cityoffreeport.org)

**7. Population:** 23,973 (US Census, 2020)

**8. Other Factors Checklist:**

Other Factors	Page #
Community population is 15,000 or less	N/A
The applicant is, or will assist, a federally recognized Indian tribe or United States territory	N/A
The priority brownfield 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).	1, 2, 3, 5
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	N/A
The reuse of the priority site(s) will incorporate energy efficiency measures	N/A
The proposed project will improve local resilience to the impacts of extreme weather events and natural disasters.	3
At least 30% of the overall project budget will be spent on eligible reuse/area-wide planning activities as described in Section I.B. for priority site(s) within the target area(s).	N/A
The target area(s) is located within a community in which a coal-fired power plant has recently closed (2015 or later) or is closing	N/A



**9. Letter from the State Environmental Authority:**

Please find attached the Letter of Acknowledgement from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency regarding this Community-Wide Assessment Grant Application.

**10. Releasing Copies of Applications:**

Not Applicable. This application does not have confidential, privileged, or sensitive information included that cannot be shared.



# ILLINOIS ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

2520 WEST ILES AVENUE, P.O. BOX 19276, SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS 62794-9276 • (217) 782-3397

JB PRITZKER, GOVERNOR

JAMES JENNINGS, ACTING DIRECTOR

217/785-8726

1/27/2026

City of Freeport  
ATTN: Mayor Jodie Miller  
314 W. Stephenson Street  
Freeport, IL 61032

**Subject: State Acknowledgement Letter for the City of Freeport  
FY2026 US EPA Brownfield Community Wide Assessment Grant Application**

Dear Mayor Jodie Miller,

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (Illinois EPA) has received your request for a letter of acknowledgement for an upcoming Community Wide Assessment Grant application to U.S. EPA. The City of Freeport is applying for a \$500,000 Community Wide Assessment Grant.

The grant will be a Community Wide Assessment for both Hazardous Substances and Petroleum.

Illinois EPA acknowledges City of Freeport's efforts to obtain federal Brownfields funds for this project. If you have any questions, I may be contacted at the above address or telephone numbers below, or at [Jacob.fink@illinois.gov](mailto:Jacob.fink@illinois.gov).

Sincerely,

Jacob Fink  
Brownfield Program Administrator  
Bureau of Land/Office of Site Evaluation  
Office# (217) 785-8726  
Cell# (217) 986-0818  
[Jacob.fink@illinois.gov](mailto:Jacob.fink@illinois.gov)



2125 S. First Street, Champaign, IL 61820 (217) 278-5800  
115 S. LaSalle Street, Suite 2203, Chicago, IL 60603  
1101 Eastport Plaza Dr., Suite 100, Collinsville, IL 62234 (618) 346-5120  
9511 Harrison Street, Des Plaines, IL 60016 (847) 294-4000

595 S. State Street, Elgin, IL 60123 (847) 608-3131  
2309 W. Main Street, Suite 116, Marion, IL 62959 (618) 993-7200  
412 SW Washington Street, Suite D, Peoria, IL 61602 (309) 671-3022  
4302 N. Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103 (815) 987-7760

PLEASE PRINT ON RECYCLED PAPER

## **1: PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION & PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION:**

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### **Target Area and Brownfields**

#### **1.a. Overview of Brownfield Challenges and Description of Target Area**

The City of Freeport, Illinois will be the geographic boundary for this community-wide assessment application. Freeport is located 20 miles south of the Wisconsin border, and 25 miles west of the City of Rockford, Illinois. U.S. Highway 20 runs north of Freeport, and connects to I-90 and I-39 in Rockford. Highway 20 runs west from Freeport to Galena, Illinois and the metropolitan area of Dubuque, Iowa. The total municipal area of Freeport is 11.79 square miles, and as of the 2020 census, the population of Freeport was 23,973<sup>1</sup>, making it the largest city in the four-county region of northwestern Illinois. Freeport is also the County Seat and largest city of Stephenson County. Freeport, founded in 1827, was originally a trading post on the banks of the Pecatonica River. Early German settlers, key to the vitality of the young city, earned Freeport the nickname “Pretzel City, USA.” Reflecting the greater trend of deindustrialization in the rust belt, Freeport has, over the past several decades, suffered from major losses in its industrial sector with companies like Honeywell and Newell downsizing and leaving, which led to a deterioration in the vitality of the City’s downtown. In turn, other aspects of overall city health have also been negatively affected. Among other difficulties, the departure of industry from the area has left the city with a substantial need for environmental remediation to create any opportunities for redevelopment and revitalization. Freeport’s most recent brownfields inventory had over 100 sites, illustrating the challenges facing the City. Freeport’s downtown is characterized by vacant and abandoned lots and buildings, leaving a wake of blight throughout the area. While urban brownfields present an obstacle to potential redevelopment, they also represent unrealized wealth and infill opportunity. If this assessment grant is awarded, the City of Freeport would utilize these funds to assess very visible sites in the downtown and along the riverfront, and directly address the challenges that brownfields currently pose in the City. Revitalization of urban infrastructure in Freeport would also support residents of the struggling downtown riverfront target area, create opportunities for minority entrepreneurship, support cultural arts, and attract tourism through a regional and local transportation system. In the face of the difficulties posed by brownfields, it is the city’s own rich industrial past which presents unique opportunity and a focal point for the future economic development and growth of Freeport. With a well-coordinated city effort to reestablish the city, and especially the downtown riverfront area, as a viable economic and social region, Freeport can once again be a standard for a healthy small-town American city.

Freeport’s Target Area is characterized by abandoned manufacturing and industrial facilities, empty storefronts, and vacant lots. Freeport’s Target Area is the downtown riverfront area and it’s geographic boundaries are comprised of the three Census Tracts that encompass the downtown riverfront: 17177000700, 17177000800, and 17177001300. All 3 Census Tracts are designated as disadvantaged. Per HUD’s low-to-moderate income tracking tool, the Target Area Census Tracts have a low-to-moderate income population ranging from 70 to 90.57<sup>2</sup>%. The Target Area has a population of 8,540, a Per Capita Income of less than \$20,000, a Median Household Income of \$22,000, and a Poverty rate of 39.3%<sup>3</sup>. These dismal demographics help illustrate vital need for brownfields redevelopment in the Target Area. But there are more issues in the Target Area than just the demographics: some of the Target Area is located in the floodway of the Pecatonica River. Per the CEJST tool, the Target Area is in the 89<sup>th</sup> percentile for losing buildings and lives to natural disasters like floods that are exacerbated by climate change. The neighborhood’s economic vitality and housing quality have been impacted negatively over time by the neighborhood’s location in the floodway. Residents contend with recurring major and minor flood events, and are subject to Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and State of Illinois floodway regulations, which limit improvements on structures located in a floodway. Over time, housing quality has severely declined and most commercial businesses have vacated the neighborhood. Today, the community suffers from

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<sup>1</sup> US Census Data, 2020 Census <https://www.census.gov/>

<sup>2</sup> HUD LMI Mapping Tool: <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=ffd0597e8af24f88b501b7e7f326bedd>

<sup>3</sup> US Census Data, 2020 ACS <https://www.census.gov/>

a lack of access to basic amenities, goods and services, and transportation options. Improving infrastructure, identifying strategies to reduce the disproportionate impacts of floodway regulations, and providing assistance for home repairs that may otherwise be cost-prohibitive could significantly improve the quality of life for these affected residents. The City's Brownfields Assessment grant funding could help with these issue significantly. Freeport is pursuing these grant funds to revitalize the downtown riverfront Target Area – these assessment grant funds represent an opportunity to address blight, benefit disadvantaged and minority populations by eliminating existing environmental threats, and providing a much needed sense of connection throughout the City.

### **1.b. Description of the Priority Brownfield Sites**

Within the Target Area, Freeport has designated three priority project sites for their brownfield program, which were selected based upon site underutilization, blighting of the area, redevelopment potential and the impact the environmental assessment and eventual remediation is anticipated to have on the City's redevelopment and revitalization efforts.

- **123 S. Adams Avenue:** *Historic Site Use:* former Rawleigh Manufacturing Building; *Current Site Conditions:* massive, multi-building facility, currently vacant and deteriorating; *Expected Contaminants:* VOCs/Petroleum Products, RCRA metals, PNAs, PCBs, Lead Asbestos; *Affected Neighborhood:* surrounding greenspace, residences, and businesses are located within 200 feet of site, along with the Pecatonica River being located a few hundred feet away; *Planned Site Reuse:* mixed use redevelopment including business fronts, retail, housing, and greenspace. The Rawleigh Building Complex has had various assessment work completed on-site to date, but due to it's size, there is so much more work to do to eliminate the environmental issues prohibiting it's redevelopment in Freeport's downtown riverfront area.
- **239 E. Stephenson Street:** *Historic Site Use:* former industrial facility; *Current Site Conditions:* vacant commercial property, beautiful historic brick building that is boarded up in a very visible and heavy traffic area; *Expected Contaminants:* PNAs, heavy metals, asbestos, VOCs, Asbestos, Lead; *Affected Neighborhood:* this site is located along a rail and commercial corridor and on an intersection with the second highest traffic count in the City; *Planned Site Reuse:* Freeport would like to market this site for mixed use commercial and hospitality redevelopment use.
- **1205 S. Chicago Avenue:** *Historic Site Use:* former fueling station/retail; *Current Site Conditions:* abandoned building and lot; *Expected Contaminants:* PNAs, petroleum, lead, asbestos; *Affected Neighborhood:* this site is located in a residential neighborhood; *Planned Site Reuse:* Freeport plans to couple this site with adjacent parcels to make an attractive commercial property development available on a highly visible street.

### **1.c. Identifying Additional Sites**

The City of Freeport will include all eligible brownfields sites throughout the entire City in their brownfield inventory update. If assessment funds are still available after the Priority Sites and Target Area site are assessed, the City will determine where next to apply assessment grant funds based on site location, it's ability to provide health and economic benefits to the community, and the site's redevelopment potential and plans. Additional sites within the target area will be identified with the help of community partner organization's input and strong community outreach efforts. The City's brownfield inventory and brownfield advisory committee will also serve in reviewing additional sites to assess and position for reuse.

### **Revitalization of the Target Area**

#### **1.d. Reuse Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans**

The City of Freeport recently completed an Economic Recovery Plan for the downtown and riverfront areas, and this plan will lead the brownfield reuse and revitalization plans for the City. Freeport intends to utilize these grants funds to complete vital assessment work to help the City prepare the blighted target area to become a River Park and Riverwalk that will help Freeport better connect the

downtown businesses and services to its community while highlighting its natural attributes. A River Park and Riverwalk in Freeport will create a vital “sense of place” that significantly reinvigorates the downtown area, with benefits including: the development of residential units in the downtown area, improvement in the City’s ability to attract and retain businesses, creates a more desirable tourism and visitor environment, and provides a staging ground for a myriad of entertainment events enjoyed by visitors and residents of the Freeport area. This work cannot be completed without first addressing the brownfield site challenges facing the City in the target areas.

These revitalization plans for Freeport’s downtown riverfront target area will provide a much-needed investment in the downtown, while placing a direct focus on recalibrating and diversifying the downtown economy with brownfield site remediation. Green infrastructure, like what is being described as the end use plan for the target area, offers a unique, sustainable redevelopment option to transform the existing contaminated landscape into a fertile, adaptive and functioning ecosystem. The City of Freeport is including a request Corridor Planning/Marketing Plan funding in this application to apply directly to the downtown riverfront Target Area, to create a more comprehensive and effective end use plan. The proposed assessment and redevelopment work described in this grant presents a unique opportunity and a focal point for the future economic development and growth of Freeport’s downtown. With a well-coordinated city effort to re-establish the Downtown as a viable economic and social area, with the future implementation of a riverwalk/ river park in the target area, Freeport can once again be a standard for a healthy small-town American city.

### **1.e. Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategy**

Freeport recognized that the revitalization of the City’s downtown as a destination and a future river park/riverwalk community would be an excellent economic recovery plan, and one that will reinvigorate downtown redevelopment after brownfield sites almost completely halted the forward momentum that downtown Freeport was experiencing. Many more urban communities like Freeport, particularly those in lower socioeconomic areas, have limited open green spaces and trails and also little access to water features. With this overall revitalization and reuse plan for the downtown riverfront target area, the City hopes to discover these lost opportunities and consider remedies, not just for the downtown and target area population, but for the community as a whole. Freeport also recognizes that their future Riverwalk & Parkway plans for the downtown are more than just a destination, and that they will be an asset to the local economy, with benefits including: the development of residential units to provide more housing options for residents, improvement in the City’s ability to attract and retain businesses in the target area, and the creation of a more desirable tourism and visitor environment in the downtown, creating more jobs and tax revenue for the City. This grant will be a large part of this redevelopment plan and directly help to mitigate environmental threats from air and water pollutants; the greenspace reuse plans in the target area also has the potential to support native wildlife and plant diversity, which will enrich the outdoor experience for those who utilize the green space. There is increasing research regarding negative health impacts from failure to include the components of greenspace in city plans. In Freeport’s case, this greenspace will connect the downtown to the riverfront along the Pecatonica River that will connect not just to other park lands, nature preserves, and recreation spaces, but also residences, schools, civic buildings, retail, workplaces, and transit centers. The greenspace will also act as a buffer to the Pecatonica River for the community, improving the City’s resilience to extreme weather events and flooding.

### **Strategy for Leveraging Resources**

#### **1.f. Resources Needed for Site Reuse**

By completing the proposed assessment work and identifying the environmental site conditions with secure funding like this EPA Grant, the City is reducing financing barriers for future redevelopment by helping to make the sites “shovel-ready”. The City’s identified target area, which includes the priority sites, is located within two City incentive areas: TIF Districts and Enterprise Zones, the extent to which the grant will stimulate the availability of additional funds to support the completion of the ESA or remediation if needed. The City of Freeport has the capability to partner with developers, located in these areas, with allocated public dollars for site assembly, public infrastructure

improvements, and monetary incentives. Freeport's financial strategy to fund more assessment and remediation work is to apply for State and Federal Historical Tax Credits; apply for New Market Tax Credits; pursue Community Development Block Grant public infrastructure funds when applicable; and seek Department of Transportation road and streetscaping funds for applicable redevelopment plans.

### **1.g. Use of Existing Infrastructure**

The planned reuse/redevelopment plans for the target area and priority project sites will primarily utilize existing infrastructure – this includes adaptive reuse plans for utilizing existing building structures on-site for redevelopment, parking lots/facilities, site access roads, local roads, sidewalks, curb and gutters, water, sewer, gas, and electricity infrastructure. If the priority sites are large enough, they will be divided and new infrastructure may be needed to serve those redeveloped sites. In this case, the existing infrastructure may need to be extended from the City's right-of-way. Freeport's redevelopment priority is on infrastructure reuse, but will work with developers when new infrastructure is required. New infrastructure may be required for broadband capabilities or any energy efficiency installations like solar power, as they do not currently exist at the priority sites or at all of the sites listed in the City's brownfields inventory. New infrastructure for redevelopment could be funded from the resources listed in the section above.

## **2: COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:**

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### **Community Need**

#### **2.a. The Community's Need for Funding**

The City of Freeport does not have the financial resources to complete the proposed site assessment work described herein without financial assistance. The 2020 American Community Survey 5-year estimates show Freeport's 21.1% poverty rate compared to the 12.1% Illinois rate. Freeport's \$39,787 median household income is nearly 50% lower than the Illinois rate of \$72,205. Freeport's Per Capita Income of \$25,218 is far below both the State's and Nation's Per Capita Income. City-wide, these statistics are startling, but when you look at the designated target area's demographics, they are even more dismal. Freeport's downtown riverfront target area is comprised of three disadvantaged census tracts. In those tracts, the low income percentiles are 90, 96, and 90, the low median income percentiles are 92, 97, and 89, all illustrating the need for economic revitalization and job creation in the target area. Per HUD's low-to-moderate income tracking tool, the target area has a low-to-moderate income population of 90.57<sup>4</sup>%. Per the US Census Data, Census Tract 8 has a population of 2,847, a Per Capita Income ranges from \$18,000 to \$20,000, the Median Household Income ranges from of \$22,000 to \$28,000, and up to 40% of people living in the target area live in Poverty.

In addition, the target area is located in a Disproportionately Impacted Area in Illinois. A Disproportionately Impacted Area is an area that meets one of the following criteria:

- the area has a poverty rate of at least 20% according to the latest federal decennial census
- 75% or more of the children in the area participate in the federal free lunch program according to reported statistics from the State Board of Education
- at least 20% of the households in the area receive assistance under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
- the area has an average unemployment rate, as determined by the Illinois Department of Employment Security, that is more than 120% of the national unemployment average, as determined by the United States Department of Labor, for a period of at least 2 consecutive calendar years preceding the date of the application
- has high rates of arrest, conviction, and incarceration related to the sale, possession, use, cultivation, manufacture, or transport of cannabis.

The target area census tracts are also designated as Qualified Census Tracts (QCTs) – a Qualified Census Tract is any census tract (or equivalent geographic area defined by the Census Bureau) in

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<sup>4</sup> HUD LMI Mapping Tool - <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=ffd0597e8af24f88b501b7e7f326bedd>

which at least 50% of households have an income less than 60% of the Area Median Gross Income. Per federal definitions, the downtown riverfront target areas are characterized as a disadvantaged area. The need for assistance to the City of Freeport to make this site assessment and revitalization project happen is more than evident.

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

Freeport's brownfield sites negatively impact the welfare of the sensitive populations in target area. Freeport's target area is full of sites that have buildings that are abandoned and blighted, and may pose a particular threat of exposure by nearby sensitive populations to contaminants via direct contact, inhalation, vapor intrusion, or ingestion. Freeport has identified the sensitive populations that are being disproportionately affected by these brownfields. They include minorities, children, persons living in poverty, and women of child bearing age. Within the target area, US Census data shows that 41.26% of the population is comprised of minorities, compared to 37.9% citywide. Furthermore, more than 44% of the female population in the target area is comprised of women of child bearing age. 39.71% of all people and 60.91% of children live below the poverty level. A full 74.8% of Freeport's schoolchildren are low-income and eligible for free and reduced lunch<sup>5</sup>. Health concerns for sensitive populations are often intensified by lack of access to adequate health care and nutrition. In Freeport, 14.8% of the population does not have health insurance; that number rises to 22.8% in the target area<sup>6</sup>. By remediating the environmental contamination issues at the project site with these grant funds, any threat of exposure by nearby sensitive populations to contaminants via direct contact, inhalation, vapor intrusion or ingestion will be reduced or eliminated. The planned redevelopment of the site will directly improve the wellbeing of the area, by creating a cleaner and safer area, and by bringing higher paying jobs to the target area.

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

A review of the Census information and Health Department data shows a number of cumulative environmental issues present in the downtown riverfront target area that illustrate a greater than normal incidence of disease and adverse health conditions. Per the tool, the 3 Census Tracts in the target area have the following health conditions and percentiles: Asthma – 87<sup>th</sup>/79<sup>th</sup>/89<sup>th</sup> percentile, Diabetes – 89<sup>th</sup>/82<sup>nd</sup>/86<sup>th</sup> percentile, Heart Disease – 81<sup>st</sup>/87<sup>th</sup>/79<sup>th</sup> percentile, and a Low Life Expectancy in 97<sup>th</sup>/84<sup>th</sup>/81<sup>st</sup> percentile. Addressing brownfields and providing an attainable and achievable end use will improve the health of the residents in the target area by addressing the sources of contamination exposure directly.

### **2.d. Economically Impoverished/Disproportionately Impacted Populations:**

Brownfield sites add to the cycle of disinvestment and poverty within the target area. Securing this grant funding is critical to the City's ability to serve these target areas most impacted by brownfields through positive redevelopment of these vacant and underutilized properties. The soil and groundwater present on each of the identified priority sites may pose a serious health threat to nearby residents and a disproportionate threat to sensitive populations in the targeted area. Another health and environmental concern is the potential migration of contaminants from the brownfield sites to the surrounding waterways including the nearby Pecatonica River. There are dire statistics for the target area of this application, including:

- the target area census tracts are all designed as Disadvantaged Areas
- the Energy Burden on the residents in the Census Tract is in the 92<sup>nd</sup> percentile
- the Census Tracts have a Low-Income percentile of 90/94, which means that household incomes in the area are equal to or twice the federal poverty level
- the Higher Education Non-Enrollment is in the 96<sup>th</sup> percentile – this is the percentage of the Census Tract's population aged 15 or older that is not enrolled in college, university, or graduate school

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<sup>5</sup> 2020 figures from the Illinois State Board of Education, available at [www.illinoisreportcard.com](http://www.illinoisreportcard.com)

<sup>6</sup> 2020 US Census American Community Survey figures, available at <http://www.census.gov>.

**CITY OF FREEPORT, ILLINOIS  
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- the Housing Cost Burden is in the 96<sup>th</sup> percentile – low income household are spending more than 30% of their income on housing
- houses with lead paint in the Census Tract is in the 88<sup>th</sup> percentile
- Unemployment in the Census Tract is in the 97/93/90<sup>th</sup> percentile
- Poverty in the Census Tract is in the 80<sup>th</sup> percentile
- 11-20% of people ages 25+ have an education level that is less than a High School Diploma

Due to the above statistics, throughout their assessment efforts, the City of Freeport will work to educate stakeholders on the importance of integrating principles of equitable development into the assessment, cleanup and redevelopment of the target area, including: ensuring equitable access to amenities such as health clinics and grocery stores, working with minority- and women-owned businesses, ensuring jobs with living wages, partnering with community-based organizations and neighborhood leaders to enhance the understanding of environmental and health-related issues at the community level, creating commercial linkage strategies, and reusing brownfield sites for greenspace and other healthy, safe and walkable areas like Freeport has planned for the target area. Freeport will also work to provide accessible and culturally appropriate opportunities for low-income, minority and linguistically isolated stakeholders to meaningfully participate in decision-making processes on the proposed brownfield assessment work. These principles help to ensure that low-income and minority residents in the project area, which has historically consisted of blighted properties and perceived or known environmental contamination, reap the benefits of this environmental assessment project.

**Community Engagement**

**2.e. Project Involvement and 2.f. Project Roles**

<b>Organization Name</b>	<b>Point of Contact (name, phone, and email)</b>	<b>Specific Role in the Project</b>
<b>Greater Freeport Partnership</b>	Name: Andrea Winter Email: <a href="mailto:awinter@greaterfreeport.com">awinter@greaterfreeport.com</a> Phone: 815-233-1350	Partner with the City in Reuse Plans for Downtown and Riverfront; bring potential developers to the table; potential investor for reuse
<b>Blackhawk Hills</b>	Name: Daniel Payette Email: <a href="mailto:daniel.payette@blackhawkhills.com">daniel.payette@blackhawkhills.com</a> Phone: 815-625-3854	Blackhawk Hills has pledged to help educate the community on the health/environmental impacts of brownfields and support the project by publishing and posting meeting notices and informational flyers.
<b>Highland Community College</b>	Name: Christina Kuberski Email: <a href="mailto:Chris.Kuberski@highland.edu">Chris.Kuberski@highland.edu</a> Phone: 815-599-3513	HCC will assist with outreach and advocacy efforts on behalf of the diverse citizen and stakeholder groups affected. In addition, the City will utilize their blossoming workforce development program as needed
<b>Freeport School District</b>	Name: Dr. Anna Alvarado Email: <a href="mailto:anna.alvarado@fsd145.org">anna.alvarado@fsd145.org</a> Phone: 815-232-0300	The School District will assist with outreach and advocacy efforts on behalf of the City, including providing meeting space. The school may help with reuse plans in the Target Area.

**2.g. Incorporating Community Input**

When seeking community input, Freeport will meaningfully involve citizens, civic organizations, and communities in the target area and redevelopment decision making process. Freeport will include the affected neighborhoods and their respective residents, property owners, and business owners as vital partners in their assessment and reuse activities. Neighborhood organizations and citizen’s groups will have the opportunity to express their concerns, identify their needs, and create and implement reuse plans. Freeport will lean on Project Partner organizations to assist with community notification efforts. As Freeport moves forward with site assessment work, the City will hold three (3) public meetings and develop three (3) fact sheets on the status of assessment activities at important junctures. The City will post these fact sheets on our website and utilize any necessary social media outreach efforts to notify the public with a link to the City webpage. If the City is awarded this grant, they will continue with the utilization of diverse notification methods (i.e. social media, website, postings) to ensure that they reach a broad audience. It will also be a priority for Freeport to describe their activities, and progress in ways that are easily understood by its residents, who will most likely be unfamiliar with environmental and scientific terminology. In addition, Freeport will seek out

translation services for their Hispanic speaking population, especially for those directly affected by the proposed assessment plan.

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

**3.a. Description of Tasks/Activities and Outputs**

<b>Task 1: Cooperative Agreement Oversight</b>
<b>a. Project Implementation:</b> This task is comprised of the following: management/oversight of the Cooperative Agreement, Quarterly and Annual Reporting to US EPA, coordination between the City and US EPA, data entry into US EPA’s ACRES database, procurement of a Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP), documentation of the site assessment selection process, management of the City’s brownfields inventory, and sending two City reps to the National Brownfields Conferences.
<b>b. Anticipated Schedule:</b> QEP will be retained within 60 days of award. Quarterly Reports and ACRES updates will submitted at the close of each quarter and an Annual Report will submitted within 30 days of fiscal year-end
<b>c. Task/Activity Lead:</b> Program Management will be led by the City’s Community Development Director, and the City’s selected Qualified Environmental Professional.
<b>d. Outputs:</b> Anticipated outputs of this Task include: 12 Quarterly Reports, quarterly updates to ACRES, 4 Annual Reports.

<b>Task 2: Community Engagement</b>
<b>a. Project Implementation:</b> This task is comprised of activities that encourage and facilitate the City’s community involvement and outreach plans. The City will re-establish an updated Brownfields Redevelopment Advisory Committee (BRAC) under this task. The BRAC will meet at least twice a year to keep the brownfields inventory current, ensuring that the highest priority sites are being assessed and made ready for reuse. As the project progresses, the City’s Project Partners will play key roles in both the BRAC and Community Outreach activities. The City will hold annual Community Meetings to ensure residents are aware of project activities and are provide an opportunity to provide input. The Community Meetings will be coupled with the release of project Fact Sheets, which will be distributed by the City, Project Partners, and posted on the City’s website. The priority projects identified in this proposal will take precedence in this task. If there are unwilling landowners and access issues, or reuse plan changes, the City will move on to other sites in the brownfields inventory.
<b>b. Anticipated Schedule:</b> BRAC re-establishment will initiate in 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter of 1 <sup>st</sup> year. 4 BRAC meetings will take place in year 1, and then 1 each subsequent year. Fact Sheets will be distributed at the end of each fiscal year. Community meetings will be held at the end of each 3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter of the fiscal year.
<b>c. Task/Activity Lead:</b> Community Engagement task activities will be led by City staff, with the Qualified Environmental Professional assisting with the BRAC, and Project Partners assisting with Community Outreach and BRAC efforts.
<b>d. Outputs:</b> Anticipated outputs of this Task include: 7 BRAC Meetings, 3 Community Meetings, and 3 Fact Sheets distributed to the community regarding the project.

<b>Task 3: Inventory &amp; Site Prioritization</b>
<b>a. Project Implementation:</b> The Freeport Brownfields Inventory has been developed and amended since the City’s first Brownfields Assessment grant award. The City and QEP will continue to add to and develop a thorough inventory and prioritize a site list based on factors including site redevelopment potential, leveraged funds in place, job creation or retention, and environmental threats affecting the health & safety of residents.
<b>b. Anticipated Schedule:</b> Site inventory and prioritization will begin as soon as the QEP is on-board in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter, and will continue through each BRAC Meeting and throughout the remainder of the project.
<b>c. Task/Activity Lead:</b> This task will be overseen by the City and conducted by the QEP.
<b>d. Outputs:</b> Prioritized Brownfield Inventory

<b>Task 4: Environmental Assessments</b>
<b>a. Project Implementation:</b> Phase I Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs) will be conducted on eligible sites to establish landowner liability protections, stimulate redevelopment, and to determine what steps may be involved for cleanup. All Phase I ESAs will be performed in compliance with the requirements of ASTM E1527-21 “Standard Practice for Environmental Site Assessments: Phase I Environmental Site

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<p>Assessment Process” to satisfy All Appropriate Inquiry. Priority sites in Target Area corridors will be assessed first, and then the City will pursue other sites outside of the Target Area that are positioned for redevelopment. The City anticipates up to 16 Phase I ESAs will be completed. Phase II ESAs will be conducted on eligible sites to position them for cleanup and redevelopment. Prior to conducting any Phase II work, a Sampling &amp; Analysis Plan will be prepared and submitted to US EPA for approval. All Phase II ESAs will be performed in compliance with ASTM E1903-19 “Standard Practice for Environmental Site Assessments: Phase II Environmental Site Assessment Process”. The City anticipates conducting up to 5 Phase II Environmental Site Assessments at sites to supplement the Phase I Environmental Site Assessments where Recognized Environmental Conditions were identified. The priority sites will be considered for Phase II Assessment work first. The City will then pursue other sites in the Target Area before venturing to other locations in the community. The results of the Phase II ESA’s will be compared to Illinois EPA’s Tiered Approach to Corrective Action Objectives (TACO) to evaluate contaminants through human exposure pathways. If contamination is identified at problematic levels, the City will seek to enroll the impacted sites in the Illinois EPA’s voluntary cleanup program for further investigation and remedial planning. The City anticipates the enrollment of 2 to 3 sites into the voluntary cleanup program. Health and Safety and Sampling Analysis Plans will be prepared for all Phase II Environmental Site Assessment activities. A Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) will also be prepared by the QEP in advance of ESA work in accordance with the US EPA’s guidelines.</p>
<p><b>b. Anticipated Schedule:</b> Phase I ESAs will start 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of the first year. The QAPP will be completed in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter of the first year, and Phase II ESAs will start in the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter of the first year.</p>
<p><b>c. Task/Activity Lead:</b> This Task will be led by the City’s QEP</p>
<p><b>d. Outputs:</b> Anticipated outputs of this Task include 16 Phase I Site Assessments, the identified number of acres assessed, 5 Phase II Site Investigations, 1 Overall Health &amp; Safety Plan with 5 site-specific safety plans, 1 Quality Assurance Project Plan, 5 Sampling and Analysis plans, the identified number of acres assessed, and the enrollment up to 3 sites in the State’s Voluntary Cleanup Program.</p>

<p><b>Task 5: Cleanup Planning</b></p>
<p><b>a. Project Implementation:</b> The City will evaluate cleanup needs and projected costs by preparing an Analysis of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA). The ABCA will consider institutional and engineering controls and projected costs for remedial approaches, leading to the preparation of Remedial Action Plans, . The City anticipates completing 2 Remedial Action Plans through the Illinois EPA Site Remediation Program.</p>
<p><b>b. Anticipated Schedule:</b> This Task will occur in the last 4 quarters of the project period.</p>
<p><b>c. Task/Activity Lead:</b> This task will be led by the City’s QEP with oversight by the City.</p>
<p><b>d. Outputs:</b> The anticipated outputs include: 2 ABCAs, 2 Remedial Action Plans.</p>

<p><b>Task 6: Corridor Planning</b></p>
<p><b>a. Project Implementation:</b> This Task includes the development of a Corridor Study in the Target Area, envisioning how each proposed site reuse contributes to the community’s downtown riverfront area revitalization vision, overall land use plans already in place, and determining feasible site reuse opportunities are critical planning steps in the brownfields redevelopment process.</p>
<p><b>b. Anticipated Schedule:</b> This Task will take place in the last year of the project period.</p>
<p><b>c. Task/Activity Lead:</b> This task will be led by the City’s Community Development Director and the QEP.</p>
<p><b>d. Outputs:</b> The anticipated outputs of this task include: one Corridor Study in the Target Area.</p>

**3.e. Cost Estimates**

Budget Categories		Project Tasks						TOTAL
		<u>Task 1:</u> Cooperative Agreement Oversight	<u>Task 2:</u> Community Engagement	<u>Task 3:</u> Inventory & Prioritization	<u>Task 4:</u> Environmental Assessments	<u>Task 5:</u> Cleanup Planning	<u>Task 6:</u> Corridor Planning	
Di re	Personnel	\$2,000	\$6,000	\$2,000	--	--	\$15,000	\$25,000
	Fringe Benefits	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

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<b>Travel</b>	<b>\$4,000</b>	--	--	--	--	--	<b>\$4,000</b>
<b>Equipment</b>	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
<b>Supplies</b>	--	<b>\$500</b>	--	--	--	<b>\$1,000</b>	<b>\$1,500</b>
<b>Contractual</b>	<b>\$12,000</b>	<b>\$3,500</b>	<b>\$11,000</b>	<b>\$245,000</b>	<b>\$84,000</b>	<b>\$84,000</b>	<b>\$439,500</b>
<b>Other</b>	--	--	--	--	<b>\$30,000</b>	--	<b>\$30,000</b>
<b>Total Direct Costs</b>							
<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>\$18,000</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>	<b>\$13,000</b>	<b>\$245,000</b>	<b>\$114,000</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>

**Task 1:** This budget includes \$2,000 of City personnel time at \$25/hour (City Planner). This will provide approximately 80 hours of City staff time to review and submit reporting and cooperative agreement management activities. \$4,000 is reserved for City staff to attend National Brownfields Conferences through the grant period, and it will cover Airfare, Lodging, and Per Diem costs. The remaining \$12,000 is reserved for QEP assistance on preparation cooperative agreement oversight reporting.

**Task 2:** This budget includes \$6,000 of City personnel time at \$52.95/hour (City Planner and Grants and Planning Manager). This will provide approximately 113 hours of City staff time for the development of Fact Sheets, Website updates, and conducting Public Meetings. The City will utilize a total of \$500 for supplies to support community engagement activities. The City's QEP will provide community engagement assistance (\$125/hour x 28 hours = \$3,500).

**Task 3:** This budget includes \$2,000 for 80 hours of City personnel time at \$25.00/hour (City Planner) for site prioritization. The \$11,000 for contractual QEP work includes 88 hours of Environmental Consultant assistance (\$125/hour x 88 hours = \$11,000).

**Task 4:** This task includes conducting 16 Phase I ESA's at \$4,500 each and 5 Phase II ESA's at \$32,800 each for a total of \$236,000. Task 4 costs will also include preparation of the Quality Assurance Project Plan (\$7,000) and Health and Safety Plan (\$2,000).

**Task 5:** This task includes completing 3 ABCAs and Remedial Action Plans at \$28,000 each for a total of \$84,000 completed by the QEP. \$30,000 will be included to address IEPA Site Remediation Program Enrollment and Review Fees.

**Task 6:** This task includes costs for City personnel time (City Planner) at \$25/hour, \$1,000 for planning and presentation supplies, and 672 hours of QEP time at \$125/hour for the Corridor Planning study completed for the downtown riverfront target area.

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

Tracking and measuring progress by the City's Project Manager on this project throughout the period of performance will ensure the City of Freeport achieves the intended project results in an efficient manner. The table below summarizes the proposed project outcomes and method for tracking project progress. The anticipated outputs for each task were described in the previous section. The tasks and outcomes for this grant include:

<b>PROJECT OUTCOMES &amp; PROGRESS TRACKING</b>		
<b>TASK</b>	<b>OUTCOMES</b>	<b>PROGRESS TRACKING</b>
<b>Programmatic Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentation of progress</li> <li>• Efficient project management</li> <li>• Accurate / timely data for EPA</li> <li>• Ready data for City use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quarterly Reports to EPA</li> <li>• Annual Reports to EPA</li> <li>• ACRES data entry</li> </ul>
<b>Community Outreach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More informed and educated stakeholders</li> <li>• Increased program buy-in</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share Fact Sheets/Web Postings/Meetings on Project Progress and Milestones with EPA</li> </ul>
<b>Site Inventory &amp; Prioritization</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete, Prioritized list of potential Brownfield sites in the City</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brownfield Inventory presented at Project Partner Meeting/Public Meeting</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental Assessments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of RECs; AAI compliance</li> <li>• Safe, efficient and reliable assessments</li> <li>• Characterization of contamination; AAI compliance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set Assessment Schedule</li> <li>• Schedule for Priority Site Assessments</li> </ul>
<b>Cleanup and Reuse Planning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyze cleanup alternatives</li> <li>• Sites ready for cleanup / reuse</li> <li>• More efficient activities through 3<sup>rd</sup> party oversight</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share ABCA and Remedial Action Plans for sites positioned for reuse with EPA</li> </ul>
<b>Corridor Planning Study</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Downtown Riverfront Corridor Study</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed Study/Plan from Consultant</li> </ul>

**TASK 4: PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY & PAST PERFORMANCE:**

**Programmatic Capability**

**4.a. Organizational Capacity, 4.b. Organizational Structure, 4.c. Description of Key Staff**

The City of Freeport has received previous brownfield assessment grant funding, and stands ready to administer another brownfield grant when awarded. Freeport has the ability and capacity to manage this grant. The City has a deeply qualified financial and community development team, who will handle the programmatic and financial requirements of this grant funding. The City has extensive experience facilitating and managing redevelopment projects and will utilize that experience to support the most strategic use of the grant funds. If awarded this funding, Freeport will effectively manage the grant and successfully perform each phase of work on the project. Community Development Director Gertrude Heimerdinger will serve as the City's Project Manager for this project, serving as the City's primary contact and responsible for submitting quarterly reports,

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financial reports, progress reports, and the final summary report to EPA Region 5 Staff with the assistance of the City's environmental consultant. City Manager Rob Boyer and Finance Director Michelle Richter will assist Gertrude with the project, providing financial and administrative oversight on the project funding. Gertrude has been with the City for on year, and is also an Architect, which will be an asset to the project when discussing the best reuse options for the downtown and riverfront target area. Rob Boyer has been with the City since 2020, and as City Manager since 2022. Mr. Boyer will provide valuable insight in the management of this funding and has extensive experience with federal funding, including a \$60M wastewater treatment plant under construction in Freeport now, and the completion of approximately 1,300 lead service line replacements. Michelle Richter, Finance Director, has been with the City since 2015 and has over 25 years of accounting, budgeting, and grant experience in both the public and private sectors.

Upon award of the cooperative agreement, City staff will prepare a draft Work Plan. After the US EPA approves the work plan, the City will select the Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP) in compliance with all applicable federal and local procurement requirements. The QEP will assist with grant and program management and will conduct assessment work activities and participate in project reporting and community engagement activities. The City will work with IEPA to provide independent oversight of assessment activities conducted under this program, to ensure all cleanup and assessment work is conducted appropriately and with consideration for public health and welfare.

#### **4.d. Acquiring Additional Resources**

Freeport will identify, coordinate and leverage any public and private resources needed to complete the described grant tasks. The City will follow EPA's procurement policies to hire a Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP) to effectively and efficiently assist the City in managing the Assessment grant project. The QEP will assist the City in preparing QAPP and HASP document and arranging drilling and laboratory subcontractors to conduct the assessment work, and manage the assessment project as it commences. All procurement will follow the City's processes along with all additional requirements needed for procurement under an EPA Cooperative Agreement. The Project Director Gertrude Heimerdinger will work with the City Manager to ensure that plan is in place if there are any changes in management at the City level – this will alleviate any potential issues or gaps in the project schedule or federal reporting on the project. In addition, there will be a meeting with the QEP and Contractor to ensure that the project stays on schedule – if not, there will be corrective actions.

#### **Past Performance and Accomplishments**

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

The City of Freeport has been awarded previous US EPA Brownfields Grants, including BF-00E01251 (Assessment 2013), BF-00E01248 (Cleanup 2013), TR-00E01247 (AWP 2013), BF-00E93001 (Cleanup 2009), BF-00E80001 (Cleanup 2008), BF-00E42401(Assessment 2007), BF-96519901 (Assessment 2003), and BF 00E03561 (Cleanup 2023).

##### **(1) Accomplishments**

With their previous US EPA Brownfields Grant Funds, the City of Freeport has:

- Leveraged over 9 million in funding from USEPA, US HUD, USDA, State of Illinois, and local partners
- Redeveloped a former battery plant site to a regional trail-head for the Grand Illinois Trail and boat launch for the Pecatonica Water Trail
- Business planning for a food entrepreneurship center
- Redevelopment strategy for the riverfront, including a reuse strategy for a 450,000 vacant industrial complex, in the process of being redeveloped to include an Amtrak station, food entrepreneurship center, urban living, industrial/flex space, business incubation, cultural uses, and a brew-pub.
- Engagement of residents and organizations across the community and region, including efforts to empower and build capacity in residents from disadvantaged riverfront neighborhoods.

##### **(2) Compliance with Grant Requirements**

The City of Freeport has been fully compliant with the US EPA Brownfields grants listed above. The City adhered to their US EPA Workplans and Cooperative Agreements, ensuring full compliance with the schedule, terms & conditions, and reporting requirements of the funding. The City completed and submitted all required quarterly reports, federal financial reports, ACRES reporting, DBE reports, and where appropriate, HASP and QAPP, as well as finalizing the Analysis of Brownfield Cleanup Alternative (ABCA) where necessary. The City has drawn all grant funds down in the respective project periods. The City also engaged the community at all opportunities, and took that feedback into their ongoing brownfields program. The City fully understands the necessity of adhering to all Cooperative Agreement requirements and has established a positive reputation with the federal partners at US EPA.

## THRESHOLD CRITERIA

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### **1. Applicant Eligibility:**

The City of Freeport is an incorporated municipality of the State of Illinois and has the authority to enter into a Cooperative Agreement with the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

### **2. Community Involvement:**

When seeking community input, Freeport will meaningfully involve citizens, civic organizations, and communities in the target area and redevelopment decision making process. Freeport will include the affected neighborhoods and their respective residents, property owners, and business owners as vital partners in their assessment and reuse activities. Neighborhood organizations and citizen's groups will have the opportunity to express their concerns, identify their needs, and create and implement reuse plans. Freeport will lean on Project Partner organizations to assist with community notification efforts. As Freeport moves forward with site assessment work, the City will hold three (3) public meetings and develop three (3) fact sheets on the status of assessment activities at important junctures. The City will post these fact sheets on our website and utilize any necessary social media outreach efforts to notify the public with a link to the City webpage. If the City is awarded this grant, they will continue with the utilization of diverse notification methods (i.e. social media, website, postings) to ensure that they reach a broad audience. It will also be a priority for Freeport to describe their activities, and progress in ways that are easily understood by its residents, who will most likely be unfamiliar with environmental and scientific terminology. In addition, Freeport will seek out translation services for their Hispanic speaking population, especially for those directly affected by the proposed assessment plan.

### **3. Expenditure of Existing Grant Funds:**

Not Applicable. The City of Freeport does not have any open/current US EPA Brownfields Assessment Grants or Multipurpose Grants at this time.

### **4. Named Contractors and Subrecipients:**

Not Applicable. The City of Freeport did not name Contractors or Subrecipients in this Grant Application Proposal.