



APPLICATION INFORMATION SHEET

1. **Applicant Identification**

Van Buren County, Michigan
219 E. Paw Paw Street
Paw Paw, MI 49079
2. **Website URL**

<https://vanburencountymi.gov/>
3. **Funding Requested**
 - a. Assessment Grant Type: Community-wide
 - b. Federal Funds Requested: \$500,000
4. **Location**

Van Buren County, Michigan
5. **Target Area and Priority Site Information**
 - Target Area: Village of Paw Paw Southern Industrial Zone
 - Priority Site 1: Former Paw Paw Plating, Commercial Avenue (parcel 80-47-583-050-00), 139 Commercial Avenue (parcel 80-47-583-049-00), and 125 Industrial Avenue (80-47-583-045-01), Paw Paw, MI
6. **Contacts**
 - a. Project Director:

Lisa Ransler, Secretary-Treasurer of Van Buren County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority
269.657.8200 x1073
ranslerl@vanburencountymi.gov
219 E. Paw Paw Street, Suite 302
Paw Paw, MI 49079
 - b. Chief Executive/Highest-Ranking Elected Official:

John Faul, County Administrator
269.657.8253
admin@vanburencountymi.gov
219 E. Paw Paw Street
Paw Paw, MI 49079
7. **Population**

Village of Paw Paw (population of 3,277)

8. Other Factors

Other Factors	Page Nos.
Community population is 15,000 or less.	1
The applicant is, or will assist, a federally recognized Indian Tribe or United States Territory.	N/A
The priority site(s) is impacted by mine-scarred land.	N/A
The priority site(s) is adjacent to a body of water.	N/A
The priority site(s) is in a federally designated flood plain.	N/A
The reuse of the priority site(s) will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy.	4
The reuse of the priority site(s) will incorporate energy efficiency measures.	4
The proposed project will improve local resilience to the impacts of extreme weather events and natural disasters.	4
At least 30% of the overall project budget will be spent on eligible reuse/area-wide planning activities for priority site(s) within the target area(s).	N/A
The target area(s) is impacted by a coal-fired power plant that has recently closed (2014 or later) or is closing.	N/A

9. Letter from the State or Tribal Environmental Authority

Attached.

10. Releasing Copies of Applications

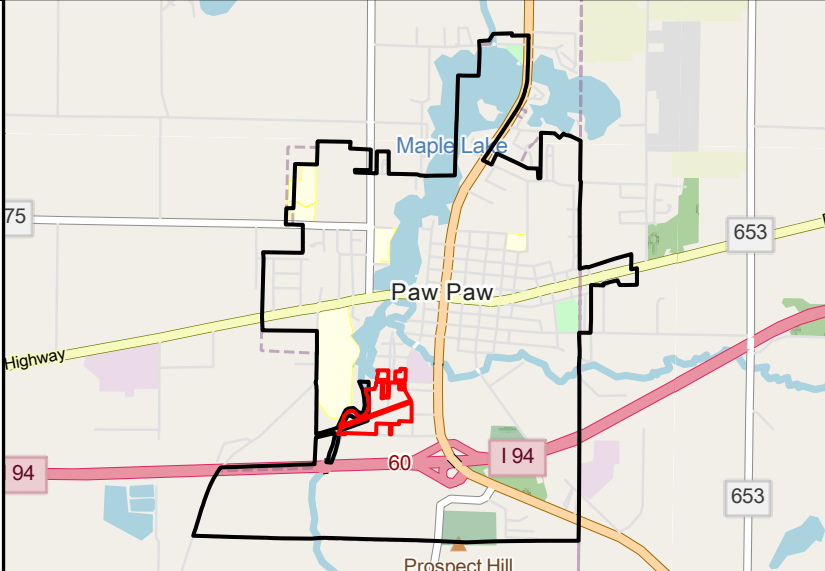
N/A.

Hard copy is intended to be 8.5"x11" when plotted. Scale(s) indicated and graphic quality may not be accurate for any other size.

Van Buren County
 Paw Paw, Michigan
 EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant

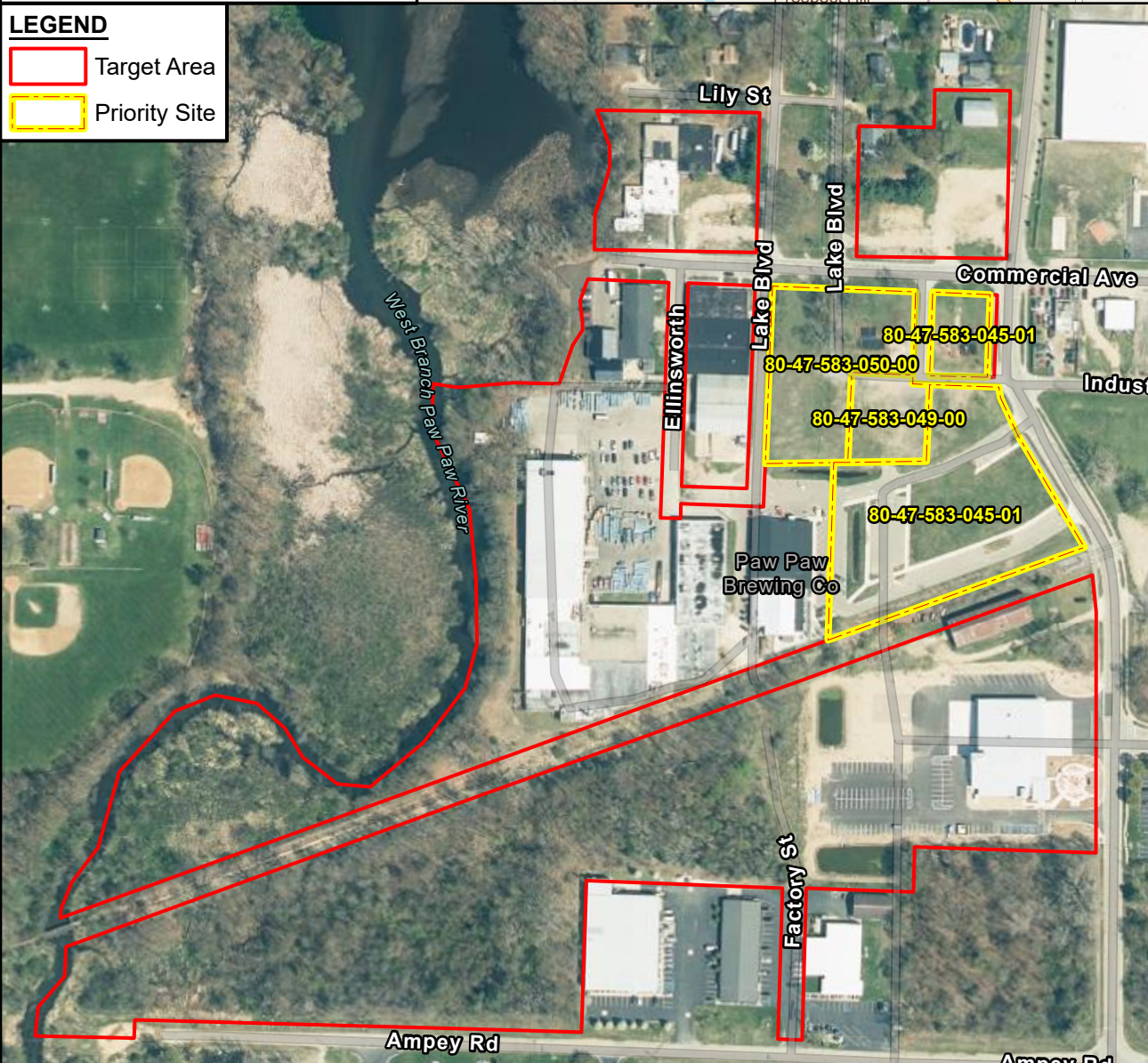
PROJECT NO.
2501604

FIGURE NO.
1



LEGEND

- Target Area
- Priority Site



SITE MAP

NORTH

0 150 300 FEET

DATA SOURCES: STATE OF MICHIGAN COUNTY AND VILLAGE BOUNDARIES, VILLAGE OF PAW PAW ZONING MAP, OPEN STREET MAP BASEMAP AND HYBRID REFERENCE LAYER, MISAL IMAGERY.



GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENT, GREAT LAKES, AND ENERGY
REMEDATION AND REDEVELOPMENT DIVISION



PHILLIP D. ROOS
DIRECTOR

December 16, 2025

VIA EMAIL

John Faul
County Administrator
Van Buren County
219 E Paw Paw Street
Paw Paw, Michigan 49079

Dear John Faul:

SUBJECT: Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE)
Acknowledgment of a United States Environmental Protection Agency
(U.S. EPA) Brownfield Grant Proposal for 2026

Thank you for your notice and request for a letter of acknowledgment for Van Buren County's proposal for a U.S. EPA Brownfield Grant. EGLE's Remediation and Redevelopment Division encourages and supports community-led environmental assessment and redevelopment efforts and recognizes Van Buren County's need for funding.

Van Buren County is applying for a \$500,000 Community-wide Brownfield Assessment Grant. As a general-purpose unit of local government, Van Buren County is an eligible grant applicant.

Should the U.S. EPA award a brownfield grant to Van Buren County, it would allow the county to conduct environmental investigations and promote economic development at brownfield sites in Van Buren County. If you need further information about potential eligible sites or assistance regarding EGLE's brownfield programs, please feel free to contact me at the number below or by email at SmedleyR@Michigan.gov.

Sincerely,

Ronald L. Smedley
Federal Brownfield Coordinator
Brownfield Assessment and Redevelopment
Section
517-242-9048

1. PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION AND PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION

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

Van Buren County is located in southwest Michigan, approximately 125 miles from Chicago and 155 miles from Detroit and is bordered to the west by Lake Michigan. This Community-wide Assessment Grant will be implemented throughout Van Buren County. Although much of the county's land area is rural and agricultural (124.5 people per square mile compared to the state's average 177.3 people per square mile), it has a strong industrial heritage, and manufacturing remains its largest industry sector, accounting for 22.9% of existing jobs. It is Van Buren County's intent to focus this grant on a specific area of former manufacturing located in the Village of Paw Paw, which serves as the County Seat. The **Village of Paw Paw** (population 3,277; U.S. Census, 2023 American Community Survey 5-year estimates) has designated its southern industrial zone—located in census tract 118.01, Block Group 3—as the target area for this application. This corridor embodies the village's industrial past yet now bears the environmental and economic impacts of that legacy. The area contains numerous aging, vacant, and underutilized industrial buildings, along with multiple vacant parcels where former operations once stood. Historically, this district supported a range of manufacturing, including paper production, electroplating, and electric goods and automotive parts manufacturing. An abandoned rail line, once the backbone of local commerce, still cuts through the area as a visible reminder of the village's manufacturing past.

On a broader countywide scale, Paw Paw's readiness for redevelopment is increasingly important due to major regional economic activity tied to the Holtec Palisades nuclear power plant in Covert, Michigan, located less than 25 miles from the priority site. This 800-megawatt facility, shut down in May 2022, is now being recommissioned with significant support from the State of Michigan and the U.S. Department of Energy. This effort is expected to create or sustain up to 600 long-term jobs and more than 1,000 additional seasonal positions during refueling and maintenance cycles every 18 months. As a result, Van Buren County is anticipating a substantial influx of workers, which will generate an immediate and pronounced need for new housing—both temporary for construction and long-term for plant operations—as well as supporting commercial services. Paw Paw, as the County Seat and a central population hub, is expected to absorb a considerable share of this demand. Decades of industrial activity have left behind petroleum impacts, trichloroethylene, and heavy metal contamination across the target area. These contaminants pose risks to indoor air quality and necessitate costly soil removal or engineered barriers before redevelopment can safely occur—factors that currently limit reinvestment and discourage private developers. Without targeted assessment, planning, and mitigation, the area cannot transform to meet the village's modern economic and housing needs. This EPA grant will equip the Village of Paw Paw with the resources necessary to evaluate and address these environmental constraints, paving the way to revitalize long-idled manufacturing sites and reposition this district as a safe, vibrant, and economically productive area capable of supporting urgently needed housing and community development.

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

In the small Village of Paw Paw, state records identify 52 known contaminated sites (representing 15.6% of all 333 contaminated sites in Van Buren County), most of which are concentrated on the village's south side within its only industrially zoned district, the target area for this EPA grant. The village has identified a significant priority site in the target area for redevelopment. The former **Paw Paw Plating** property was selected due to its long-vacant status and strategic redevelopment

potential. The site operated as an electroplating facility from 1950 to 2009 and is impacted by heavy metals, cyanides, trichloroethylene, and per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). Although the former buildings have been demolished, environmental impacts remain, and the site cannot be reused without proper assessment and cleanup planning. The village and its partners have significant interest in redeveloping the property into a mixed-use project, which will include ground-floor commercial space and two stories of market-rate residential units. The Paw Paw Housing Commission has also identified the area as a prime location for critically needed workforce housing. EPA Assessment Grant funds are essential to advance this redevelopment, supporting contaminated soil management, vapor mitigation design, and the removal of a known underground storage tank—ultimately enabling safe, productive reuse of this long-troubled site.

In addition to mixed-use and workforce housing opportunities, the village is also actively evaluating the former Paw Paw Plating property as a potential location for a natural-gas-powered generator facility. Because the village operates its own municipal electric utility, it is exploring local power generation as a cost-effective strategy to reduce peak-demand charges from the Pennsylvania-New Jersey-Maryland Interconnection (PJM) electrical grid and increase long-term energy resilience. The former Paw Paw Plating site is uniquely suited for this infrastructure, as it is industrially zoned, centrally located within the service area, and in close proximity to an existing natural gas supply line. As part of conceptual planning, the village is also considering co-locating recreational amenities, such as pickleball courts or other outdoor activity spaces, alongside the generator facility. This approach would allow essential energy infrastructure to be paired with new public amenities, making more efficient use of formerly contaminated land while enhancing quality of life for residents. The EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant will play a vital role in determining how to safely accommodate these potential reuses by funding environmental due diligence, evaluating engineering controls, and supporting integrated site planning. Together, these redevelopment paths reflect the village’s holistic vision for the site: to leverage a single distressed property to meet multiple community needs, such as housing, economic development, clean energy resilience, and expanded recreational access.

1.c. Identifying Additional Sites

The Van Buren County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (VBCBRA), which will implement the Assessment Grant on behalf of the county, has a long history of working collaboratively with local units of government, local economic agencies, and the development community to find opportunities where grant funds can be put to use. Prospective sites will be evaluated against multiple criteria, including known or suspected contamination, redevelopment potential, opportunities for adaptive reuse, incorporation of sustainability principles, and reduction of urban sprawl. Each nomination will be scored by County staff and will ensure the area is in a disadvantaged community, and that the project is consistent with local plans and zoning, how the project positively impacts the community, an evaluation of how brownfield conditions will be alleviated, how the project will be catalyst to development in the area, economic benefits and job creation, and the degree to which overall project success appears achievable.

1.d. Reuse Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans

In 2017, the Village of Paw Paw was selected as one of only ten communities statewide to participate in the State of Michigan’s Rising Tides Initiative, a partnership of the Michigan Economic Development Corporation and the Michigan State Housing Development Authority

designed to help communities access state and federal funds and strengthen long-term economic development planning. The resulting 2017 report identified several structural challenges limiting the village's growth, including a lack of housing diversity, high rental rates, constrained land availability, and a high concentration of vacant or underutilized buildings. These findings helped catalyze ongoing community visioning and Master Planning efforts, during which the **Paw Paw Plating** priority site and the target area were repeatedly identified as central to the village's redevelopment goals. The long-term vision for this district emphasizes mixed-use redevelopment, expanded housing options, and new recreational amenities to improve quality of life and support community vitality.

To advance these goals, the Village of Paw Paw has collaborated with the Technical Assistance to Brownfields Communities Program (TAB); regional and state planning agencies; the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy; Market One economic development staff; and other community partners to prepare revitalization plans and update zoning to support the scale and type of redevelopment envisioned for the area. The work proposed under this EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant directly aligns with these adopted plans and priorities, providing the environmental due diligence, planning, and technical support necessary to transform the target area into a safe, vibrant, mixed-use district that combines housing, commerce, municipal infrastructure, and recreational amenities in a way that advances long-term community resilience.

For the **Paw Paw Plating** site specifically, redevelopment concepts include the construction of two new three-story mixed-use buildings featuring street-level retail space, a childcare center on the ground floor, and approximately 31 residential units on the upper floors. In addition, the village is exploring strategic infrastructure investments for the target site, including the installation of a natural-gas-powered generator to support municipal peak-shaving operations. The generator is proposed to be co-planned with public amenities, such as the development of new pickleball courts or related recreational features, creating a dual-benefit project that enhances both community infrastructure and recreational access. This integrated approach reflects the village's emphasis on multi-use, community-serving redevelopment in areas that have long been environmentally and economically distressed.

On a broader countywide scale, these improvements allow the local economy to expand and diversify. The Holtec Palisades nuclear power plant in Covert, Michigan, is less than 25 miles from the priority site in Paw Paw. This 800-megawatt facility, shut down in May 2022, is being recommissioned thanks to a groundswell of support from the State of Michigan and the U.S. Department of Energy. The economic impact this will have in Van Buren County is monumental: it is anticipated to create or sustain up to 600 jobs, support more than 1,000 seasonal jobs during regularly scheduled refueling and maintenance periods every 18 months, and provide extended economic benefits for the region. There will be an immediate need for housing and supporting commercial businesses to accommodate the influx of workers needed to retrofit and operate this plant. Thus, the priority site project proposed through this EPA grant is aligned with and complements this critical economic development county initiative.

1.e. Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategy

The **Paw Paw Plating** project will be the first mixed-use development in the Paw Paw target area. The impact of new construction and added commercial lease spaces will provide new jobs, while

the resulting increase in residential population will further support local businesses in the downtown area, a short walk from the priority site. The project will create 14,390 square feet of greenspace along the site's southern boundary, which integrates resilience to the impacts of extreme weather events and natural disasters through improved stormwater retention and flood capacity. The project also supports the use of existing walkways and recreational areas along the Paw Paw River immediately west of the target area. The project will restore value to a property that has long sat vacant and unused. Further, the proposed incorporation of 31 residential units on the upper floors of the redevelopment promotes the purposes of the Housing Commission, a nonprofit organization, as well as the public good. As the project is designed, there will be significant opportunities to incorporate energy efficiencies in new construction techniques and materials, energy-efficient building systems, solar or wind-powered lighting, and other renewable energy technologies. The VBCBRA policy prioritizes projects that "will reuse vacant or obsolete structures, sustainable, green building design, and projects intended for LEED [Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design] certification."

In addition to the mixed-use redevelopment scenario, the village is also evaluating the former **Paw Paw Plating** site as a viable location for a natural-gas-powered generator facility to support municipal peak-shaving. This facility, intended to support municipal peak-shaving and reduce long-term energy costs for residents and represents a critical investment in the community's energy resilience. To maximize public benefit, the village is exploring co-development of recreational amenities, such as new pickleball courts or similar outdoor activity spaces, adjacent to the generator site. Pairing essential infrastructure with accessible recreational assets will strengthen the quality of life for residents, enhance walkability within the district, and promote more active use of formerly underutilized land. Together, these improvements broaden the benefits of the reuse strategy by combining clean energy planning, community wellness, and placemaking within a historically distressed industrial area.

1.f. Resources Needed for Site Reuse

Van Buren County is a general-purpose unit of local government and can receive federal and state funds as well as enact local tax incentives that help private developers fund assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment. The Assessment Grant is a useful tool in leveraging other funding sources, as the data from environmental assessments and cleanup planning activities generates detailed plans and costs that funding resources require. Key funding sources that will be used include New Market Tax Credits and Brownfield Plan tax increment financing, which can utilize property taxes from the new developments to reimburse developers or local units of government for gap financing for housing, environmental assessment and cleanup activities, demolitions, and other site development costs. Brownfield Plans also allow for capture into the Local Brownfield Revolving Fund, which is managed by the VBCBRA and is used for cleanup loans. The fund has just reached \$215,000, which is relatively small to fund the anticipated cleanup projects but could be available for smaller projects as needed. The State of Michigan maintains a Brownfield Redevelopment Grant and Loan Program, which can also be accessed by the county, providing up to \$2 million for a single site to fund environmental cleanup, asbestos removal, and demolition activities. The State of Michigan's Community Revitalization Program is another available resource for qualifying projects (i.e., near downtown, mixed-use development). This program can provide up to 25% of the project cost as a cash benefit to the developer upon successful project completion.

1.g. Use of Existing Infrastructure

The Village of Paw Paw target area has existing infrastructure including roads, municipal sewer, water, fiber optic, and power. However, additional improvements, including new sidewalks and enhanced connections to existing bike trail systems, are anticipated to support the redevelopment of the priority site and other projects in the target area. These would be funded by the developers.

2. COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

2.a. The Community's Need for Funding

Throughout Van Buren County, 37% of residents are Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) or are living below the poverty line. In the Village of Paw Paw, specifically, 59% of residents meet these same criteria (ALICE, 2023 point-in-time data). Additionally, Worker Adjustment Retraining Notification (WARN) data indicates 204 layoffs have occurred in the county over the past five years. The Village of Paw Paw target community's economic conditions are evident by the fact that the village was selected in 2017 as one of only ten communities across the state to participate in a pilot program called Rising Tide, a coordinated effort by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation and the Michigan State Housing Development Authority to assist the community in accessing state and federal funds that can make a positive impact on the community's future economic development planning. The village was selected based on a series of economic factors including unemployment rate (5.6% compared to U.S. average of 5.2%) and poverty status (18.7% compared to U.S. average of 12.4%) (U.S. Census, 2023 American Community Survey 5-year estimates). Further, median household income in the village is \$38,989, which is 40% to 50% lower than the median incomes of the county (\$66,902), state (\$71,149), and U.S. (\$78,538). The program identified various economic development weaknesses in the village including empty, vacant buildings; lack of housing diversity; tax base not growing; low housing quality; high rental rates; high renovation costs of historical buildings; lack of an industrial park; and lack of room to expand. The program also identified the top threat to the village as a lack of funding. Paw Paw is a village with a small population of 3,277. As a result, local governance is small, and local property taxes do not generate the level of revenue required to address these types of brownfield redevelopment projects.

2.b. Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations

Sensitive populations in the Paw Paw target area include children under the age of 5, who represent 10.0% of the village's population, and women of childbearing age (ages 20 to 44), who represent 16.4%. The sensitive populations in our target area are impacted by poverty, and environmental contamination. Throughout Van Buren County, 58.8% of K-12 students are economically disadvantaged, while 55.4% of children ages 0-4 receive benefits through the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) federal program (2024 Kids Count in Michigan). In the Village of Paw Paw, 59% of residents are qualified as ALICE or living below the poverty line. This population is more likely to access food stamps and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits; in fact, 30.0% of residents in census tract 118.01 (which contains our target area) receive food stamps/SNAP, more than twice the rate of the county (13.6%), state (13.1%), or nation (11.8%). Overwhelmingly, the social and institutional inequities that cause poverty and drive health outcomes that are significantly worse than for wealthier populations. These outcomes are also exacerbated by environmental contamination, which weakens immune systems and causes asthma, cancer, and other diseases. According to the Michigan Economic Justice Screening Tool (MiEJScreen), Paw Paw is in the

84th percentile for environmental effects. This includes proximity to cleanup sites (95th percentile), hazardous waste facilities (66th percentile), and Risk Management Plan sites (86th percentile), as well as other burdens such as lead paint indicator (60th percentile), among other indicators. Through this EPA grant, the target area has an opportunity to assess, understand, and manage the environmental risks present in their community, which is also necessary to leverage additional funding to address the cleanup risks.

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

As brownfield sites are assessed, cleaned up, and redeveloped, there are opportunities to eliminate and/or control risks of exposure to environmental contamination, which weakens immune systems and causes asthma, cancer, and other diseases. According to the MiEJScreen, census tract 118 (which contains the target area) is in the 86th percentile for proximity to Risk Management Plan sites, emphasizing the community’s disproportionate exposure to contaminated properties. At a county level, there is a higher cancer incidence and mortality rate, chronic lower respiratory diseases mortality rate, and adult current asthma prevalence among Van Buren County residents than in the state or country (refer to the table below for health data). According to the MiEJScreen, census tract 118 is in the 55th percentile for asthma, which is well known to be directly related to high ozone impact; this is reflected in the fact census tract 118 is also in the 86th percentile for ozone (MiEJScreen). An EPA grant will allow the Van Buren County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (VBCBRA) to identify, assess, and evaluate the risks associated with the priority site and other contaminated sites, ultimately developing cleanup plans that can create more equitable and healthy living conditions for local residents.

Health Issues	Van Buren	Michigan	U.S.
Cancer Incidence ¹ / Mortality Rate ²	457.6 / 162.4	450.9 / 158.3	448.0 / 146.0
Lung & Bronchus Cancer Incidence ¹ / Mortality Rate ²	73.5 / 40.9	64.2 / 38.3	59.2 / 32.4
Chronic Lower Respiratory Diseases Mortality Rate ³	56.5	41.9	36.4
Adult Current Asthma Prevalence	12.2% ⁴	11.0% ⁵	8.9% ⁶

¹ Michigan 2020 Primary Care Needs Assessment (per 100,000); ² National Cancer Institute (2018–2022, per 100,000); ³ CDC WONDER (2020, age-adjusted data); ⁴ CDC PLACES: Local Data for Better Health (2023); ⁵ 2023 Behavioral Risk Factor Survey; ⁶ CDC National Center for Health Statistics (2023)

Local data also indicates that the Village of Paw Paw is in the 84th percentile for lead-impacted blood levels, which is the percent of tested children with elevated blood lead levels (EBLLs) ($\geq 5 \mu\text{g/dL}$) (MiEJScreen). In 2023, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services completed childhood blood lead level testing and identified 4.6% of children tested in Van Buren County had EBLLs, higher than the state percentage of 4.2%. In the Paw Paw target area, there is a significant number (57.0%) of occupied housing units built before 1979, which shows a high percentage of occupants potentially exposed to lead-based paint and asbestos. This may reasonably explain the village’s high lead-impacted blood levels and can be mitigated by the Assessment Grant through conducting hazardous building materials surveys and asbestos-containing materials surveys and the redevelopment of the priority site, which will enhance the amount and quality of housing options in the village.

2.d. Economically Impoverished/Disproportionately Impacted Populations

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the Village of Paw Paw has a median household income of \$38,989, which falls far below both the Michigan and U.S. medians, indicating limited household earning power and heightened vulnerability to rising housing and utility costs. The village contains approximately 1,499 housing units, almost a third of which (29.2%) were built in 1939 or earlier, reflecting a modest and aging housing stock that constrains the availability of affordable, high-quality housing options for working families. In addition to limited income mobility, 18.7% of village residents live below the poverty line and 8.5% in our target area are unemployed, both rates higher than state and national averages. Many households face compounded economic stressors, including lower per-capita income, rising rental costs, and limited access to diverse housing types. These factors create significant barriers to economic stability and contribute to the heightened vulnerability of many residents.

These socioeconomic conditions underscore the need for targeted public investment through the EPA Brownfield Program. Redevelopment of contaminated properties in Van Buren County, such as the former **Paw Paw Plating facility**, directly addresses longstanding environmental burdens by creating new opportunities for workforce housing, commercial services, and local job creation. At the Paw Paw Plating site, reuse plans specifically include development of a local natural-gas-powered generation facility, which will help stabilize and potentially decrease electric utility rates for target-area residents already experiencing disproportionate economic impacts from surrounding brownfields. EPA Assessment Grant funding will help reduce environmental and financial barriers that disproportionately affect economically distressed populations, ultimately supporting safer neighborhoods, expanded healthy housing options, improved health outcomes, and equitable access to redevelopment benefits.

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

As there is no community-based organization in the county that can service this grant, it is the county’s intention to secure a community liaison to assist in community engagement. This will not be a county employee but may be an elected official or community member involved in county affairs. The county will use its existing policies to provide direction for stipend amounts, reimbursement requests, documentation (receipts), and allowable costs. The budget below incorporates a cost for these services.

Name of Entity & Contact	Entity’s Mission	Involvement in the Project
Paw Paw Housing Commission Chuck Black, 269.870.0448, chuck.bpphc@gmail.com	To help the community with access to safe, equitable, and affordable housing.	Primary project developer for Paw Paw Plating priority site.
Paw Paw Downtown Development Authority Mary Springer, 269.415.0060	To enhance the welfare of businesses and residents in downtown Paw Paw.	Local business-focused organization that can disseminate information and meeting notices and can host meetings. Can help advertise work activities to diverse community of bidders.
Market One Zach Morris, morrisz@marketone.org	Laser focused on providing solutions to the most pressing needs in	Economic development agency that will foster development opportunities, help secure resources, and promote

	Van Buren County communities.	workforce development. Participates in the VBCBRA and is involved in making decisions on sites, cleanup, and reuse. Liaison to local governments.
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2.g. Incorporating Community Input

As the projects in the target area advance, there will be ample opportunities to engage the community, both in regularly scheduled public meetings of the village, Downtown Development Authority, and VBCBRA and in open-house-style meetings specific to projects. Paw Paw Brewing is a neighbor to the priority site and provides a venue for advertising as well as hosting open meetings to share information with the public, including project progress, and secure input. These meetings can be recorded as a podcast for sharing via the various platforms and websites maintained by project partners. We envision at least one in-person/recorded meeting each calendar year at Paw Paw Brewing’s site. The VBCBRA has a webpage(s) where comments can be submitted and information posted. The VBCBRA will be the primary party securing public comments, responding to any meaningful comments, and ensuring that public concerns are considered. Additional approvals will come through the public Planning Commission meetings and Village Council meetings.

3. TASK DESCRIPTIONS, COST ESTIMATES, AND MEASURING PROGRESS

Task 1: Site Assessments
a. Project Implementation: Site eligibility determinations, access agreements, Phase I and II Environmental Site Assessments, Sampling Plans, Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP)
b. Anticipated Schedule: QAPP developed in first quarter, 2 projects completed in the first year and 2–3 in each subsequent year, ~50% of the grant used in 18 months
c. Task Lead: Qualified Environmental Professional with Grant Project Manager oversight
d. Outputs: 10 Phase I and II Environmental Site Assessment reports; eligibility determinations; Assessment, Cleanup, and Redevelopment Exchange System (ACRES) updates; All Appropriate Inquiry checklists; QAPP
Task 2: Cleanup and Reuse Planning
a. Project Implementation: Work Plans, Cleanup Plans, Reuse Plans, Analysis of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives (ABCAs), Brownfield Redevelopment Plans as needed for specific projects
b. Anticipated Schedule: 2 projects completed in the first year and a maximum of 2 projects in each subsequent year; 5 total
c. Task Lead: Qualified Environmental Professional with Grant Project Manager oversight
d. Outputs: 5 technical Work Plans, Cleanup and Reuse Plans, ABCAs, conceptual site reuse plans, conceptual cost estimates, Brownfield Plans, etc.
Task 3: Community Engagement
a. Project Implementation: Press release, informational brochures and presentations, applications for funding, meetings with prospective developers and community, community liaison selection and guidelines
b. Anticipated Schedule: In first two quarters, develop press release, applications, and funding guidelines; hold quarterly community engagement meetings
c. Task Lead: Grant Manager, community liaison, support from Environmental Professional
d. Outputs: Press release, brochures/presentations, applications, meeting agendas and minutes

Task 4: Grant Management
a. Project Implementation: Procure Qualified Environmental Professional; prepare Quarterly Reports, ACRES, and financial reports; attendance at one National Brownfield Conference by up to 2 people
b. Anticipated Schedule: Ongoing with quarterly updates and as projects progress
c. Task Lead: Deliverables will be completed by Grant Project Manager with support from Qualified Environmental Professional
d. Outputs: Quarterly Reports, financial reports,

3.e. Cost Estimates

Budget Categories	Task 1: Site Assessments	Task 2: Cleanup and Reuse Planning	Task 3: Community Engagement	Task 4: Grant Management	Total
Travel	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,000	\$1,000
Other	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$500	\$500
Contractual	\$381,700	\$100,000	\$7,800	\$9,000	\$498,500
Total Direct Costs	\$381,700	\$100,000	\$7,800	\$10,500	\$500,000
Total Budget	\$381,700	\$100,000	\$7,800	\$10,500	\$500,000

- Task 1, Contractual Costs: 10 Phase I and II Environmental Site Assessments at \$38,170 per site on average; **\$381,700 total.**
- Task 2, Contractual Costs: 5 Cleanup/Reuse Plans (ABCAs, Brownfield Plans, etc.) at \$20,000 per site; **\$100,000 total.**
- Task 3, Contractual Costs: Environmental Professional services and/or community liaison stipends for meetings and development of informational materials, ~65 hours over grant term at ~\$120/hour; **\$7,800 total.**
- Task 4: \$10,500 total; Travel Costs: airfare (2 x \$250 = \$500), hotel and accommodations (up to 4 days total at \$125/day = \$500); Other Costs: assumes 2 persons attending one National Brownfield Conference (2 x \$250 in registration fees = \$500), Contractual Costs: 60 hours for support during term of grant at \$150/hour; \$9,000 total; procure Qualified Environmental Professional (\$0); Grantee will provide personnel cost and supplies at no cost; Grantee will also provide meeting space.

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

We will utilize the Assessment, Cleanup, and Redevelopment Exchange System (ACRES) database and quarterly reporting to track and report outcomes, share outputs, and report project progress to EPA and the community. From developers, we will secure a report of outcomes for completed projects such as jobs created, acres cleaned up, investment leveraged, square footage of new construction, etc. The Grant Project Manager will track the number of projects completed and funds drawn against the grant proposal schedule and budget to track and evaluate progress on a quarterly basis. If progress is slower than expected, the Grant Project Manager will evaluate appropriate responses (e.g., increase communications and community outreach). All outputs from the grant will be shared with the EPA such as reports, meeting minutes, community outreach and engagement notes, etc.

4. PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE

4.a.–4.c. Organizational Capacity, Organizational Structure, and Description of Key Staff

The EPA grant will be managed on behalf of Van Buren County by the Van Buren County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority which has functioned on a continuous basis since 2002. The Authority is a previous EPA grantee and has the organizational capacity to carry out the programmatic, administrative, and financial requirements of the grant. We have access to all of the resources available through the Van Buren County government including accounting, finance, procurement, legal, and administrative support. The Authority has a citizen-led board that is used to evaluate funding requests, provide direction to county staff, solicit and respond to community input, and provide oversight of financial performance. The Authority will retain a technical consultant to implement technical components of the grant. The technical consultant will report to Authority staff and be procured competitively subject to board approval. Key staff will be Lisa Ransler, who is the Secretary-Treasurer of the Authority and will be the Grant Project Manager. Ms. Ransler is a former Village Manager and now the Community Services Director for Van Buren County. With nearly 35 years of experience in municipal service, her background includes economic development, neighborhood development, finance, and executive leadership. She has been active with the Van Buren County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority since 2020 and holds a master's degree in public administration from Western Michigan University.

4.d. Acquiring Additional Resources

The county has procurement guidelines that are used to solicit, evaluate, and secure expertise and resources needed to perform the grant activities. There are several qualified environmental consulting firms that service the geographic area such that meeting EPA's requirements for procurement is not difficult.

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

4.e.(1) Accomplishments

Since 2007, Van Buren County has secured and effectively utilized multiple EPA Brownfields Grants. The county's three most recent EPA grants include a FY 2016 Community-wide Assessment Grant (CA BF-00E02005-04; \$400,000; 10/1/2016–2021), a FY 2010 Petroleum Assessment Grant (CA BF-00E00374-0; \$200,000; 10/1/2010–2014), and a FY 2009 Hazardous Substance Assessment Grant (CA 2B-00E88101-0; \$200,000; 10/1/2009–2012). All three previous grants are closed. Total outputs for the three grants include 3 Quality Assurance Project Plans, 37 Phase I Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs), 29 Phase II ESAs, 44 Quarterly Reports, 16 Disadvantaged Business Enterprise reports, and 11 federal financial reports. Total outcomes include assessment of 37 sites, 218 acres designated as ready for use, creation of 1,280 jobs, and \$90 million in private investment. The combined Assessment Grants' outputs were accurately reflected in the Assessment, Cleanup, and Redevelopment Exchange System (ACRES).

4.e.(2) Compliance with Grant Requirements

The VBCBRA has complied with all the grant requirements including work plans, quality assurance, schedules, financial reporting and documentation, project progress requirements, ACRES reporting, etc. Evidence of compliance is on file with the EPA and state records. Both the FY 2009 and FY 2010 EPA Brownfield Assessment Grants were fully drawn down with no funds returned to the EPA. The FY 2016 grant had an efficient application of project activities and did not necessitate full use of the grant funds, and a minor \$8,027 of funds was returned.

**THRESHOLD CRITERIA RESPONSE
VAN BUREN COUNTY, MICHIGAN**

1. Applicant Eligibility

a. Van Buren County is a Michigan General Purpose Local Unit of Government and is eligible to receive funding through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Brownfield Assessment Grant program.

b. N/A

2. Community Involvement

There will be ample opportunities to engage the community, both in regularly scheduled public meetings of the village, Downtown Development Authority, and Van Buren County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (VBCBRA) and in open-house-style meetings specific to projects. Paw Paw Brewing is a neighbor to the priority site and provides a venue for advertising as well as hosting open meetings to share information with the public, including project progress, and secure input. These meetings can be recorded as a podcast for sharing via the various platforms and websites maintained by project partners. We envision at least one in-person/recorded meeting each calendar year at Paw Paw Brewing's site. The VBCBRA has a webpage(s) where comments can be submitted and information posted. The VBCBRA will be the primary party securing public comments, responding to any meaningful comments, and ensuring that public concerns are considered. Additional approvals will come through the public Planning Commission meetings and Village Council meetings.

3. Expenditure of Existing Grant Funds

Van Buren County does not have an open EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant or Multipurpose Grant.

4. Contractors and Named Subrecipients

N/A, a contractor/subrecipient has not been procured or named.