



ROCHESTER

Minnesota



NARRATIVE INFORMATION SHEET

R05-26-A-035

1. Applicant Identification

City of Rochester
201 4th Street SE
Rochester, MN 55904

2. Website URL

<https://www.rochestermn.gov/>

3. Funding Requested

- Assessment Grant Type: Community-wide
- Federal Funds Requested: \$500,000

4. Location

- City: Rochester
- County: Olmsted
- State: Minnesota

5. Target Area and Priority Site/Property Information

- Target Area: Downtown Waterfront District
 - Census Tracts: 27109000100, 27109000200, and 27109000300
- Priority Sites:
 - Associated Milk Producers Inc. (AMPI) Property, 700 1st Avenue SE
 - Civic Center South Property, 401 4th Street SE
 - Rochester City Mill, 11 4th Street SE
 - Former Mr. Muffler Property, 322 3rd Avenue SE
 - Silver Lake Power Plant, 425 West Silver Lake Drive NE

6. Contacts

- Project Director
 - Name: Steve Brown
 - Phone: (507) 328-2022
 - Email: ssampsonbrown@rochestermn.gov
 - Mailing Address: City of Rochester, 4001 West River Parkway NW, Suite 100, Rochester, MN 55901
- Chief Executive/Highest Ranking Elected Official
 - Name: Mayor Kim Norton
 - Phone: (507) 328-2700
 - Email: knorton@rochestermn.gov
 - Mailing Address: City of Rochester, 201 4th Street SE, Room 281, Rochester, MN 55904

7. **Population**
123,624

8. **Other Factors**

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, 4, 5
The priority site(s) is in a federally designated flood plain.	1, 2
The reuse of the priority site(s) will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy.	2, 3
The reuse of the priority site(s) will incorporate energy efficiency measures.	2, 3, 7
The proposed project will improve local climate adaptation/mitigation capacity and resilience to protect residents and community investments.	2, 3
At least 30% of the overall project budget will be spent on eligible reuse/area-wide planning activities, as described in Section 3.A.(2), for priority site(s) within the target area(s).	6, 7, 8, 9, 10
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.	1, 2, 5

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

10. **Releasing Copies of Applications**

Not applicable, the application does not include confidential, privileged, or sensitive information

January 15, 2026

VIA EMAIL

Kim Norton
City of Rochester
201 4th St SE
Rochester, MN 55904

RE: City of Rochester EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant Application
Letter of Support from the MPCA Brownfield Program

Dear Kim Norton:

On behalf of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), we are writing to acknowledge and support the proposed assessment activities for the City of Rochester in fulfillment of the criteria of the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Fiscal Year 2026 Brownfield Assessment Grant guidelines.

The City of Rochester has informed the MPCA that they intend to perform petroleum and hazardous substances assessment activities through a Community-Wide Assessment Grant. Assessment activities would include assessment and remedial planning at brownfields, including key downtown sites and immediate surrounding properties.

The MPCA is supportive of the City of Rochester's application for an EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant. Should this grant be awarded, the MPCA will partner with the City of Rochester to help them improve the environment and build a better future for residents in the region.

If you have any questions, please contact Shanna Schmitt at 651-757-2697 or by email at shanna.schmitt@state.mn.us, or Stacey Hendry-Van Patten at 651-757-2425 or by email at stacey.vanpatten@state.mn.us.

Sincerely,

Shanna Schmitt

This document has been electronically signed.

Shanna Schmitt, PG, CPG
Brownfield Program Coordinator
Remediation Division

Stacey Hendry-Van Patten

This document has been electronically signed.

Stacey Hendry-VanPatten
Supervisor
Remediation Division

SS/SVP:ss

cc: Torre Ippolito, US EPA Region 5 (electronic)
Andrew Seth, Sustainable Strategies DC (electronic)

1. PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION AND PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION

Target Area and Brownfields

a. Overview of Brownfield Challenges and Description of Target Area – Rochester (population 123,624) is Minnesota’s third largest city and home to the renowned Mayo Clinic, the largest integrated, non-profit medical group practice in the world. In 2013, state and community leaders launched the Destination Medical Center (DMC) initiative to transform Rochester into an international hub for medical research, treatment, and innovation. A vital component of this initiative seeks to “identify brownfield sites for redevelopment to remove blight and take development pressure off undeveloped land.” The City seeks \$500,000 in EPA Brownfield Community-Wide Assessment funding to conduct 11 Phase I and six Phase II assessments in the city’s Downtown Waterfront district, as well as robust planning activities to advance DMC revitalization efforts.

Rochester’s Downtown Waterfront district will be the focus of the community’s brownfield efforts. Bisected by the Zumbro River and bounded by 7th Street NE to the north, 3rd Avenue SE to the east, 12th Street SE to the south, and 4th Avenue SW to the west, this area includes Census Tracts 1, 2, and 3. City leaders have prioritized this area for redevelopment due to its strategic location near the Mayo Clinic campus. However, the lack of site-specific environmental data remains a primary barrier to advancing revitalization in this district.

Key brownfield sites in the Downtown Waterfront district include a decommissioned coal utility, former manufacturing plants, garages, and other industrial properties. Reuse of these parcels is complicated by the real or perceived presence of hazardous substances and petroleum. Environmental pollution and the stigma associated with potentially contaminated sites in Rochester have discouraged private investment, contributed to blight, and constrained the productive use of centrally located land with access to existing infrastructure. The presence of vacant and underused industrial properties adjacent to residential neighborhoods also raises concerns related to human health. Without site assessments to characterize contamination and inform cleanup planning, redevelopment pressure is displaced to undeveloped land on the City’s outskirts, increasing infrastructure costs and environmental impacts.

EPA Brownfields funding will enable the City to assess pollution at critical properties in the Downtown Waterfront district, laying the groundwork for future remediation activities that will improve health outcomes, stimulate economic development, and enhance marginalized neighborhoods. Cleanup efforts will complement Rochester’s goal to be “America’s City for Health.” As the world’s premier destination for wellness, Rochester will leverage federal brownfield tools to link the community’s growth with healthy living.

b. Description of the Priority Brownfield Sites – Rochester’s historic development concentrated industrial, utility, and transportation-related land uses along the Zumbro River. As these uses declined, numerous properties within the Downtown Waterfront district were left vacant or underutilized, with redevelopment complicated by the real or perceived presence of hazardous substances and/or petroleum. The City has identified more than a dozen potential brownfield sites within the target area and has prioritized a subset of sites for assessment based on redevelopment readiness, proximity to residential areas and sensitive environmental resources, alignment with local revitalization plans, and the likelihood that environmental uncertainty is a primary barrier to reuse. Priority brownfields include:

- Associated Milk Producers Inc. (AMPI) Site at 700 1st Avenue SE – Since 1969, this 12.6-acre riverfront site between South Broadway and 3rd Avenue SE operated as a dairy processing facility. The parcel was previously a grain elevator (built in 1896). Potential contaminants include coal ash, heavy metals, cleaning chemical residues, asbestos, lead, and petroleum/diesel/oil. Located near a planned transit mobility hub, this site will be transformed into a historic warehouse district with housing options, local businesses, inviting public spaces, and riverfront activation. Assessment and cleanup of the AMPI site is the City’s top redevelopment priority.
- Civic Center South Property at 401 4th Street SE – This 3.8-acre waterfront site (located in a 500-year floodplain, with a small corner in the 100-year floodplain) currently serves as a surface parking lot. An unused water reservoir and a former auto repair shop are located on the property. The site was previously home to the Rochester Water Works Pumping Station. Expected contaminants include petroleum, coal ash, lead, and asbestos. It is planned for mixed-use development, including retail, office, and multi-family residential.
- Rochester City Mill at 11 4th Street SE – This 2.2-acre prime waterfront site is currently home to a small office/retail building, a garage structure, and surface parking. The property is located along the Riverwalk and adjacent to the 470,000-square-foot Mayo Civic Center. It was formerly the location of the Rochester City Mill. Expected contaminants include coal ash, asbestos, and petroleum. Situated in a currently designated Opportunity Zone along the floodway, it’s one of Rochester’s best remaining land assets.
- Former Mr. Muffler Property at 322 3rd Avenue SE – An auto repair shop previously operated on the 0.5-acre site. Potential pollution includes metals and metal dust, various organic compounds, solvents, and waste oils. It is planned

for mixed-use development, including residential and commercial space. The site was the subject of a Mayor's Institute on City Design study.

- Silver Lake Power Plant at 425 West Silver Lake Drive NE – This coal-operated power plant went online in 1949. The Rochester Public Utilities Board recently decommissioned the utility. The 11.7-acre site along Silver Lake is expected to be contaminated with coal ash (arsenic, boron, cadmium, chromium, lead, radium, selenium, and more) and petroleum. Within a currently designated Opportunity Zone, the property may be redeveloped as a public park.

These priority sites were selected because environmental uncertainty remains a primary barrier to reuse, and because redevelopment of these properties would provide significant community benefits. Many of the properties are located near residential neighborhoods that experience documented health disparities (asthma, cancer, heart disease), underscoring the need to identify and reduce potential exposure risks. Contaminants in the floodplain may also migrate due to a high water table and river overflows. The cleanup of these brownfields will complement plans to increase transit-oriented development, encourage sustainable growth, and promote affordable housing.

c. Identifying Additional Sites – Rochester will develop a transparent process to identify additional sites with a Steering Committee comprised of residents, business owners, and other stakeholders, aligning assessment activities with public health protection and Downtown Waterfront district revitalization goals. The Steering Committee will guide site identification/prioritization and ensure that community perspectives meaningfully inform decision-making. Public meetings and outreach activities will be conducted to educate residents about brownfields and to solicit nominations of properties suspected of contamination. Candidate sites will undergo an initial screening and be evaluated using clear criteria, including: redevelopment potential; protection of public health; proximity to sensitive populations; demonstrated community support; capacity to spur neighborhood revitalization; job creation potential; feasibility of negotiating site access with property owners; readiness for assessment; and the likelihood of leveraging additional State, federal, or private resources for cleanup and reuse. All identified sites will be documented in a brownfield inventory.

Revitalization of the Target Area

d. Reuse Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans – Rochester's reuse strategy for the Downtown Waterfront district focuses on the redevelopment of vacant and underutilized brownfield properties into a compact, mixed-use urban district that supports housing, employment, recreation, and riverfront access. Reclaiming brownfields will transform the downtown from a perceived medical campus into a vibrant city core. This investment will advance a significant part of Rochester's development strategy, which includes reusing brownfields for a mix of uses, including residential, retail, commercial, parks, and hospitality, with an emphasis on transit-oriented development, riverfront activation, and the efficient use of existing infrastructure. Environmental site assessments are a critical first step in advancing this reuse strategy by reducing uncertainty related to contamination, supporting cleanup planning, and increasing the feasibility of redevelopment consistent with adopted plans.

The closure of the AMPI brownfield site prompted the creation of a [*Downtown Waterfront Southeast Small Area Plan*](#) in 2021. Over 60 acres of brownfields along the Zumbro River have been envisioned as “a mixed-use urban district that embraces economic, social, and environmental health.” In 2022, the Rochester City Council also unanimously adopted a [*Riverfront Small Area Plan*](#) to transform the area, including the former Mr. Muffler site, Rochester City Mill, and Civic Center South property, with mixed-use development. These plans call for enhanced riverfront access, public spaces, and development that is resilient to flooding and climate impacts.

EPA Brownfields resources complement the [*Planning 2 Succeed: Rochester Comprehensive Plan 2040*](#), which encourages the reuse of vacant and underutilized land along the waterfront. The plan includes strategies to “promote the redevelopment of brownfields and grayfields into compact, mixed-use, and walkable environments.” The project, which will encourage energy efficiency strategies in brownfields reuse, also aligns with Rochester's 2017 [*Energy Action Plan*](#) and its efforts to mitigate climate change by transitioning to 100% renewable energy by 2030.

Additionally, brownfield redevelopment boosts DMC efforts. In 2013, Rochester, Olmsted County, the Rochester-Olmsted County Council of Governments, and the Mayo Clinic developed the [*DMC Development Plan*](#) to create a long-term vision for downtown growth. The DMC initiative is one of the largest economic development strategies ever undertaken in Minnesota. Its purpose is to secure Rochester's and Minnesota's status as a global medical destination, and local, state, and federal investment is intended to incentivize private sector development. The DMC initiative aims to leverage river/waterfront assets to create a 365-day destination for residents and visitors alike, and specifically calls for the reuse of brownfields in the downtown. By redeveloping this underutilized space, Rochester will enhance the Mayo Civic Center's viability as a regional convention destination and promote mixed-use development.

EPA Brownfields funding will support these revitalization plans by providing the site-specific environmental data needed to move priority brownfield sites from planning to reuse.

e. Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategy – Implementation of the proposed reuse strategy for priority brownfield sites in Rochester’s Downtown Waterfront district will generate substantial economic, environmental, and community benefits following assessment and cleanup planning. By reducing environmental uncertainty at strategically located brownfield properties, the project will enable redevelopment that supports housing, employment, public amenities, and riverfront access in an area that has experienced long-term disinvestment.

Redevelopment of assessed brownfield sites will stimulate economic development by returning vacant and underutilized properties to productive use. The DMC initiative, including the reuse of brownfields in Rochester’s downtown, is estimated to grow the employment base in the city by up to 45,000 jobs and more than double visitation from Mayo Clinic patients/companions, business travelers, and convention goers. Data shows that Mayo Clinic visitors spend 70% of their time outside the hospital, necessitating the cleanup of dormant land to meet consumer needs.

In addition to economic benefits, reuse of priority brownfield sites will facilitate the creation and enhancement of community-serving amenities. Several identified sites adjacent to the Zumbro River are planned for parks, riverfront trails, public gathering spaces, and mixed-use development that improves access to the waterfront for nearby neighborhoods. These improvements will provide new recreational opportunities, enhance quality of life, and reconnect historically underserved communities to natural and civic assets in the downtown area.

EPA Brownfields funding will support DMC revitalization efforts that are expected to generate over \$270 million in additional City tax revenues, \$218 million in Olmsted County taxes, and up to \$2.2 billion in State tax collections over 20 years. Other key DMC outcomes include the creation of up to 6.8 million square feet of hospital/clinic/research space, over 1 million square feet for bio-med-tech businesses, up to 3,100 residential units, 310,000 square feet of office space, approximately 320,000 square feet of retail/dining/entertainment space, and 7 additional hotels. At the 12.6-acre AMPI site alone, reuse will include 750 units of market rate housing and 750 affordable housing units.

Energy efficiency and greenhouse gas reduction are additional outcomes of the reuse strategy. Redevelopment of assessed brownfield sites will incorporate energy-efficient building practices and leverage Rochester’s district energy system, which provides efficient heating and cooling through shared infrastructure. Expansion of district energy connections within the Downtown Waterfront district is expected to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions while supporting dense, mixed-use redevelopment consistent with the City’s climate and energy goals.

Strategy for Leveraging Resources

f. Resources Needed for Site Reuse – Rochester has extensive experience leveraging federal dollars with public and private resources. The City has already secured a major State commitment to support downtown revitalization; Minnesota pledged \$585 million over 20 years for DMC development. Mayo Clinic has also committed \$3.5 billion to downtown investment. State and federal brownfield cleanup resources will help to support the remediation and reuse of assessed sites. Key funding that has been committed, secured, and anticipated includes:

Source	Purpose	Status	Amount
Minnesota investment	DMC infrastructure improvements	Committed	\$585 million
Mayo Clinic	Downtown medical facilities construction	Committed	\$3.5 billion
MN Main Street Economic Revitalization Program grant	Subgrants to support downtown development	Secured	\$3.1 million
Minnesota cleanup grants	Remediation of EPA-assessed sites	Anticipated	\$1-2 million
DOT RAISE grant	Complete Street/bridge in warehouse district	Secured	\$20 million
FTA Small Starts funding	Bus rapid transit along DMC corridors	Secured	\$84.9 million

g. Use of Existing Infrastructure – Reuse of priority brownfield sites in Rochester will leverage existing municipal infrastructure. Priority sites are located in established neighborhoods that are already served by paved roadways, public water and sewer systems, electric and natural gas utilities, high speed internet, and public transit, minimizing the need for major new infrastructure investments. Identified properties will link to 110 miles of bike and pedestrian trails. This project will also leverage new infrastructure development in the community. In 2024, the City received \$84.9 million from the FTA Small Starts program to develop a Bus Rapid Transit line that will connect downtown waterfront sites to a planned transit-oriented development corridor, relieving vehicular congestion. Rochester also won a DOT RAISE grant to build the 6th Street bridge, which will improve connectivity in and around the target area.

Access to existing infrastructure will reduce construction costs, limit disruption to surrounding neighborhoods, and support compact development patterns. Any minor upgrades needed to support brownfield reuse – such as improved site access, lighting, or drainage enhancements – will be coordinated with the City’s capital improvement planning. By maximizing the use of existing infrastructure, Rochester’s brownfields reuse strategy supports smart growth, reduces environmental impacts, and accelerates redevelopment outcomes consistent with adopted local plans.

2. COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community Need

a. The Community’s Need for Funding – The Downtown Waterfront district faces long-standing economic and environmental challenges. Census Tracts 1, 2, and 3 within the target area include concentrations of low-income households and historically underserved populations that have experienced decades of industrial use, disinvestment, and exposure to environmental risk. These conditions constrain local market demand and reduce the feasibility of using private capital or local public funds to advance environmental assessment and cleanup at brownfield sites.

At the municipal level, Rochester’s ability to fund brownfield activities is significantly limited by structural fiscal constraints. A substantial portion of the community’s land is owned by tax-exempt nonprofit institutions, including Mayo Clinic, thereby reducing the City’s taxable property base. The low assessed values of land in Census Tracts 1, 2 and 3, due to brownfield contamination, limit Rochester’s tax revenues. Additionally, Rochester serves as a regional employment and health care center, resulting in a large daily influx of workers and visitors who rely on City services but do not pay local taxes. These factors place ongoing pressure on municipal resources and have contributed to a growing backlog of deferred maintenance for streets, parks, and other essential public infrastructure.

The private sector also lacks the capacity to address brownfield conditions in Rochester without public assistance. Many priority sites are affected by unknown or poorly documented environmental conditions resulting from historic industrial and utility uses. The uncertainty surrounding the presence and extent of contamination makes it difficult to estimate remediation costs, secure financing, or attract private investment. In low-income areas, these risks are amplified by weaker market conditions and lower tolerance for delayed returns. Developers are therefore unwilling to fund environmental assessments upfront, and projects remain stalled despite strong community support.

Without federal assistance, the City lacks the financial capacity to assess contaminated properties and reduce the uncertainty that continues to deter reinvestment in the Downtown Waterfront district. EPA Brownfields funding is critical to overcoming these barriers by providing the resources needed to identify contamination, support cleanup planning, and position priority sites for reuse.

b. Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations – Many sensitive populations are located in the target area. Census Tract 1 is significantly older (nearly two times the national level) and Census Tract 3 has a large population of children under 15 years old. Women aged 15-50 years old in Census Tract 3 also give birth at a significant rate. See summary table below (levels at or higher than state and national levels shown in red):

Vulnerable Populations	Census Tract 1	Census Tract 2	Census Tract 3	Minnesota	United States
Seniors 65 and Over	31.1%	14.9%	15.1%	16.8%	16.8%
Children Under 15	2.2%	16.7%	18.2%	19.0	18.2%
Pregnant Women (per 1,000)	0	19	31	56	52

Considering prior uses, the City expects targeted brownfields to be contaminated with arsenic, boron, cadmium, chromium, lead, radium, selenium, slag, asbestos, cleaning chemical residues, and petroleum. EPA has designated some of these substances as carcinogenic, mutagenic, and teratogenic. These contaminants pose serious concerns to sensitive populations. Polluted sites exacerbate the risk of cancer and non-cancer mortality for nearby households, including the area’s pregnant women and infants. Contaminants of concern include:

- Lead (likely at several sites) – Children’s brains and nervous systems are more sensitive to lead’s effects. Pregnant women are also vulnerable to lead exposure, which can result in miscarriage and premature birth.
- Arsenic (likely at Silver Lake Power Plant site) – Evidence suggests that inhaled or ingested inorganic arsenic can injure pregnant women and their unborn babies.
- Petroleum (likely at most sites) – Toluene has been shown to cause spontaneous abortion among pregnant women. Xylene inhaled by women can reach developing fetuses and contaminate breast milk.

Brownfields also yield negative psychological impacts, especially for sensitive populations, as these sites impact surrounding neighborhoods, resulting in blight and disinvestment, reduced property values and corresponding tax revenue, and higher crime.

Redevelopment in the Downtown Waterfront district will benefit low-income residents in Rochester. Census Tracts 1, 2, and 3 have low household median incomes (\$40,545, \$56,795, and \$68,984, respectively, compared to \$78,538 across the United States) and high poverty (26.6%, 21.8%, and 7.6%, respectively, compared to 12.4% nationally). EPA funding will initiate the cleanup of these contaminants and reduce threats to the health and welfare of sensitive populations. Brownfields assessments of critical sites represent a first step in removing pollution and eliminating exposure pathways for Rochester’s most vulnerable residents.

c. Greater than Normal Incidence of Disease and Adverse Health Conditions – Residents in the project area face greater incidences of diseases and conditions associated with exposure to hazardous substances, pollutants, and contaminants. According to a *2025 Community Health Needs Assessment*, the leading cause of death in Olmsted County is heart disease (23%), followed by cancer (21%). According to the Minnesota Department of Health, the age-adjusted cancer rate was 516 per 100,000 people in Olmsted County between 2017 and 2021, compared to 480 per 100,000 people statewide and 444.4 per 100,000 people nationwide. Major local cancer types include breast, melanoma, non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma, and thyroid. Over half of Olmsted County adults have one chronic condition, and one in four live with multiple chronic conditions, including asthma, arrhythmia, coronary artery disease, diabetes, and hypertension. Federal health data further reinforces these findings. A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) PLACES analysis of Census Tracts 1, 2, and 3 shows that they experience significant health disparities for adults 18 and over. See summary table (levels at or higher than national levels shown in red):

Health Indicator	Census Tract 1	Census Tract 2	Census Tract 3	National
Asthma	9.7%	10.5%	10.3%	9.8%
Cancer (excluding skin cancer)	11.7%	5.8%	6.6%	7.9%
Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease	7.4%	5.8%	4.4%	6.2%
Cognitive disability	12.7%	16.6%	13.2%	13.7%
Diabetes	13.6%	10.7%	8.5%	12.0%
Heart disease	9.3%	5.5%	4.5%	6.4%
High blood pressure	38.8%	30.1%	27.3%	34.4%

In addition, CDC estimates the prevalence of fair or poor health among adults aged 18 years and older as 19.5% in Census Tract 1, 19.7% in Census Tract 2, and 14.6% in Census Tract 3, compared to substantially lower statewide and national benchmarks. Census Tracts 1 and 2 are also ranked as “high” on the CDC/Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry’s Social Vulnerability Index, with 0.9077 and 0.8312 scores (out of 1 statewide), respectively, indicating heightened environmental and public health stressors.

Exposure to hazardous materials and petroleum may contribute to these observed health disparities for nearby residents, including sensitive populations such as children, pregnant women, older adults, and individuals with chronic illnesses. Brownfields assessment and cleanup will help mitigate these risks by identifying harmful contaminants and remediating sites for mixed-use development and community assets. With EPA investment, the Olmsted County Health Department and Mayo Clinic will also develop a health monitoring program to assess high incidence rates (especially with sensitive populations) and correlate the data to existing brownfields.

d. Economically Impoverished/Disproportionately Impacted Populations – Residents of Rochester’s brownfield target area are economically challenged and disproportionately impacted by environmental and health burdens when compared to Minnesota and national benchmarks. These Census Tracts experience higher poverty rates and lower median household incomes, limiting residents’ ability to avoid or mitigate exposure to environmental hazards concentrated in their neighborhoods. See summary below (variations from state and/or national levels shown in red):

	Census Tract 1	Census Tract 2	Census Tract 3	Minnesota	United States
Poverty Rate	26.6%	21.8%	7.6%	9.2%	12.4%
Median Household Income	\$40,545	\$56,795	\$68,984	\$87,556	\$78,538

The proposed project will benefit economically impoverished and disproportionately impacted residents. Brownfields cleanup of the AMPI site that supports the *Downtown Waterfront Southeast Small Area Plan (2020)* will create affordable housing options, reintroduce retail into surrounding neighborhoods, and develop inclusive public spaces where none existed. Mixed-use redevelopment of the former Mr. Muffler site, Rochester City Mill, and Civic Center South sites also supports neighborhood concerns, including:

- Reducing environmental contamination that threatens the health and welfare of area residents.
- Supporting business and neighborhood-serving economic activity.
- Ensuring universal access to downtown jobs, transportation modes, and other key destinations.

Finally, a new park on the site of the former coal-fired power plant will provide recreational opportunities for Southeast Rochester residents with limited green space options. Rochester will also ensure that downtown revitalization efforts provide affordable housing options and create jobs for low-income residents.

Community Engagement

e. Project Involvement & f. Project Roles – Rochester has partnered with various organizations working with sensitive populations in the target areas. The primary avenue for their meaningful involvement is participation on the Steering

Committee, which will guide site selection and community engagement. Key partners include:

Name of organization/ entity/group	Entity's mission	Point of contact (name & email)	Specific project involvement or assistance provided
RNeighbors	Empower residents to create sustainable neighborhoods	René Halasy, rene@rneighbors.org	Steering Committee. Support site prioritization & community engagement. Site reuse input.
DMC Economic Development Agency	Facilitate projects that support DMC initiative	Jamie Rothe, jamierothe@dmceda.org	Steering Committee. Support site prioritization & community engagement. Reach out to developers to promote reuse.
Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce	Promote business success in Rochester	Ryan Parsons, rparsons@rochestermnchamber.com	Steering Committee. Support site prioritization, community engagement, outreach to businesses.
Rochester Downtown Alliance	Build a vibrant downtown community in Rochester	Shawn Fagan, sfagan@downtownrochestermn.com	Steering Committee. Support site prioritization & community engagement. Integrate reuse plans with revitalization goals.
Mayo Clinic	Promote health through integrated clinical practice	Rose Anderson, anderson.rose@mayo.edu	Steering Committee. Work with City to share brownfield risks & collect health data.
Olmsted County Public Health Services	Provide health services and programs	Denise Daniels, daniels.denise@co.olmsted.mn.us	Information sharing with residents on the safety of remediated brownfields.

g. Incorporating Community Input – Rochester will build on the *DMC Development Plan* outreach efforts to continue effective community engagement. That process will ensure that residents meaningfully inform brownfields assessment activities and reuse planning throughout the project period. Representatives from RNeighbors, DMC Economic Development Agency, Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce, Rochester Downtown Alliance, and Mayo Clinic have already formed a project Steering Committee. Staff will meet regularly with these groups (initially and at least quarterly thereafter). Partners will also help engage residents and businesses.

A dedicated Community Engagement Team, led by the City and supported by partners, will develop public involvement strategies. Local outreach activities will target residents of the Downtown and Slattery Park neighborhoods, particularly sensitive populations. The Community Engagement Team will host engagement opportunities over the grant period, including in-person meetings and virtual sessions, to share project information, solicit feedback, and communicate next steps. Meetings will occur after work hours, be centrally located, and provide childcare to reduce participation barriers. All written materials will be available in English, Spanish, and Somalian.

Community input will be collected through multiple methods, including facilitated discussions at meetings, comment cards, surveys, and online feedback tools. Olmsted County Public Health Services will participate in engagement activities to provide clear, accessible information about brownfield risks, assessment findings, and potential health implications, helping residents make informed contributions.

To engage low-income residents in reuse planning, Rochester will utilize a “community co-design” process. Residents with deep knowledge of their neighborhoods will be recruited. Co-designers will include neighborhood association representatives, local business owners, and a designee of the Rochester Downtown Alliance. These participants will be paid for their time (\$25 per hour), with reimbursement for childcare and other expenses. This group will ensure that site reuse meaningfully addresses resident needs.

Outreach and information dissemination will use a combination of traditional and digital media, including television and radio stations, social media, and the City’s web site. Direct communication with project area households will further ensure broad awareness of brownfields activities and engagement opportunities. This approach builds on Rochester’s successful use of similar engagement strategies in prior community development initiatives.

Importantly, community input will directly inform project decisions, including the identification and prioritization of additional sites, the sequencing of assessment activities, and the development of reuse concepts for assessed properties. All feedback will be documented, summarized, and incorporated into project planning. To ensure transparency and accountability, the City will share meeting summaries and responses to community input through its web site, community newsletters, and follow-up communications, closing the feedback loop with participants.

3. TASK DESCRIPTIONS, COST ESTIMATES & MEASURING PROGRESS

Description of Tasks/Activities & Outputs

a. Project Implementation	b. Anticipated Project Schedule	c. Task/Activity Lead	d. Outputs
Task #1 – Cooperative Agreement Oversight			
A project manager will ensure compliance with grant requirements. Tasks include oversight, contracting, and performance reporting. Environmental/planning contractors will be procured to conduct assessments and develop cleanup/reuse plans. These services will be solicited through a Request for Proposals (RFP)/Request for Qualifications (RFQ). The City will initiate a competitive qualifications-based selection process in compliance with local and federal regulations. Two people will attend EPA's National Brownfields Training Conference to learn best practices. Key residential and business leaders will be asked to participate on a Steering Committee. Additionally, a Community Engagement Team will be established to encourage resident participation.	Ongoing project management with quarterly reporting and regular Assessment, Cleanup and Redevelopment Exchange System (ACRES) updates. Environmental/planning contractors procured during first quarter of Year 1.	Steve Brown, Director of Construction	Formalized Steering Committee and Community Engagement Team, RFP/RFQs for assessments and cleanup/reuse planning and contracts with qualified professionals, quarterly reports, ACRES updates, and closeout report
Task #2 – Community Engagement			
City staff will lead the Community Engagement team. Residents will be involved in confirming priority brownfields, determining secondary sites, and recommending reuse options. Rochester will connect with the community through quarterly meetings, newsletters, web sites, social media, and other outreach tools. The City will use ATSDR's Brownfields/Land Revitalization Action Model to foster dialogue.	Quarterly community meetings and ongoing communications.	Jenna Bowman, Communications & Engagement Director, with help from contractors	Community engagement plan, quarterly meetings in neighborhoods, and newsletters/fact sheets
Task #3 – Site Selection & Access Agreements			
City staff and environmental consultants will work with the Steering Committee to confirm primary brownfields selected for assessments and recommend additional sites in the targeted project area. The project team will negotiate with landowners to secure site access. This permission will enable Rochester to collect sediment, surface water, and groundwater samples; install groundwater monitoring wells; and use equipment, including vehicles and drill rigs.	Primary and secondary sites will be selected in the second quarter of Year 1. Site access negotiations will begin mid-Year 1 and continue into Year 4.	Steve Brown, Director of Construction	Inventory of identified brownfields and primary/secondary site recommendations, and site access agreements
Task #4 – Phase I & Phase II Activities			
Rochester will conduct ~11 Phase I assessments and ~six Phase II assessments in the targeted area. These activities will be conducted by qualified environmental professionals and preceded with approved Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPP). Procured environmental contractors will ensure that all Phase I and Phase II activities meet American Society for Testing Materials standards and comply with the All Appropriate Inquiries Final Rule.	Assessment activities will occur over a 42-month period, from the third quarter of Year 1 through Year 4.	Environmental consultants, with support from Steve Brown, Director of Construction	11 Phase I and 6 Phase II assessments, 1 generic QAPP, and 6 site-specific QAPP addenda
Task #5 – Cleanup & Reuse Planning			
Cleanup/reuse plans will be developed by qualified experts, with significant community input. Proposed activities include: a charrette; development of an Analysis of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA) for sites to be remediated; a land use plan that considers cleanup strategies for priority brownfield sites, green infrastructure, energy efficiency, and Complete Streets; and an implementation strategy with business recruitment approaches, identification of public and private revitalization	Cleanup/reuse planning will occur in Year 3 and 4, unless needed earlier.	Environmental consultants will develop cleanup plans for priority sites. A planning team will also be contracted.	1 charrette, ABCAs for proposed cleanup sites, land reuse plan, and detailed implementation strategy

resources, and a land use plan game plan.

Task #6 – Health Monitoring

Rochester will work with Olmsted County Health Department and Mayo Clinic to develop a health monitoring program to assess high incidence rates and correlate data to existing brownfields. Health officials will identify and address potentially harmful exposures to residents. Screenings of vulnerable populations will be conducted to determine whether these exposure pathways might have resulted in health impacts.	Public workshops during Year 1, ongoing communication with residents, and health screenings conducted concurrently with Phase II assessments.	Olmsted County Health Department and Mayo Clinic	Presentations at quarterly meetings, online/printed materials describing health issues related to brownfields, and health screening reports
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A timeline of project activities is included below:

Activity	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3				Year 4			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Cooperative Agreement Oversight	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Community Engagement	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Site Selection & Access Agreements		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Phase I & Phase II Activities			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Cleanup & Reuse Planning									X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Health Monitoring	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

e. Cost Estimates

		Project Tasks						
Direct Costs		Cooperative Agreement Oversight	Community Engagement	Site Selection & Access Agreements	Phase I & Phase II Activities	Cleanup & Reuse Planning	Health Monitoring	Total
	Personnel	\$12,500	\$2,000	\$2,500	\$4,000	\$0	\$0	\$21,000
	Fringe Benefits	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Travel	\$3,500	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$3,500
	Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Supplies	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Contractual	\$0	\$23,000	\$10,500	\$285,500	\$150,000	\$4,500	\$473,500
	Construction	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Other	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,000	\$2,000
Total Direct Costs	\$16,000	\$25,000	\$13,000	\$289,500	\$150,000	\$6,500	\$500,000	
Indirect Costs	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Total Budget	\$16,000	\$25,000	13,000	\$289,500	\$150,000	\$6,500	\$500,000	

The cost estimates presented in the budget above include the following assumptions:

- Cooperative Agreement Oversight – The budget includes \$12,000 (\$50/hour for 240 hours) in staff time to provide cooperative agreement oversight and travel expenses for two people to attend EPA’s National Brownfields Training Conference (\$1,750 per person – \$250 for registration, \$500 for airfare, \$750 for three hotel nights, and \$250 for three days per diem; \$3,500 total). The budget also allocates \$500 for staff time to conduct an RFP/RFQ process for environmental and planning contractors to perform assessments and develop cleanup and reuse plans.
- Community Engagement – City staff (\$40/hour for 50 hours) and contractors (\$21,000) will manage engagement. Ten community co-designers will also be convened (\$25/hour for 80 hours) for reuse planning.
- Site Selection and Access Agreements – The budget includes \$1,000 (\$50/hour for 20 hours) in staff time and \$4,000 for contractors to manage the brownfield site selection process. Staff time (\$50/hour for 30 hours) and consultant expenses (\$6,500) are also included in the budget to negotiate site access with willing private property owners.
- Phase I/Phase II Activities – The project will support ~11 Phase I assessments (\$5,500 each) and six Phase II assessments (\$37,500 each). City staff (\$40/hour for 100 hours) will oversee the assessment process.
- Cleanup/Reuse Planning – Environmental consultants will develop cleanup plans for priority sites. A planning team will also be contracted to help determine site reuse. The budget includes \$150,000 for cleanup/reuse planning.
- Health Monitoring – Olmsted County Health Department and Mayo Clinic are allocated \$4,500 to conduct health monitoring activities in the project area. The budget also includes \$2,000 to design and print health materials.

f. Plan to Measure and Evaluate Environmental Progress and Results – Rochester will measure and evaluate

environmental progress and results using a structured, outcome-oriented performance framework tied directly to the EPA-approved work plan. Results will be tracked through clearly defined outputs, outcomes, and milestones, ensuring accountability and transparency throughout the grant period.

Key project outputs will include 11 Phase I environmental assessments, six Phase II environmental assessments, and related planning documents completed for priority brownfields. Additional outputs may include acres assessed, properties screened for contamination, and sites evaluated for cleanup and reuse potential. These outputs will be compared against the approved work plan schedule to ensure timely completion.

Outcomes will be evaluated based on the degree to which assessment activities reduce environmental uncertainty and support informed decision-making. Outcomes will include identification and characterization of contaminants, clarification of potential exposure pathways, determination of sites suitable for cleanup or reuse, and preparation of sites for future remediation and redevelopment. Progress toward reuse readiness will be tracked as sites move from unknown environmental conditions to defined cleanup pathways. The project is expected to prepare 30+ acres of brownfields for remediation and reuse, create 390 short-term assessment/cleanup/construction jobs and 704 long-term jobs, and leverage \$805 million in private investment.

The City's project manager will conduct regular internal reviews to evaluate progress against established milestones and performance measures. Internal project management software will be used to monitor schedules, deliverables, and corrective actions, while ensuring that grant funds are expended efficiently and in accordance with EPA requirements. All required data will be entered into ACRES on a regular basis.

4. PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY & PAST PERFORMANCE

Programmatic Capability

a. Organizational Capacity – The City has the staff expertise necessary to manage the project. The City has successfully implemented projects funded by DOT, EDA, HUD, and NEA, among other resources. This track record indicates not only compliance with all programmatic standards but also efficiency in administrative and financial management. Rochester has consistently met all associated requirements and expectations, ensuring these funds are utilized effectively to support community development and enhance the well-being of its residents. Through this extensive experience, the City has built a solid foundation of knowledge and best practices that will contribute to the successful management of this project.

Project management duties will be assigned to Steve Brown, Director of Construction. He will serve as a liaison between EPA Region 5 and Rochester and will be responsible for assuring compliance with the administrative and reporting requirements of the cooperative agreement. Rochester's Finance Department will be responsible for compliance with the grant's financial requirements. This team has extensive experience managing federal funding.

A Steering Committee composed of representatives from RNeighbors, DMC Economic Development Agency, Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce, Rochester Downtown Alliance, and Mayo Clinic will meet regularly to select brownfield sites, support community engagement, and participate in reuse planning.

A Community Engagement Team will implement strategies to involve disadvantaged residents in Census Tracts 1, 2, and 3. This team will be composed of members of various municipal departments, as well as members of community associations, the business community, the education sector, the nonprofit field, and other stakeholders.

ii. Organizational Structure – Rochester has a long track record of successfully managing community projects. The key to this effort is the development of a detailed work plan with clear milestones and responsibilities. This will be developed at an initial meeting, including participation from the City Administrator and other key staff. Key goals will be identified and responsibilities within the work plan will be well-defined. Performance measures will help to track progress. To ensure that the project is on schedule, status updates will be incorporated into the City's existing reporting structure. In addition, staff will meet regularly with key partners.

The City will follow all EPA Brownfields funding requirements. The community is experienced managing grant-supported work. Rochester has established clear guidelines for timely and accurate reporting of financial and programmatic information to funding agencies. Local systems are in place to track reporting deadlines and ensure submissions are made in accordance with the terms and conditions of the grant award. The City's Finance Department also has effective internal controls over the use and distribution of federal grant funds. The Finance team will maintain accurate, current, and complete records identifying the source and application of EPA-funded activities.

c. Description of Key Staff – The City has the staff expertise to manage the project. Steve Brown, Rochester's Director of Construction, will administer the project. Steve has extensive government experience and has managed state and federal funding, including EPA Brownfields grants for the City of Dubuque, Iowa. He will liaise with EPA Region 5

and assure compliance with all cooperative agreement terms and conditions. Steve will be supported by qualified interdepartmental staff, including Strategic Initiatives Director Josh Johnsen and Senior Administrative Analyst Brent Svenby. Josh has 10+ years of property development experience, including the oversight of the Discovery Walk and Riverfront public infrastructure improvements. Brent has over 20 years of urban planning experience, including working directly on redevelopment, economic, and affordable housing projects.

The City will use a team approach to ensure that the project is not dependent on a few key personnel. A Community Engagement Team, led by Rochester's Communications & Engagement Director Jenna Bowman, will implement strategies to enhance resident involvement. The City's Finance Department will be responsible for compliance with the grant's financial requirements. This team has extensive experience managing federal funding.

d. Acquiring Additional Resources – Rochester will hire qualified experts to support engagement activities, conduct assessments, and develop cleanup/reuse plans. The City has established procedures that staff will follow in selecting consultants. These services will be procured in compliance with EPA regulations and 2 CFR Part 200. Specifically, the City will: not seek contractor assistance for RFP/RFQ preparation; avoid language that limits competition or benefits a specific contractor; consider price in proposal evaluations; use weighted selection factors; publicly advertise the RFP/RFQ on the Rochester web site and other online forums; and document the selection rationale if the chosen contractor is not the lowest bidder.

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency will provide technical assistance. City staff will work with prospective purchasers to enroll sites in the State's Voluntary Investigation and Cleanup Program. Rochester, Olmsted County Public Health Services, and Mayo Clinic will communicate the health risks associated with brownfields. Health professionals will provide technical assistance, identify sensitive populations, and ensure that cleanup reduces exposure pathways. Rochester will also coordinate with EPA technical assistance provider Kansas State University.

The City will promote the project to local contractors. EPA investment will support efforts to create jobs paying prevailing wages and promote upward economic mobility. Workforce development partners will help unemployed and underemployed residents gain access to brownfields job training and connect with assessment activities.

Past Performance & Accomplishments

f. Hasn't Received EPA Brownfields Grant but Has Received Other Federal/Non-Federal Assistance Agreements

1. Purpose and Accomplishments – Rochester has never received EPA Brownfields funding. However, the City has secured federal and state resources to support local revitalization, including:

- In 2017, the City received a \$939,443 MN DEED Contamination Cleanup Grant to clean up a site upon which a 156-unit multi-family residential housing project has been constructed.
- In 2020, the City received an \$853,338 MN DEED Contamination Cleanup Grant to clean up a site upon which a 180-unit affordable multi-family residential housing project has been developed.
- In 2024, the City received an \$366,288 MN DEED Contamination Cleanup Grant to clean up a site upon which a 243-unit multi-family residential and a 76-unit affordable multi-family residential project is proposed to be developed.

2. Compliance with Grant Requirements – Rochester has a strong and well-documented record of compliance with the work plans, schedules, and terms and conditions of grant agreements, including funding administered by Minnesota state agencies, DOT, EDA, HUD, and NEA. For each grant, the City developed agency-approved work plans that clearly defined tasks, milestones, and deliverables, and these work plans were implemented as approved. Projects were managed to ensure activities were completed in accordance with established schedules. Milestones were met on time, and when minor adjustments were required, they were promptly coordinated with the relevant agency and formally documented. Rochester has a consistent history of submitting timely quarterly and final performance reports, financial reports, and required grant deliverables in accordance with grant terms and conditions.

The City has demonstrated responsible financial management. Grant funds were expended only on eligible activities, tracked through established financial controls, and monitored to ensure expenditures aligned with approved budgets. Projects were completed on budget, and all administrative, programmatic, and cross-cutting federal requirements were met. Where required, progress toward achieving expected results was documented and reported in a timely manner.

Rochester's grant-funded projects have achieved their intended outcomes, as demonstrated by examples identified above. This consistent performance reflects the City's internal systems for grant oversight, compliance monitoring, and coordination among programmatic, financial, and reporting staff. As a result, Rochester is well-positioned to manage and comply with the work plan, schedule, reporting, and administrative requirements of an EPA Brownfields grant.

Threshold Criteria Responses City of Rochester, Minnesota

1) APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

- a. The City of Rochester is a unit of local government, and a political subdivision under the laws of the State of Minnesota. The City is eligible to receive EPA Brownfields funding.
- b. The City of Rochester is exempt from Federal taxation. However, Section 501(c)(4) does not pertain to local governments.

2) COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Rochester will build on the efforts of its effective *DMC Development Plan* outreach. Representatives from RNeighbors, DMC Economic Development Agency, Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce, Rochester Downtown Alliance, and Mayo Clinic have already formed a project Steering Committee. Staff will meet regularly with these groups (initially and at least quarterly thereafter). Partners will also help engage residents and businesses.

A Community Engagement Team will develop public involvement strategies. This team will organize a series of meetings over the project period, including virtual sessions as needed. Local outreach activities will target residents of the Downtown and Slattery Park neighborhoods, particularly sensitive populations. The purpose of this engagement is to share information, collect feedback, and describe next steps. Input will also be gathered to shape reuse of assessed properties. Personnel from Olmsted County Public Health Services, Mayo Clinic, and MN Pollution Control Agency will share information on brownfields risks. Engagement activities will occur after work hours, be centrally located, and provide child-care to maximize participation. Comment cards will be provided at meetings to capture and document input.

To engage minority and low-income residents in reuse planning efforts, Rochester will utilize a “community co-design” process. Residents with strong connections to the community and deep knowledge of their neighborhoods will be recruited. Co-designers will include neighborhood association representatives, local business owners, and a designee of the Rochester Downtown Alliance. These participants will be paid for their time (\$25 per hour), with reimbursement for childcare and other expenses. This group will ensure that the proposed site reuses meaningfully address resident needs.

Traditional media, including the newspaper, television, and local radio stations, will be used to disseminate information. Web sites and social media will describe brownfields efforts and promote engagement opportunities. A survey tool will be used to gather feedback. Rochester will also communicate through community newsletters. All written outreach materials will be available in English, Spanish, and Somalian. Rochester has used this outreach process successfully with previous state brownfields grants.

3) EXPENDITURE OF EXISTING GRANT FUNDS

The City has not received previous EPA Brownfields funding.

4) CONTRACTORS AND NAMED SUBRECIPIENTS

Not applicable. Rochester has not procured any contractors or identified any subrecipients for EPA grant funds. The City will follow the federal fair and open competition requirements in 2 CFR Part 200, 2 CFR Part 1500, and 40 CFR Part 33 when contracting with environmental and planning specialists.