



**RE: FY2026EPA Brownfields Community-Wide Assessment Grant Application**

The City of Austin, Minnesota is pleased to submit this proposal for FY2026 Brownfields Community-Wide Assessment Grant funding. Below we provide the information requested.

**1. Applicant Identification:**

City of Austin, Minnesota  
500 4<sup>th</sup> Ave NE  
Austin, Minnesota 55912

**2. Website URL :**

<https://www.ci.austin.mn.us/>

**3. Funding Requested:**

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

**4. Location:**

- (a) City: Austin
- (b) County: Mower
- (c) State or Reservation: Minnesota

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

- Target Areas:
  - East Side District Target Area
  - Cedar River Regional Park District Target Area
- Addresses of Priority Sites:
  - 4th Avenue NE Collective – 1017, 1021, 1023, and 1027 4th Avenue NE
  - Future Cedar River Recreation Park – between 4th Avenue NE and Oakland Avenue E

**6. Contacts:**

(a) Project Director:

Name: Holly Wallace, Planning & Zoning Administrator  
Phone: (507) 437-7101 | Email: hollyw@ci.austin.mn.us  
Mailing Address: 500 4th Ave NE Austin, Minnesota 55912

(b) Chief Executive/Highest Ranking Elected Official:

Name: Craig Clark, City Administrator  
Phone: (507) 437-9941 | Email: craigc@ci.austin.mn.us  
Mailing Address: 500 4th Ave NE Austin, Minnesota 55912

**7. Population:**

- Population of the City of Austin: 26,167



**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 site(s) is impacted by mine-scarred land.	N/A
The priority site(s) is adjacent to a body of water (i.e., the border of the priority site(s) is contiguous or partially contiguous to the body of water, or would be contiguous or partially contiguous with a body of water but for a street, road, or other public thoroughfare separating them).	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8 & 9
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.	3 & 6
The reuse of the priority site(s) will incorporate energy efficiency measures.	3 & 6
The proposed project will improve local resilience to the impacts of extreme weather events and natural disasters.	3 & 6
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).	9
The target area(s) is impacted by a coal-fired power plant that has recently closed (2015 or later) or is closing.	N/A

**9. Letter from the State or Tribal Environmental Authority:** A letter of acknowledgement from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) is attached.

**10. Releasing Copies of Applications:** not applicable

**Letter from the State Environmental  
Authority**

January 14, 2026

VIA EMAIL

Holly Wallace  
City of Austin  
500 4<sup>th</sup> Ave NE  
Austin, MN 55912

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

Dear Holly Wallace:

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

The City of Austin has informed the MPCA that they intend to perform petroleum and hazardous substances assessment activities through a Brownfield Community-wide Assessment Grant in the City of Austin, located in southern Minnesota. Assessment activities would include assessments and remedial planning at brownfields, including properties in the downtown and immediate surrounding neighborhoods.

The MPCA is supportive of the City of Austin's application for the EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant. Should this grant be awarded, the MPCA will partner with the City of Austin 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](mailto:shanna.schmitt@state.mn.us), or Stacey Hendry-Van Patten at 651-757-2425 or by email at [stacey.vanpatten@state.mn.us](mailto: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-Van Patten  
Supervisor  
Remediation Division

SS/SVP:ss

cc: Torre Ippolito, EPA Region 5 Brownfields (electronic)

# **Narrative**



## 1. PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION & PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION

### Target Area & Brownfields

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

The City of Austin (City), Minnesota (MN) (the geographic boundary), is a “general purpose unit of local government” as defined in 2 CFR 200.64 and is therefore eligible to receive United States (US) Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) funds.

Located in south-central Minnesota near the Iowa border, the City of 26,174 residents has a long economic history shaped by industry along the Cedar River.<sup>1</sup> Founded in 1854 on the south banks of the Cedar River (the River), it is now situated at the junction of highways US 218 (north/south) and Interstate 90 (I-90) (east/west). Mills powered by the Cedar River were the first industries in Austin. In 1891, George A. Hormel opened a small family-owned butcher shop in Austin, which eventually grew into today's Fortune 500 company, Hormel Foods. While industrial activity contributed significantly to the City's early growth, including establishment of Hormel Foods, it also created a legacy of environmental challenges

Compounding these historic industrial impacts, the Cedar River has repeatedly inundated the community. Between 1978 and 2010, Austin experienced multiple damaging floods, including the record-setting 2004 event when the River crested more than 25 feet above flood stage. Subsequent flood mitigation efforts, including removal of structures in the floodplain, park conversions, and construction of levees and floodwalls, have left behind numerous underutilized or vacant properties that now contribute to the City's brownfields burden. Historic industry, natural disasters, and shifting demographics, describe the brownfield challenges limiting economic vitality and posing environmental, public health, and redevelopment constraints within Austin. Brownfield redevelopment is key to economic growth within the Target Areas. According to Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's (MPCA) What's in My Neighborhood, **there are total of 579 environmental database listings for Leak Sites, Site Assessment, Brownfield, Voluntary Investigation and Cleanup, RCRA Remediation, CERCLIS, and/or Superfund sites in Austin**, making brownfield redevelopment key to economic growth within the City.<sup>2</sup>

Two Target Areas within the City limits have been identified based on community need, high potential for reuse of identified sites, and the ability to address negative environmental impacts. The Target Areas include **East Side District** (4<sup>th</sup> Avenue Northeast [NE]; 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE; Oakland Place Southeast [SE]; and 11<sup>th</sup> Street NE) and **Cedar River Regional Park District** 4<sup>th</sup> Street NE along east and west sites of the River to Oakland Avenue E. Both Target Areas are in Census Tract [CT] 27099000410; population [pop.] 4,869. These Target Areas contain concentrations of aging or vacant properties, proximity to sensitive natural resources, and disproportionately impacted residents. Focused investment in these areas will catalyze reuse, enhance environmental protection, and support economic development.

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

Redevelopment and reuse of the following priority brownfield sites will catalyze revitalization efforts surrounding the Cedar River and in the East Side Neighborhood. These priority sites were selected based on their potential environmental impacts to the residents and River, community input, and secured site access. The City will modify zoning as needed.

<b>Priority Site: 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE Collective</b> 0.59 acre @ 1017, 1021, 1023, and 1027 4 <sup>th</sup> Avenue NE	<b>Target Area: East Side District</b> * & **
The site consists of 4 contiguous parcels that were constructed as early as 1910. The site was originally the 1000 block of East Water Street, which is now 4 <sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. Prior to construction the area was mostly apartments and small homes with the railroad to the east and a Blacksmith and Foundry located a block to the west. East Side Garage opened at 1016 4 <sup>th</sup> Avenue NE in 1922. It primarily carried cars but also provided repair services with tires and a battery department, accessories department, fuel sales, and facilities for storage of cars. In November 1925, the business moved across the street to 1012 4 <sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. 1021 4 <sup>th</sup> Avenue NE was originally built as a movie theatre and 1023 was a commercial building. 1027 4 <sup>th</sup> Avenue NE was often described as an “Austin Landmark”. Hotel Harrington, located across the street from the railroad depot, was a favorite destination for many. The 1 <sup>st</sup> floor featured a dining hall that served "plain, substantial, well-seasoned grub" and the "famous Harrington Hotel dinner" It was also referred to as "Austin's best known dining room". These sites are also located adjacent to a floodway to the west and south. <sup>3</sup> Perceived contamination includes asbestos containing materials (ACM) and lead-based paint (LBP), based on the age of the buildings, and volatile organic compounds (VOCs), polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), lead, heavy metals, and petroleum-related compounds related to potential vehicle maintenance. These sites	

<sup>1</sup> [Search Results](#)

<sup>2</sup> [What's in My Neighborhood | Minnesota Pollution Control Agency](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Lake & Flood Elevations Online](#)



were selected for assessment and reuse planning due to their history, high potential for reuse, and alignment with City plans for revitalization.

**Priority Site: Future Cedar River Recreation Park**  
 23.79 acres between 4th Avenue NE and Oakland Avenue E

**Target Area: Cedar River Regional Park District\*\***

The site consists of 25 parcels along the Cedar River that is a major catalyst project for downtown Austin. The site is adjacent to a recreation center and water tank on the northwest-central portion with a ballroom building constructed in 1946 on the west-central portion. Several historical buildings were present within the site throughout the 1950s that have since been demolished. A power plant historically operated on the northwest-central portion, which was associated with 2 removed, fuel oil underground storage tanks (USTs) (TS0014174), and is listed as a Petroleum Brownfield site (BF0000633 and BF0001053) and Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) Superfund site (SR0001479). Environmental investigations completed at the former power plant facility identified buried debris with PAHs, arsenic, and mercury in soil, tetrachloroethylene (PCE) in soil vapor, and petroleum contamination in soil and groundwater. In addition, 5 previously investigated and closed Petroleum Leak Site investigations are located adjacent to the site with several located upgradient from the site. Perceived contamination at the site includes ACM, VOCs, PAHs, metals, and petroleum-related compounds with potential for buried debris. The future park is located within a 100- and 500-year floodplain, with the River being a Floodway.<sup>4</sup> These sites were selected for assessment and reuse planning due to their location along the River, high potential for reuse, and alignment with City plans for revitalization, natural solutions, and economic growth involving these sites and the River.

\* Current Opportunity Zone Designation. \*\* Likely eligible for Opportunity Zone 2.0

**1.c. Identifying Additional Sites:**

The City will build upon and enhance the processes used for the successful inventory and prioritization procedures developed for the FY22 CWA grant. The inventory is a comprehensive list of available, potentially available, and/or identified vacant/underutilized sites. These sites are prioritized by environmental risk and contamination severity; redevelopment potential and market feasibility; community health and socio-economic impact; owner cooperation and regulatory eligibility; and strategic alignment with City & EPA program objectives. Furthermore, discussions with the Brownfields Advisory Committee (BAC) and the ability to access secured funding will be a part of identifying additional sites.

**Revitalization of the Target Area**

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

In 2011, a grassroots movement began sweeping through Austin to improve the City’s quality of life. The result, *Vision 2020*, a process where hundreds of volunteers and community organizations cultivated a citywide campaign to gather ideas and identified and prioritized the most promising concepts to bring to life. In 2012, 10 bold Vision Statements were unveiled, serving as a guiding framework for action. Over the next 8 years, a coalition of leaders, residents, and institutions transformed that vision into tangible outcomes. As *Vision 2020* concluded its formal work in 2020, a new chapter emerged with the launch of *Impact Austin*, an initiative designed to carry forward the community’s momentum.<sup>5</sup> *Impact Austin’s* mission focuses on aligning people and resources to revitalize, discover, and invest in Austin’s future emphasizing housing, economic growth, revitalization, job creation, and connection.

In July 2024 *Impact Austin* along with the City and County embarked on a comprehensive planning process, *Stitching Together Land, Flavor, And Place, A Playbook For Mower County And Austin, Minnesota (2045 Comprehensive Plan)*.<sup>6</sup> The *2045 Comprehensive Plan* lays out 6 big ideas, 11 frameworks, and details 10 experience districts.

The Cedar River Regional Park District Target Area is 1 of the 10 experience districts laid out in the *2045 Comprehensive Plan*.<sup>7</sup> The **Future Cedar River Recreation Park in this Target Area aligns with the plan’s vision to reclaim and restore the Cedar River floodplain, transforming it from a barrier into a community asset.** Through thoughtful design, environmental assessment and remediation with thorough reuse planning and intentional landscaping, the City will create a multi-functional riverfront that manages flood risk while also becoming a regional destination.

<sup>4</sup> [Lake & Flood Elevations Online](#)

<sup>5</sup> [ImpactAustin.pdf](#)

<sup>6</sup> [2045 Comprehensive Plan](#)

<sup>7</sup> [2045 Comprehensive Plan](#)



The *Cedar River Recreation Park Feasibility Study* was completed in 2023. It evaluated the feasibility of transforming the obsolete 4th Avenue Dam on the Cedar River into a modern river recreation park. The study confirms that such a project is **technically feasible** and offers significant potential for recreation, habitat enhancement, safety improvements, and economic development.

1 of the 11 frameworks in the *2045 Comprehensive Plan* includes **promoting strategic development by supporting infill growth**. The reuse of the **4<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE Collective** aligns with this framework. This significant area of Austin, home to the historical Hotel Harrington, was once a thriving part of Austin. Supporting infill development of this area, promotes this framework and aligns with the future vision for Austin.

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

The proposed reuse of the **Future Cedar River Recreation Park** and the **4<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE Collective** will generate significant environmental, economic, recreational, and community benefits for Austin. Development of the **Future Cedar River Recreation Park** will convert a dam site into a safe, multi-functional greenway with riverfront recreational amenities. The park's whitewater, wading, tubing, and bank access features, validated as technically feasible through the *2023 Cedar River Recreation Park Feasibility Study*, will stimulate local economic activity by increasing foot traffic, supporting tourism, and creating opportunities for additional growth

In addition to economic revitalization, the reuse strategy advances major community goals outlined in the *2045 Comprehensive Plan*, including reclaiming the Cedar River floodplain as a community asset, expanding public recreation, improving ecological function, and **strengthening the City's resilience to the impacts of extreme weather events and natural disasters**. The project's design will enhance habitat, introduce fish passage, and incorporate bank terracing and Americans with Disabilities Act accessible trails that provide access for families, youth, seniors, and people with disabilities. These improvements directly benefit disproportionately impacted residents who currently lack access to high-quality outdoor recreation spaces and enhance resilience through flood adaptive design and restoration of natural systems. Public health and safety will improve by removing blight, addressing legacy hazards, and replacing a dangerous low head dam.

Redevelopment of the **4<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE Collective** supports the *2045 Comprehensive Plan's* framework to promote strategic infill development. Revitalizing these Priority Sites creates opportunities for mixed-use developments, local businesses, and walkable amenities. This infill approach reduces development pressure on greenfields, aligns with the City's goals, and supports long-term economic growth and housing needs. **Redevelopment of these Priority Sites will incorporate energy efficient building upgrades, including high efficiency windows, insulation, and heating/cooling systems**. Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Certified new construction will be considered along with renewable energy, specifically solar panels for electric power.

#### **Strategy for Leveraging Resources**

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

The City will leverage state, regional and local funding resources to complement this Project and future reuse of priority sites. Local programs that this project is eligible for and can be leveraged for reuse include Grow Austin Fund, Tax Increment Financing, Tax Abatement, Development Corporation of Austin's Revolving Loan Fund, and Opportunity Zone incentives. There are also regional and state funds that will be pursued for assessment, cleanup, and reuse: MN Department of Employment & Economic Development (DEED): Contamination Investigation & Cleanup Grant, Redevelopment Grant Fund, Small Cities Development Program; MN Investment Fund, Job Creation Fund; MN Housing Finance Agency: Low-Income Housing Tax Credits and Workforce Housing Grant. Sources for business specific funding are available from The Hormel Foundation, Southern MN Initiative Foundation through its Business Loan and Small Enterprise Loan funds. The City, its partners, businesses, and non-profit organizations within the City may also be able to access philanthropic funding from sources such as the Bush Foundation Community Innovation Grants, National Endowment for the Arts Our Town Grant, AARP Community Challenge Grant, and others. Funding that could be specifically accessed for the Future Cedar River Recreation Park includes U.S. Congress directed spending, MN Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Dam Safety Grants, and MN DNR Outdoor Recreation Grant.

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

Existing infrastructure will be used whenever possible at the Priority Sites. Properties within the Target Areas are served by roads, water, wastewater, sewer, utilities, lighting, natural gas, and other public infrastructure. Reuse of priority brownfield sites in the Target Areas will limit uncontrolled, potentially contaminated stormwater runoff impacting the Cedar River and Turtle Creek Watersheds. Reuse will also allow for opportunities to integrate long-term sustainable energy resources, and stormwater management systems. This desire is illustrated in the *2045 Comprehensive Plan: Stitching Together Land, Flavor, and Place a Playbook For Mower County and Austin, MN*



“Focus on context-sensitive infill development that integrates residential, commercial, and recreational spaces—offering diverse, walkable opportunities to live, work, and socialize”.<sup>8</sup>

It is the City’s goal to prioritize redevelopment providing the greatest opportunity for infrastructure reuse. If demolition is necessary, the City will minimize materials sent to landfills and keep valuable materials in the local economy where repurposing creates local jobs. Although the upgrades needed at the Priority Sites are unknown at this time, if significant upgrades arise, the opportunities described in 1.f. can be reviewed for additional funding.

**2. COMMUNITY NEED & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:**

**Community Need**

**2.a. The Community’s Need for Funding:**

Many of the City’s most disproportionately impacted populations live within the Target Areas. The Target Areas have seen a 5.6% population change from 2014-2018 & 2019-2023, **outpacing the City by more than 4 times** while poverty rates, income, and unemployment have also remained high, creating a lack of economic capacity to support this growth.

**Unemployment is 6.7% in the Target Areas, which is 2.8% more than the state at 3.9%**, indicating limited access to stable employment opportunities. Per capita income is just **\$22,117, less than half of the state averages**. Median family income follows the same pattern at **\$42,721, \$68,771 less than the state average**. With a poverty rate of **32.8%**, the area experiences poverty more than twice the City’s rate and more than triple the rate of the State. Further, poverty in the Target Areas increased by **15%** between 2014-2018 & 2019-2023, while poverty declined in the County, State, and U.S. This upward trend demonstrates worsening socioeconomic conditions and reinforces the community’s inability to access other funding sources for critical brownfield assessment or reuse activities.

Additional indicators reflect disinvestment. The Target Areas have **9.5% vacant businesses—higher than both the County and State**, and **20.5% of homes are valued below \$60,000, nearly triple the City and more than quadruple the State**. Collectively, these disparities demonstrate that the Target Areas have **low-income populations unable to draw on other funding to undertake revitalization efforts**. Economic distress, coupled with high poverty, low incomes, elevated unemployment, and stagnant property values, clearly establishes the need for EPA investment. Brownfields funding is essential to overcome entrenched barriers, address environmental health risks, and support equitable revitalization within this disproportionately impacted community.

**Table 1 – Community Need**

	CT 27099000410* & **	City	County	MN	US
% pop. change between 2014-2018 & 2019-2023	5.6%	4.6%	1.2%	3.4%	2.9%
Unemployment Rate	6.7%	4.2%	3.8%	3.9%	5.2%
Per capita income	\$22,117	\$31,165	\$35,609	\$46,957	\$43,289
Median Family Income	\$42,721	\$83,604	\$91,150	\$111,492	\$96,922
Poverty rate	32.8%	14.8%	12.2%	9.2%	12.4%
% change in poverty rate between 2014-2018 & 2019-2023	15.0%	7.7%	-4.1%	-6.1%	-8.7%
Vacant Businesses	9.5%	9.4%	7.6%	11.6%	N/A
Home value <\$60K	20.5%	7.2%	6.8%	4.9%	6.8%

**Note:** All data was downloaded from [www.policymap.com](http://www.policymap.com) on 1/10/26 from the 2019 – 2023 American Community Survey Estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau. **Bold** = data lower/higher % than City; *Italics* = data lower/higher % than County; **Blue Font** = data lower/higher % than % MN; **Highlights** = data lower/higher % than U.S. \* Current Opportunity Zone Designation. \*\* Likely eligible for Opportunity Zone 2.0

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

Sensitive populations in Target Areas face significantly higher health and welfare risks. The Target Areas have **32.7% single female-headed families with children, nearly triple the City’s average and 4 times the State’s, with a 172.8% increase** between 2014-2018 & 2019-2023. **These households have a median family income of just \$23,075**. Children are especially vulnerable, with **45.6% of those under five living in poverty, more than double the City and four times the State average**.

19.2% of the Target Areas population is disabled, and 20.6% live in poverty. **17.9% of the Target Area is over the age of 65 and in poverty, more than double the City and state averages**. Housing conditions compound these vulnerabilities—**74% of homes were built before 1980**, increasing the likelihood of exposure to LBP, ACM, and

<sup>8</sup> 2045 Comprehensive Plan Playbook



related hazards. With **13.8% of residents with less than a 9th-grade education, 5 times more than the State average**, educational barriers further limit access to health and environmental information.

Brownfield assessment and reuse activities will directly address these risks by identifying contamination to reduce exposure near homes, schools, and community facilities. Reuse strategies, such as creation of the Future Cedar River Recreation Park, and safe redevelopment of blighted properties such as the 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE Collective, will improve public health, expand safe recreational opportunities, and reduce environmental threats to children, low-income households, elderly residents, and people with disabilities.

**Table 4 - Sensitive Populations in TAs – 2019-2023**

	CT 27099000410* & **	City	County	MN	US
Families that are single female headed with children	<b>32.7%</b>	<i>12.2%</i>	<i>9.3%</i>	8.4%	9.6%
% change in families; single female headed with children between 2014-2018 & 2019-2023	<b>172.8%</b>	<i>62.2%</i>	<i>30.4%</i>	-1.9%	-1.1%
% change in disabled pop. between 2014-2018 & 2019-2023	<b>40.2%</b>	<i>-2.9%</i>	<i>-6.5%</i>	8.5%	6.6%
Median Family Income single female and children	<b>\$23,075</b>	<i>\$28,092</i>	<i>\$30,582</i>	\$44,434	\$37,937
Poverty rate for children <5yrs.	<b>45.6%</b>	<i>20.9%</i>	<i>17.9%</i>	11.0%	17.6%
Poverty rate for people w/ disability	<b>20.6%</b>	17.2%	18.4%	23.9%	23.9%
Poverty rate single female w/children	<b>42.9%</b>	<i>37.6%</i>	<i>34.3%</i>	26.2%	32.6%
Poverty rate for adults >65 yrs.	<b>17.9%</b>	8.4%	<i>8.5%</i>	8.4%	10.4%
Pre-1980 housing	<b>74.0%</b>	<i>76.5%</i>	<i>75.0%</i>	52.6%	50.5%
Disabled Population	<b>19.2%</b>	<i>12.3%</i>	<i>11.6%</i>	11.4%	13.0%
< 9 <sup>th</sup> grade education	<b>13.8%</b>	<i>8.1%</i>	<i>5.8%</i>	2.7%	4.7%

**Note:** All data was downloaded from [www.policymap.com](http://www.policymap.com) on 1/10/26 from the 2019 – 2023 American Community Survey Estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau. **Bold** = data lower/higher % than City; *Italics* = data lower/higher % than County; **Blue Font** = data lower/higher % than % MN; **Highlights** = data lower/higher % than U.S. \* Current Opportunity Zone Designation. \*\* Likely eligible for Opportunity Zone 2.0

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

Historical industrial activities due to the City’s location on the River and the East Side District Target Area being adjacent to a railroad, have left a legacy of environmental and social impacts in the Target Areas as described above.

**Table 4: Cancer Data**

Cancer incidence rate per 100,000	County	MN	U.S.
Lung & Bronchus	<b>61.2</b>	53.8	53.1
Bladder	<b>21.7</b>	21	18.8
All Cancer	481.6	486.8	444.4

**Note:** All data was downloaded from [www.policymap.com](http://www.policymap.com) on 1/17/26. **Blue Font** = data higher MN; **Highlights** = data higher than U.S. Data is unavailable at the census tract and city level.

**lung cancer is the second most common cancer in MN and colon cancer is the third leading cause of cancer deaths in the State.**<sup>11</sup> With an average of 74% of homes in the Target Areas built prior to 1980, ACM exposure (lung cancer) and LBP exposure (lung and bladder cancers) is high.<sup>12</sup>

Exposure to airborne particulates, such as wind-blown contaminated soils and building materials with ACM, may contribute to and/or complicate asthma and other respiratory diseases. From 2019-2021 **The County saw 580 asthma-related hospitalizations, which were more emergency room visits than 77 of the 87 counties in Minnesota.**<sup>13</sup> According to Minnesota Department of Health, the Target Areas blood lead level was 1.3% compared to the state average of 0.8%.<sup>14</sup> According to a 2019 report by the MPCA, fine particles and ozone contributes to significant health issues in the County and makes a correlation to high rates of asthma hospitalizations for children and respiratory hospitalizations in adults<sup>15</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.policymap.com/>

<sup>10</sup> [Cancer incidence and mortality](#)

<sup>11</sup> [Cancer in Minnesota - MN Dept. of Health](#)

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.policymap.com/>

<sup>13</sup> [Asthma charts - MN Data](#)

<sup>14</sup> <https://mndatamaps.web.health.state.mn.us/interactive/leadtract.html>

<sup>15</sup> Life and Breath-How Air Pollution Affects Health in Minnesota, June 2019, pages 20-25.



Potential ingestion, inhalation, and dermal contact with contaminated air, soil, and building products pose a public health risk and the City will utilize this grant to identify, assess, and plan cleanup of the Priority Sites and other nearby sites. The redevelopment and reuse of the Priority Sites will help improve community health for the most sensitive populations of the City.

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

The Target Areas experience higher poverty rates and are home to populations that have historically borne disproportionate environmental burdens. Decades of industrial and commercial activity along the Cedar River and railroads have left legacy contamination from foundries, auto body repair shops, gas stations, and dry cleaners. These conditions have contributed to blight, economic decline, and health risks for residents.

This grant will fund environmental assessments and planning activities to identify and mitigate hazardous substances and petroleum contamination at the priority sites. By addressing contamination threats, the project will reduce exposure risks to pollutants, improving public health outcomes for the City’s disproportionately impacted populations. Beyond environmental remediation, reuse strategies promote economic revitalization and community resilience.

The City has strong relationships with organizations in the community which will assist with site selection, prioritization and community involvement. Through priority site redevelopment, community involvement, and assessment efforts, the City is committed to serving economically impoverished populations that have been disproportionately impacted by industrial, governmental, and/or commercial operations, through job creation, safe and sustainable housing, outdoor recreation, and neighborhoods that protect residents from extreme weather events and harmful pollutants, reducing poverty and the impacts on vulnerable populations. **NO displacement of residents or businesses will occur.**

**Community Engagement:**

**2.e. & 2.f. Project Involvement & Roles:**

Through the lifecycle of the City’s FY22 CWA grant, a successful BAC was formed. The City will once again convene a BAC with representatives from various local organizations/entities/groups that align with the Target Areas and that will be meaningfully involved in the implementation of these grant funds. The BAC will be actively engaged throughout the project and have input on key decisions. The City will convene the BAC on a quarterly basis with in-person and virtual options and provide a Quarterly Project Update document for those unable to attend.

Name	Entity’s mission	Point of Contact	Specific Involvement
<b>Development Corporation of Austin</b>	To attract new businesses and industries, as well as to support existing enterprises	John Garry <a href="mailto:jkgarry@austindca.org">jkgarry@austindca.org</a>	Will serve as a conduit to the local development community by promoting the brownfields program for new or growing businesses.
<b>Austin Utilities</b>	Connections for Better Living	Alex Bumgardner <a href="mailto:alexb@austinutilities.com">alexb@austinutilities.com</a>	Will review and evaluate existing electric, water, and natural gas utilities at each site; confirm available capacity; identify required upgrades; and help incorporate renewable energy and utility-efficiency considerations into reuse planning.
<b>Austin Housing &amp; Redevelopment Authority</b>	Committed to promoting community redevelopment — revitalizing neighborhoods to enhance the quality of life for all residents	Taggart Medgaarden <a href="mailto:taggart@austinhra.org">taggart@austinhra.org</a>	Will offer insight into housing and neighborhood revitalization priorities, assist in identifying brownfield sites, and provide input on redevelopment strategies.
<b>Riverland Community College</b>	To transform lives through excellence in service, education, and career training.	Miguel Garate <a href="mailto:miguel.garate@riverland.edu">miguel.garate@riverland.edu</a>	Will help connect redevelopment efforts with community education and workforce opportunities.



<b>Nord/Haus Real Estate Group</b>	To deliver a relaxed and refined buying and selling experience.	Matt Bartholomew <a href="mailto:Matt@nordhaus.realestate">Matt@nordhaus.realestate</a>	Will serve as a conduit to the local real estate community by promoting the brownfields program for new or growing businesses.
<b>Mower County Public Works Director</b>	Vibrant communities where all people thrive	Mitch Wenum <a href="mailto:mitchw@co.mower.mn.us">mitchw@co.mower.mn.us</a>	Will contribute expertise on county-level initiatives and how brownfield redevelopment efforts integrate with ongoing and future community improvement projects.
<b>Mower Soil and Water Conservation District</b>	To enhance the natural resources bases while maintaining a viable economy.	Tim Ruzek <a href="mailto:tim@mowerdistrict.org">tim@mowerdistrict.org</a>	Will support environmental review discussions by providing input related to land stewardship, resource protection, and community outreach tied to brownfield redevelopment.

**2.g. Incorporating Community Input:**

The City will ensure meaningful and ongoing community input through an engagement strategy designed to reach residents most directly affected by project activities. Working with the BAC and the Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP) firm, the City will remove barriers to participation and provide regular, accessible updates through public meetings (virtual and in-person), press releases, fact sheets, and website postings. To solicit and respond to feedback from disproportionately impacted residents, the City will use targeted outreach—including listening sessions, partnerships with community organizations, and engagement of non-English-speaking households, youth, and the elderly.

Innovative approaches such as bike/walk audits, pop-up events, and demonstration activities will broaden participation among hard-to-reach groups. Virtual tools, including GIS StoryMaps, social media, and livestreamed events, will serve as effective alternatives to in-person engagement, ensuring that community members can learn about the projects, provide input, and see how their feedback is incorporated into decision-making. This approach ensures transparent communication, comprehensive participation, and meaningful integration of community input throughout the assessment and planning process.

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

**Description of Tasks/Activities & Outputs:**

**3.a.-d. Project Implementation; Anticipated Project Schedule; Task/Activity Lead; & Outputs:**

The City is requesting \$500,000 of EPA CWA funding to assess and plan the cleanup/reuse of the Priority Sites. The scope of work has been organized into four tasks described below.

<b>Task 1: Cooperative Agreement (CA) Management</b>
<b>a. Project Implementation:</b> The City will manage all aspects of the project, including coordination with the EPA and QEP firm. Reporting will include Quarterly Progress Reports (QPRs); Assessment, Cleanup and Redevelopment Exchange System (ACRES) Updates; Annual/Final Federal Financial Reports (FFRs); and a Final Performance Report documenting accomplishments, outputs, outcomes, and success stories. The City has procured a QEP firm in compliance with federal regulations and will oversee their work and any contractors needed. One City staff member will attend local, regional, and/or state conferences and the 2027 National Brownfields Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah as well as one other National Brownfield Conference. Any proposed scope changes will be discussed with and approved by EPA.
<b>b. Schedule:</b> Management & reporting will be ongoing throughout the 4-year implementation period. QPRs will be submitted within 30 days after quarters end. Attendance of 4 state, regional, and/or national workshop/conference(s) are anticipated from 2026-2030.
<b>c. Leads:</b> The City will lead this task including financial management, execution, and compliance with the terms and conditions of the CA. The QEP firm will assist with reporting activities.
<b>d. Outputs:</b> 16 QPRs; 4 FFR Reports; ongoing ACRES Updates; 1 Final Performance Report; Attend 4 Brownfield Workshops/Conferences
<b>Task 2: Brownfield Inventory and Site Prioritization/Selection</b>
<b>a. Project Implementation:</b> The City will work with the QEP firm along with the BAC to continue expanding the site inventory and prioritize sites. Environmental database information will be utilized as well as information from Sanborn fire insurance maps, city directory records, tax delinquencies, and building code violations. The inventory will be in a GIS format such that it can be a future resource for the City, with each site catalogued using the parcel tax ID numbers. As part of the site selection process, the City will survey the BAC, local developers, real estate brokers, and other stakeholders for information on potential sites and



conduct desktop studies and windshield surveys to verify existing site conditions. The City will work with the QEP firm along with the BAC to review already established criteria to prioritize sites that offer the greatest benefits to inform the site selection process. The City will acquire complete coverage of historical fire insurance maps (FIM) and georeference and mosaic them into seamless coverages for each year acquired. A detailed map analysis will identify features from each FIM for each year acquired that identify industrial, commercial, and other uses that potentially generated or used hazardous materials during their operations. This will include features like gas stations, dry cleaners, factories, and machine shops, in addition to specific features such as USTs and ASTs, materials storage, asbestos uses, etc. Each feature will be digitized using GIS and a database of features will be created that can be used for any spatial analysis such as land use planning, remediation, utility work, and brownfield identification, using geospatial systems already present in the City's technology infrastructure.

**b. Schedule:** BAC Meetings will be held each quarter through the lifecycle of the grant. Brownfield Inventory/Site Prioritization will be initiated in Q1 '27 and will continue throughout the lifecycle of the grant. GIS Data Mapping will initiate during Q4 '26 and continue through Q3 '30.

**c. Leads:** The City, QEP firm, and BAC will continue to update the developed brownfield inventory including prioritization and selection of sites for environmental site assessments (ESAs) and planning.

**d. Outputs:** Inventory – GIS files and FIM Georeferenced

**Task 3: Phase I & II ESAs, RBM Surveys, RAPs, & ABCAs**

**i. Project Implementation:** It is proposed that 61% of the grant funds will be used for this task. Under the direction of the City, the QEP firm will complete Eligibility Determination (ED) request forms and submit to EPA (hazardous substances) and/or MPCA (petroleum). Upon confirmation of eligibility, Phase I ESAs will be completed in accordance with 40 CFR Part 312, the All-Appropriate Inquiries Final Rule, and the standards set forth in the ASTM E1527-21 Phase I ESA process. All reports will be provided electronically (e.g., Adobe Acrobat) to the City by the QEP firm and submitted to EPA. A Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) will be prepared and approved by EPA as part of this grant award prior to conducting any Phase II ESAs or other sampling activities. Prior to initiating any Phase II ESA field work Sampling and Analysis Plans (SAPs) and Health and Safety Plans (HASPs) will be prepared for each site and submitted to EPA. Phase II ESAs will follow standards set forth in the ASTM E1903-19 Phase II ESA process. The QEP firm under the direction of the City will perform Phase II ESAs, supplemental assessment activities, Regulated Building Materials (RBM) surveys, Response Action Plans (RAPs), and (Analysis of Brownfield Cleanup Alternatives (ABCAs) on Priority Sites that meet eligibility requirements.

**ii. Schedule:** Task 3 activities will be completed throughout the life of the grant. EPA/MPCA Eligibility Determinations, Site Access Agreements, conduct Phase I ESAs: Q1 '27–Q2 '30; Preparation and submittal of QAPP: Q1 '27; ACM/RBM surveys: Q1 '27–Q3 '30; Conduct Phase II ESAs: Q2 '27–Q2 '30; Prepare RAP: Q3 '27–Q3 '30; Prepare ABCA: Q3 '27–Q3 '30.

**iii. Lead:** Under the direction of the City, the QEP firm will complete Phase I & II ESA activities and reporting, supplemental assessment activities, RBM surveys, and RAPs and ABCAs that meet the eligibility requirements.

**iv. Outputs:** 29 Eds; 5 Phase I ESAs; 1 QAPP and 3 QAPP updates; 5 HASPs/SAPs; 2 RBM surveys; 5 Phase II ESAs; 1 RAP, 1 ABCA.

**Task 4: Reuse/Area-Wide Planning (AWP) Studies and Community Outreach**

**i. Project Implementation:** The City with support of the QEP firm will perform a comprehensive community outreach program that will include options for traditional, targeted, innovative, and virtual engagement. Including but not limited to meetings and forums, development and distribution of marketing and informational materials, and joint outreach and education efforts with local organizations. City staff with assistance from the QEP firm will be made available to meet with local representatives (and if appropriate, host public meetings) for any owners that express a need and interest in participating in the project. Care will be taken to invite and involve residents in the Target Areas as well as keep public and government organizations informed. Community involvement for individual sites will be on a case-by-case basis, as needed. The QEP firm will also complete 2 AWP Studies for the East Side District Target Area and another for the Cedar River Regional Park District Target Area. Activities within these plans will include due diligence and existing conditions review; market study; community engagement/in person visioning workshops; preliminary concept designs; final concept design and perspective illustrative renderings; and a resource roadmap.

**ii. Schedule:** Task 4 will be ongoing on an as warranted basis throughout the duration of the grant implementation. Outreach communications will be initiated in Q1 '27 and extend through Q4 '30. 2 AWP Studies for the East Side District Target Area and another for the Cedar River Regional Park District Target Area will be initiated in Q1 '27 and extend through Q3 '30.

**iii. Lead:** The City will lead this task with support for the QEP firm and BAC.

**iv. Outputs:** 6-8 Outreach meetings; Outreach documentation & supplies; Online communications; 2 AWP Studies.

**3.e. Cost Estimates:**

With economically impoverished/disproportionately impacted populations in the Target Areas, the City will leverage this funding with proven strategies to engage the community in a dynamic process to revitalize Priority Sites via sustainable development and environmental resilience best practice. The overall budget is summarized below. **The City is not requesting personnel, fringe, administrative, or indirect costs as these expenses will be covered by the City.**



**Table 6 - Budget for Grant Funded Activities**

Budget Categories	Task 1	Task 2	Task 3	Task 4	Total
	Cooperative Agreement (CA) Management	Brownfield Inventory & Site Prioritization/Selection	Phase I & II ESAs; SSSAPs; RBM Surveys; RAPs; & ABCAs	Reuse/AWP Studies & Community Outreach	
Travel	\$4,500	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$4,500
Supplies	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,000	\$1,000
Contractual	\$22,500	\$30,000	\$307,500	\$156,000	\$494,500
Other	\$1,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,000
<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>\$28,000</b>	<b>\$30,000</b>	<b>\$307,500</b>	<b>\$157,000</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>

The following table provides a summary of the estimated costs for project outputs by task and budget category. **31% of funding is allocated towards community outreach and 2 AWP Studies. 61% of funding is allocated towards Phase I & II ESAs; RBM Surveys; RAPs, ABCA related tasks.**

**Table 7 - Summary of Task Cost Development and Application of Funding**

<p><b>Task 1: Cooperative Agreement (CA) Management: Total Budget = \$28,000</b></p> <p><b>Cost Basis and Assumptions:</b> Contractual Costs of \$22,500 is budgeted for 150 hours (hrs.) to be completed by the QEP at an estimated \$150/hr. This includes budget for quarterly, annual/final FFR, and ACRES reporting. Travel Costs of \$4,500 (\$2,000 for airfare and transportation, \$2,000 [\$200 x 10 nights] for hotel accommodations, and \$500 for meal expenses) is budgeted for expenses for one City staff to attend local, regional, and/or state conferences and two EPA National Brownfield Conferences (including the 2027 National Brownfields Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah). Other Costs of \$1,000 for registration for one staff member to attend two EPA National Conferences (including the 2027 National Brownfields Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah) and registration for other local, regional, and/or state conferences.</p>
<p><b>Task 2: Brownfield Inventory and Site Prioritization/Selection: Total Budget = \$30,000</b></p> <p><b>Cost Basis and Assumptions:</b> Contractual Costs of \$30,000 is budgeted for an estimated 140 hrs. (\$150/hr. = \$21,000) of work by the QEP firm for developing the brownfield inventory. This includes records research, GIS data entry and mapping, windshield survey, interviews with community members, &amp; presentations/meetings and \$9,000 for georeferencing FIMs, City Directories, and web map preparation.</p>
<p><b>Task 3: Phase I &amp; II ESAs; RBM Surveys; RAPs; ABCAs: Total Budget = \$307,500</b></p> <p><b>Cost Basis and Assumptions:</b> Contractual Costs of \$312,000 is budgeted for the QEP to complete one QAPP (\$7,000) and 3 Annual QAPP Updates (\$2,000 each = \$6,000); 29 ED forms (\$500 each [25 EDs/Future Cedar River Recreation Park &amp; 4 EDs/4<sup>TH</sup> Avenue NE Collective] = \$14,500); 5 Phase I ESAs (4 @ \$7,000 each &amp; 1 [Future Cedar River Recreation Park] @ \$17,000 = \$45,000); 5 HASP/SAPs (\$5,000 each = \$25,000); 5 Phase II ESAs (4 @ \$25,000 each &amp; 1 [Future Cedar River Recreation Park] @ \$70,500 = \$170,500); 3 RBM surveys (3 @ \$5,000 each = \$15,000); 1 RAP (\$6,000 each = \$6,000); 1 ABCA (\$6,000 each = \$6,000).</p>
<p><b>Task 4: Reuse/AWP Studies and Community Outreach: Total Budget = \$157,000</b></p> <p><b>Cost Basis and Assumptions:</b> Contractual Costs of \$150,000 are budgeted for the QEP to complete 2 AWP Studies (500 hrs. for each Plan @ \$150/hr. = \$75,000 each); \$6,000 for Outreach Documents and Meetings (40 hrs. @ \$150/hr.). Supply Costs of \$1,000 include \$800 for printing (\$500 for community outreach events and \$300 for brochures) and \$200 for mailings (274 pieces at \$0.73 apiece).</p>

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

The City will use a clear and measurable system to track progress. With support from the QEP firm, all grant activities will be reported to EPA with quarterly reporting and ACRES. Key outputs tracked each quarter will include: the number of sites prioritized, Phase I and Phase II ESAs completed, environmental investigations performed; reuse planning activities, BAC meetings and attendance, and community engagement events and participation. All assessed sites will be linked to parcel identification numbers within the City’s GIS system to ensure accurate documentation and mapping of project activities.

The City will also evaluate outcomes to demonstrate the broader community, environmental, and economic impacts of assessment activities. These outcomes include sites assessed, acres prepared for redevelopment; parks or greenspace created; private and public investment leveraged; jobs created or retained; and increases in tax revenues and property values. These metrics directly correlate with the proposed tasks and will provide quantifiable project successes.

**4. PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE:**

**Programmatic Capability:**

**4.a.c. Organizational Capacity; Structure; & Description of Key Staff:**

The City has successfully managed an EPA Brownfield CWA grant (FY22) and will be responsible for compliance with all administrative and programmatic conditions under this grant. Holly Wallace led aspects of the previous grant and will serve as the Project Director. Ms. Wallace will work closely with Craig Clark, City Administrator (Assistant



Project Manager), and Emily Burns, Finance Director, as well as other City departments to ensure successful projects that align with City and EPA goals.

**Holly Wallace will serve as the Project Director.** Ms. Wallace serves as the Planning and Zoning Administrator for the City, bringing a strong interdisciplinary background in environmental science and law to her role. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Biology with an emphasis in water resource management and water chemistry and earned her Juris Doctor from Hamline University School of Law. Holly has been with the City for more than 10 years and oversees all facets of planning, building, zoning, and rental divisions, while also supporting local economic development efforts. She will once again be a part of day-to-day grant activities along with other key responsibilities that advance the City's planning and development goals.

**Craig Clark will serve as the Assistant Project Director.** Mr. Clark serves as the City Administrator and holds a Master of Public Administration and a Bachelor of Science in Political Science and History. He has more than 25 years of municipal administrative experience including the development of a tax abatement program for new housing and a business incentive for tax base and job growth. Craig served as the Project Director for the City's FY22 and will be a part of day-to-day grant activities with Ms. Wallace. Additionally, he is responsible for managing a municipal budget of over \$31 million and a staff of 140 employees. If Ms. Wallace can no longer fill her role, Mr. Clark will ensure the project continues.

**Emily Burns will serve as the Finance Director.** Ms. Burns, MPA, CPM, has more than 15 years of municipal experience across finance, administration, human resources, economic development, and grants management. She will oversee financial management, drawdowns, and compliance with this grant.

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

The City has access to departments with additional technical and supporting roles to assist with grant implementation activities. The City has proactive staffing succession plans, eliminating project delays and ensuring project staff have appropriate qualifications and experience. The City routinely contracts with consultants and has established equal opportunity procurement procedures for ensuring a fair bidding process and adhering to 2 CFR Part 200. The City has procured through a competitive Request for Qualifications/Proposals (RFQ/P) process a QEP firm to assist with grant implementation activities. The City is also continuously tracking additional opportunities to pursue funding resources that align well with the City's vision and the non-profit and private development activities within the City.

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

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

##### **4.e.(1 & 2) Accomplishments & Compliance with Grant Requirements:**

*FY22 EPA Brownfield CWA Grant for Hazardous Substances and Petroleum (BF-00E03217-0)*

**1. Accomplishments:** During the lifecycle of the grant, the following outputs and outcomes were completed with the use of grant funds: QAPP and Annual QAPP updates approved; 7 Eligibility Determinations approved by EPA; 5 Eligibility Determination approved by MPCA; 10 Phase I ESAs completed; 7 Site-Specific SAPs submitted & approved; 7 Phase II ESAs completed; **1 RAP; 1 ABCA; 1 Site-Specific Rendering; Successful BAC and stakeholder meetings were held.**

Additional accomplishments included: **Semcac's Head Start and Outreach Center:** Semcac, a nonprofit Community Action Agency serving Southeast MN, is developing the 2-acre former KAAL TV Station with plans for a 13,300-square foot facility, including 8 Head Start and Early Head Start classrooms, a multipurpose room, motor room, laundry room, office space for all Head Start staff in the county, offices for Outreach & Emergency Services, storage, restrooms, and a commercial kitchen for Senior Nutrition. The site design also includes a playground and parking. Under the City's CWA grant a **Phase I ESA, Site-Specific SAP, and Phase II ESA were completed totaling \$49,917.00.** This redevelopment project has also received a **Hormel Foundation grant for \$2,767,056** in 2022; a **MN Department of Human Services' Live Well At Home grant for \$228,527** in 2024; and in 2025 **\$566,565.00 in MN DEED** Cleanup funding. Construction is set to begin February 2026 with completion by October 2026.

**A Phase I ESA (\$8,150.44) was completed using the City's grant funds** at the Aplus property. This underutilized site, was then sold as a new small business site bringing around a dozen jobs to the City.

**2. Compliance with Grant Requirements:** All quarterly performance reports, technical reporting and ACRES reporting has been completed and submitted on time. On 9/19/2025 a budget reallocation was requested by the City due to not fully spending down personnel, travel, and supplies. The request was made to reallocate \$22,217.28 to contractual. Due to the reallocation happening near the end of the grant \$50,451.64 was the remaining balance at the end of the performance period. The City is not requesting personnel, fringe or indirect with this grant submittal.

# **Threshold Criteria**

# Threshold Criteria for Community-Wide Assessment Grants

## **1. APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY:**

(a) Applicant Type: City Government

(b) Eligibility: The City of Austin, Minnesota is a “general purpose unit of local government” as defined in 2 CFR § 200.64 and, therefore, eligible to receive EPA Brownfield Community-Wide Assessment Grant funding.

## **2. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:**

The City will ensure meaningful and ongoing community input through an engagement strategy designed to reach residents most directly affected by project activities. Working with the BAC and the Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP) firm, the City will remove barriers to participation and provide regular, accessible updates through public meetings (virtual and in person), press releases, fact sheets, and website postings. To solicit and respond to feedback from disproportionately impacted residents, the City will use targeted outreach—including listening sessions, partnerships with community organizations, and engagement of non English speaking households, youth, and the elderly.

Innovative approaches such as bike/walk audits, pop up events, and demonstration activities will broaden participation among hard to reach groups. Virtual tools, including GIS StoryMaps, social media, and livestreamed events, will serve as effective alternatives to in person engagement, ensuring that community members can learn about the projects, provide input, and see how their feedback is incorporated into decision making. This approach ensures transparent communication, comprehensive participation, and meaningful integration of community input throughout the assessment and planning process.

## **3. EXPENDITURE OF EXISTING GRANT FUNDS:**

The City does not have an open EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant or Multipurpose Grant

## **4. CONTRACTORS AND NAMED SUBRECIPIENTS:**

Contractors: The city has selected a firm under a “comprehensive services process” for both grant writing and grant implementation services. The City’s procurement method used was a Request for Qualifications and Proposals (RFQP). Details regarding the City’s RFQP process are described in detail below.

- The RFQP and related documents were posted by the City of the City’s website on June 9, 2025 (<https://www.ci.austin.mn.us/>)
- The RFQP and related documents were also posted on June 12, 2025 to (<https://www.bidnetdirect.com/>)
- The RFQP and related documents were emailed to the membership list of Minnesota Brownfields (<https://mnbrownfields.org/>)
- 4 proposers responded to the RFQP on July 25, 2025.
- The chosen QEP Firm, Stantec Consulting Services Inc. (Stantec) was announced on August 19, 2025.

Below is the timeline of the RFQP process as seen in the RFQP released on June 9, 2025.

### RFQP TIMELINE SCHEDULE (dates/times subject to change)

Bid Release	Monday, June 9, 2025
Bids Due	Friday, July 25, 2025 (4:00pm CST)
Intent to Award	Tuesday, August 19, 2025

## Threshold Criteria for Community-Wide Assessment Grants

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### Internal Timelines

Evaluation Commences	August 2025
Award Recommendation	August 19, 2025

The RFQP, Stantec's response, and the City and Stantec contract are available upon request by contacting Holly Wallace ([HollyW@ci.austin.mn.us](mailto:HollyW@ci.austin.mn.us))

Subrecipients: Not applicable.