



301 West Court Street, Paragould, Arkansas 72450

1. Applicant Identification

City of Paragould
301 West Court Street
Paragould, AR 72450

2. Website URL: <https://www.cityofparagould.com>

3. Funding Requested

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

4. Location

a) City of Paragould, b) Greene County, c) Arkansas

5. Target Area and Priority Site Information

- Target Area Information: City of Paragould – Commercial Historic District
(Census Tracts 05055480500 & 05055480700)
- Priority Site Information:
 - Site 1: Cotton Gin Company – West Garland & South 2nd Street, Paragould, AR 72450
 - Site 2: Terry's Gas Station – 116 W. Main Street, Paragould, AR, 72450
 - Site 3: SA Recycling – 110 E Hunt Street, Paragould, AR 72450

6. Contacts

a. Project Director

Tara Sexton, Grants Administrator
870-239-7500 ext. 2040
tara.sexton@paragouldcityar.gov
301 West Court Street
Paragould, AR 72450

b. Chief Executive/Highest Ranking Elected Official

Josh Agee, Mayor
870-239-7510
josh.agee@paragouldcityar.gov
301 West Court Street
Paragould, AR 72450



Mayor's Office
 (870) 239-7510
 Fax (870) 239-7509
City Clerks Office
 (870) 239-7500
 PO Box 1175
City Police Headquarters
 (870) 236-7621
 Fax (870) 239-7554
 301 West Court Street

301 West Court Street, Paragould, Arkansas 72450

7. Population

City of Paragould, Arkansas: 29,940 (US Census: 2019–2023 American Community Survey)

8. Other Factors

Other Factors	Page #
Community population is 15,000 or less.	4
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).	N/A
The priority site(s) is in a federally designated flood plain.	N/A
The reuse of the priority site(s) will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy.	3
The reuse of the priority site(s) will incorporate energy efficiency measures.	3
The proposed project will improve local resilience to the impacts of extreme weather events and natural disasters.	3
At least 30% of the overall project budget will be spent on eligible reuse/area-wide planning activities, as described in Section 3.A.(2), for priority site(s) within the target area(s).	8, 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

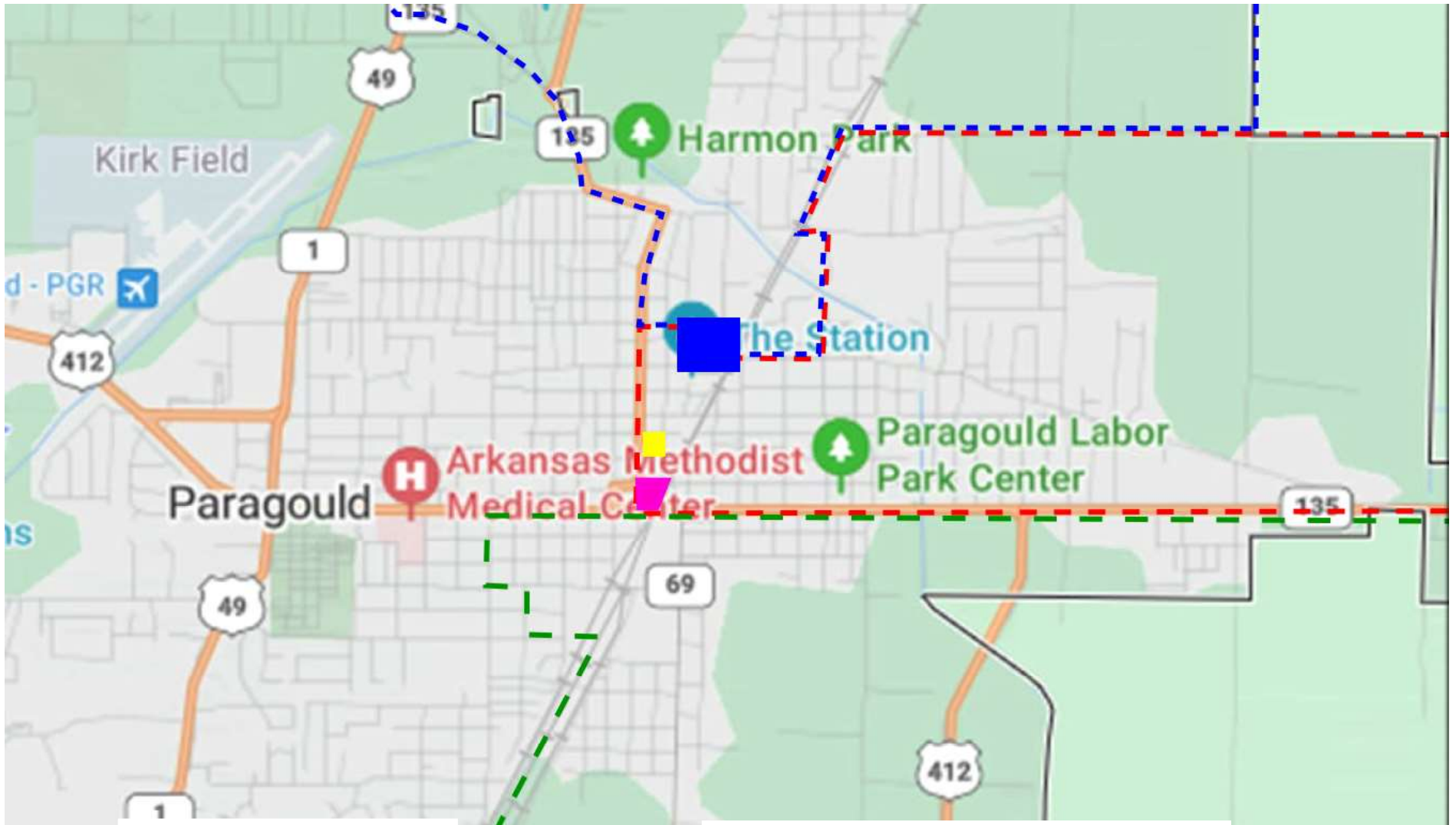
9. Letter from the State or Tribal Environmental Authority

See attached.

10. Releasing Copies of Applications

Not Applicable.

FY26 EPA Brownfield Community Wide Assessment Grant City of Paragould, AR



- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Paragould City Limits | Assessment Target Site (Cotton Gin) |
| Target Area Census Tract 4805.02 | Assessment Target Site (SA Recycling) |
| Target Area Census Tract 4805.01 | Assessment Target Site (Terry's Gas Station) |
| Target Area Census Tract 4807 | |



**DIVISION OF
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY**

Sarah Huckabee Sanders
GOVERNOR

Shane E. Khoury
SECRETARY

December 4, 2025

Electronic Mail Only

Tara Sexton, Grants Administrator
City of Paragould
301 West Court Street
Paragould, Arkansas 72450

**RE: Letter of Support for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2026 EPA Brownfield
Community-wide Assessment Grant Application**

Dear Ms. Sexton:

The Division of Environmental Quality Office of Land Resources (DEQ) is pleased to submit this letter in support of the City of Paragould's application for a Brownfield Community-wide Assessment Grant (CWAG) in Federal Fiscal Year 2026.

As the state response program, DEQ's Arkansas Brownfield Program will continue to support local efforts by providing technical assistance and regulatory oversight, as well as Targeted Brownfield Assessments when funding is available. Properties assessed by the City of Paragould may also be eligible for participation in the Arkansas Brownfield Program to obtain liability protections under Arkansas law or to obtain funding for remedial actions.

Please feel free to contact me at (501) 682-0616 or by email at addie.mcclain@arkansas.gov if further assistance is needed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "A. McClain".

Addie McClain, Brownfield Program Coordinator
Division of Environmental Quality

1. PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION AND PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION

Target Area and Brownfields. a. Overview of Brownfield Challenges and Description of Target Area: Successful timber and agriculture production in the City of Paragould (City), Arkansas, eventually gave way to social, economic, and environmental hardship triggered by industrial shifts and outsourcing. The City, located at the crossroads of the Missouri Pacific and Cotton Belt Railroads, was once a prosperous principal trading center for Northeast Arkansas. Incorporated in 1883, the City grew tremendously with the timber industry. By the 1920s, the timber industry began to slow, and the vacant timber lots were transformed into farmland producing cotton, corn, and soybeans. With this shift to agriculture, the cotton gin mill (priority site 1) opened and became the economic driver for the City by bringing in other new businesses. As the textile industry flourished, highways, roadways, and gas stations (priority site 2) were built, which diminished the need for the railway. The hide and metal company (priority site 3) grew as metal processing and recycling began to sprout in the area. With the outsourcing of the textile industry overseas in the late 1990s, businesses shuttered, and hundreds of jobs were lost. By 2020, degraded buildings, empty lots, and environmental concerns from past industrial practices created a sharp decline in revenues and an increase in vacancy, blight, and **brownfield challenges** throughout the downtown.

The **geographic boundary** for this application is the **city limits**, with a **target-area focus on the Commercial Historic District (CHD)**, census tracts (CTs) 05055480500 and 05055480700. City leadership is targeting the downtown because it embodies the city's history, hosts its most distinctive buildings, and is distinguished by its compact form. But the target area (TA), full of potential brownfield sites, has three priority sites in desperate need of assessment. Paragould intends to use this grant to address the abandoned and derelict downtown properties, allowing for better connectivity via multiuse trail systems, **improving environmental resiliency** by supporting and increasing current infrastructure, and reestablishing a thriving downtown to promote sustainable economic growth for the CHD community.

b. Description of the Priority Brownfield Site(s): More than two dozen vacant industrial buildings, such as gas stations, warehouses, restaurants, storage buildings, and a laundromat, exist within the CHD. Many of these properties may contain environmental contaminants such as polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (**PAHs**), heavy metals, solvents, volatile organic compounds (**VOCs**), semivolatile organic compounds (**SVOCs**), polychlorinated biphenyls (**PCBs**), and total petroleum hydrocarbons (**TPHs**) for oils and fuels as well as building-related asbestos-containing materials (**ACM**) and lead-based paint (**LBP**) due to their historic uses and age, and these create barriers to redevelopment and economic growth.

Three priority sites that lie in a highly visible corridor near the neighboring interstate were selected based on their redevelopment potential. **The City has site access to conduct assessments upon grant award at all three priority sites.** An inability to safely assess and address these dilapidated, environmentally contaminated sites has hampered redevelopment efforts and contributed to **economic hardship for sensitive residents.** Revitalizing these centrally located properties will eliminate public health hazards, improve neighborhood safety, and restore community pride, while attracting industry that can drive long-term economic resilience.

Priority Site 1: The **Cotton Gin Company** (1 acre), established in the early 1900s, is located on the south end of historic downtown adjacent to the City's largest and oldest church and Dollar General. Operations ceased in 2018, and the site has been vacant since. The unsecured site allows unfettered access to the idle, rusty cotton gin, cotton house structures (10,000 sq. ft.), and gravel parking lot. The site is along a highly traveled pedestrian and vehicle roadway and is a safety concern for area residents. Potential environmental concerns include **VOCs, SVOCs, nitrates,**

pesticides, TPHs for oils and fuels, and based on the age of the site buildings, ACMs and LBP. Reuse plans include mixed-use commercial properties with affordable housing.

Priority Site 2: Terry's Gas Station (0.18 acres) operated from the 1960s until the mid-90s. The site hosts a 1,346-square-foot building, previously a gas station with a service bay, which has been vacant for over two decades. There is a steel canopy that hosted four fuel pumps that have since been removed. The concrete paving is uneven and cracked on virtually the entire surface area. A derelict wooden picket fence marks the south property line. This site, in the heart of the CHD, is less than two tenths of a mile from homes, churches, and schools. Environmental concerns include **VOCs, SVOCs, heavy metals, ACMs and LBP** (due to the age of the structures). Reuse plans include mixed-use commercial development.

Priority Site 3: SA Recycling (5 acres) opened as Samuel Hide and Metal Company in the early 1930s. In June 2022, SA Recycling took ownership of the dilapidated one-story brick building (2,024 sq. feet), rusted metal sheds, and the abundance of recycled debris piles in the partially fenced lot in the middle of the CHD. The site is within steps of residential homes and local businesses and is bordered by a main railroad track with debris piles and large storage containers in sight of all who drive by the area. Environmental concerns include **VOCs, TPHs, PAHs, PCBs, Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) metals, ACM, and LBPs**. The City aims to acquire the site in the near future as it is located in an integral part of the CHD. Redevelopment of the site will include a new park with greenspace.

c. **Identifying Additional Sites:** The City conducted a windshield survey and identified over two **dozen** potential brownfield sites in the TA. During this grant project, a more in-depth site inventory and evaluation ranking criteria process will be established, as the City will work diligently with TA residents to identify and prioritize sites within the community. Those properties will be researched further by City staff using GIS and the property appraiser's website. The evaluation criteria used to determine which sites are added to the inventory will be based on community need, project partners and resident input, along with US Census data to ensure distressed communities directly benefit from the project. In the event all TA sites have been addressed, the City will work with project partners and residents to identify abandoned and underused properties throughout the **geographic boundary** and will apply the established ranking criteria (based on need of the communities) to determine the priority in which sites will be addressed.

Revitalization of the Target Area. d. **Reuse Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans:** Because the priority sites have created obstacles to redevelopment, Paragould intends to use this grant to address the abandoned and derelict downtown properties, which will allow for better connectivity via multiuse trail systems, **improve environmental resiliency** by supporting and increasing current infrastructure, and reestablish a thriving downtown to promote sustainable economic growth for the CHD community. Without redevelopment, the economy won't thrive. To jump-start revitalization, the City redeveloped the old rail depot into a thriving farmers' market adjacent to the priority sites.

The City's redevelopment efforts focus on the CHD by investing in the Paragould Main Street Program and Paragould Historic District, restoring the Greene County Courthouse, constructing Power Plant Park, creating the Innovation Center, and developing the 8 Mile Creek Trail. The **Discover Paragould 2042 Plan** (Plan) was created with brownfield redevelopment in mind, **making this application for EPA Brownfield Assessment funding one of the City's key objectives**. The Plan's vision for downtown includes a redesigned southern entrance connecting to the Kings Highway Corridor and a northern link to the new 8 Mile Trail through the revitalized North End neighborhood. Key priorities include expanded historic preservation, integrating

surrounding neighborhoods into downtown, adding parks and greenspace, and extending bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure throughout Paragould. Key planning themes include **(1) Stewarding the Future of Paragould’s Core Places & Community Anchors** and **(2) Guiding Growth and Development for New Neighborhoods, Shopping, Recreation & Employment**.

Priority Sites 1 and 2 will be developed into **mixed-use commercial properties comprising retail and affordable housing** connecting the downtown via the 8 Mile Creek Trail and the farmers’ market. These will address planning theme 1, “identifying and envisioning the future of core places through best development practices related to **preservation, infill and redevelopment**,” and theme 2, identifying the areas of “new growth through the application of best community development practices.” **Priority Site 3 will be redeveloped into a new park and greenspace**. This presently dilapidated and debris-covered area will transform into a place of pride and energy, an area for families and children to play in, and an outdoor venue for community events. To further solidify the immediate need for environmental assessment for downtown redevelopment, the community added **Action Item #29** to the **Plan**, which is to “**Obtain Brownfield Assessment Grant**” funding to “identify the potentially contaminated sites within the TA to further the established redevelopment goals.” EPA Brownfield funding will help resolve the issue of blight, remove potential contaminants, and create a new affordable and healthy lifestyle.

e. Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategy: The Plan outlines a vision for revitalization through community planning and partnerships, aiming to build a vibrant, economically stable, and community-centered city while addressing historical environmental impacts and improving public health. Assessing and redeveloping target-area properties is key to supporting vulnerable, low-income residents. Planning studies project the City’s population to increase by 9,000 over the next 20 years from its current 29,940.¹ Redevelopment of the **Cotton Gin Company** and **Terry’s Gas Station** will create a new opportunity for retail mixed with affordable and modern housing options to fuse current visions with historic charms. The conversion of **SA Recycling** into a park with greenspace will create community bonding with a new opportunity for physical activity, mental well-being, recreational events, and social connection. With this population boom looming, renewal of the priority sites and other blighted properties in the CHD will accomplish the mission of the Plan by creating new businesses with entry-level job opportunities that will increase the tax base (**economic benefit**). Improving downtown business and neighborhood aesthetics, creating new affordable housing options, developing additional parks and greenspace, and providing better connectivity via the already established trail systems are **noneconomic benefits** that will encourage an influx of visitors from the adjacent Highway 412 who will patron the CHD businesses and bring in revenue benefiting the local community (**economic benefit**).

The City, as part of the Midwest, suffers from numerous extreme weather events and natural disasters. In March 2025 and May 2024 EF2 tornadoes impacted the City. Severe thunderstorms and extreme winds also challenge the area on a regular basis. The City will collaborate with developers to ensure that all redevelopment is designed and constructed **to be resilient to extreme weather events and natural disasters**. The City will establish partnerships with developers to promote and implement **energy-efficient and renewable energy** strategies within their redevelopment plans. These strategies include building standards requiring **solar panels** or **energy-efficient materials/appliances**, site infrastructure incorporating **solar lighting** around buildings and parks and greenspaces, and energy sourcing that includes **wind power** or **renewable natural gas**. The EPA Brownfields Assessment grant will facilitate this transformation by turning environmental liabilities into assets that drive economic growth.

¹ US Census: 2019–2023 American Community Survey.

Strategy for Leveraging Resources. f. Resources Needed for Site Reuse: The City is eligible to pursue private, state, and federal grant options to advance redevelopment efforts. City leadership recently established a Land Bank, allowing the City's Economic Development Tax to fund a surplus that will facilitate **affordable housing** redevelopment planned within the CHD at the **priority sites**. The City's initial calculations show this funding vehicle will bring in \$1.5 million per year over the next five years to meet the Plan's housing objectives. If further assessment is needed within the TA upon the close of this grant, the City can apply to the State of Arkansas' Targeted Brownfields Assessment Program. Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding will be pursued to **address blight via demolition during site redevelopment**. As sites are identified for cleanup, the City will seek **EPA Brownfields Cleanup Grant funding for remediation** of assessed sites. Tax incentives such as the Opportunity Zones and state redevelopment tax incentives will be used by the City and developers for the planned redevelopment in the CHD.

g. Use of Existing Infrastructure: The redevelopment may potentially use the current building structures at Terry's Gas Station and SA Recycling. The City has evaluated existing infrastructure in the CHD and has determined that it is sufficient. Redevelopment will include the use of existing infrastructure (streets, transportation, broadband, water/sewer, power). **Infrastructure to support brownfield redevelopment is already in place at the priority sites and in the TA**. If additional infrastructure improvements are needed, the City will seek state and federal funding.

2. COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community Need. a. The Community's Need for Funding: The CHD is home to a **small and impoverished population (9,404)**.² The downtown has a **low median household income of \$35,787** compared to the US average (\$78,538).² In addition, **38% of all CHD residents live in poverty (US 12%), 9% are unemployed (US 5%), and the per capita income is \$18,506 (US \$43,289)**.² The TA is in the **93rd percentile for poverty**, with income at or below 100% of the federal poverty level, and in the **95th percentile for low income**.³ In addition to high poverty rates, the City lacks funding for the environmental assessments necessary to redevelop this distressed community. The City has the lowest city sales tax rate of any city in its class in the state, which helps the local consumers and impoverished residents. Consequently, the **City's entire tax revenue is spent on basic services**, with no surplus available for assessment activities to create momentum for redevelopment. Although the City does not have discretionary funding to pursue assessment activities on its own, they do routinely apply for federal and state funding for projects to supplement existing City programs. Without additional funding for environmental assessment, residents will continue to endure blight and potential ongoing harmful health effects from underused properties in the TA. EPA Brownfields Assessment funding will serve as the initial step in identifying environmental risks, spurring revitalization, **bringing in new employment opportunities to mitigate poverty**, and establishing a stronger community.

b. Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations: The sensitive populations in the CHD are youth, those living below the poverty level, and those living on government assistance. Poverty levels in the TA alone show the extreme economic impoverishment: **32% of all families (US 9%), 50% female head of household (US 23%), 53% of children under the age of 18 (US 16%), and 38% of all residents (US 12%)**.² Of the TA's residents, **25% depend on government food assistance**, more than double the US average (11%). Residents desperately need job opportunities as shown

² US Census: 2019–2023 American Community Survey.

³ <https://public-environmental-data-partners.github.io/j40-cejst-2/en/#12.12/36.03647/-90.47439>.

by an average **unemployment rate of 9%**, and in **CT 05055480700 unemployment is 11%, more than double the national average (US 5%).**²

The redevelopment of the **Cotton Gin Company and Terry's Gas Station** priority sites into affordable housing units and mixed-use commercial development will address **welfare issues** such as the need for **new entry-level job opportunities, better access to fresh foods (CHD farmers market), and affordable housing options**. Within the TA, **12% of target-area households have no vehicle access (US 8%).**² This reality makes it more difficult for residents to access local job opportunities and obtain healthy food, and highlights the importance of TA walkability via the 8 Mile Creek Trail. Exacerbating this issue, the CHD is in a **USDA Food Desert**. The redevelopment of the three downtown priority sites along with access to the 8 Mile Creek Trail will provide connectivity for residents to pursue entry-level job opportunities, **access fresh food from the downtown farmers market** and parks and greenspace without the need for a vehicle.

The **lack of affordable, safe housing** within the TA is affecting the residents. The CHD's average monthly rent is \$807 (US \$1,348), and the average median value of a home is \$106,566 (US \$303,400).⁴ Even with the low monthly rent and low home values, the community is still suffering as a significant portion of their annual income goes to cover housing costs. The TA is in the **70th percentile of low-income households spending more than 30% of their income on housing.**⁵ Furthermore, existing housing within the TA is aged, with 55% of all homes constructed prior to 1979, creating an environmental concern of **ACM and LBP.**⁴ More than 79% of the impoverished residents in the City rent housing due to lack of income, demonstrating the extreme need for affordable, modern housing that this redevelopment will create.⁶ Vacant and underused properties left by declining commercial and industrial activity have created economic and social strain, leading to disinvestment and high poverty in the TA. EPA Brownfields Assessment funds will help identify contamination and protect vulnerable residents, laying the groundwork for redevelopment through affordable housing and new businesses in the CHD, ultimately creating jobs and long-term economic opportunity.

c. Greater Than Normal Incidence of Disease and Adverse Health Conditions: Sensitive populations face more significant risk of disease and health conditions such as **cancer and asthma** because of conditions present at brownfield sites. Based on their age and deterioration, **TA buildings** create an ongoing air quality threat as the LBP and ACM continue to sit and decay. Additional environmental concerns for the priority sites include VOCs, SVOCs, nitrates, and heavy metals. Historical site uses at the **Cotton Gin Company**, including cotton storage, may also impact this property through the pesticides and herbicides associated with the farming industry. **Terry's Gas Station and SA Recycling** locations along a railroad line may have resulted in contamination from old creosote railroad ties and PCBs. Additional TA properties identified through the City's windshield survey include former filling stations and suspected laundry/dry-cleaning facilities situated near homes, parks, and churches. The TA is in the **79th percentile** for leaking underground storage tanks (USTs), and historical releases of hazardous substances from dry cleaners can go undetected for years and present a continuing threat for vapor encroachment conditions (**VECs**) inside buildings. Many of these hazardous and petroleum compounds can lead to cancer.⁷

⁴ US Census: 2019–2023 American Community Survey.

⁵ <https://public-environmental-data-partners.github.io/j40-cejst-2/en/#12.2/36.0763/-90.47166>.

⁶ <https://www.city-data.com/poverty/poverty-Paragould-Arkansas.html>.

LBP and ACM exposure pose increased risks, especially for the TA’s children. The TA ranks in the **55th percentile in the state for lead paint indicators**.⁷ Lead exposure can result in severe health and developmental consequences in **infants and children**, and asbestos exposure can result in many forms of **cancer** and breathing problems such as **asthma**. The 2023–2026 Greene County Community Health Needs Assessment (**city/target-area data not available**) lists **cancer as the second leading cause of death** with a rate of **178.9 per 100k** (US 144.1 per 100k). Respiratory diseases, including **asthma**, are the sixth leading cause of death, with a rate of **93 per 100k** (US 36.4 per 100k). The **TA is in the 65th percentile for toxic releases to air statewide**.⁷ The **TA is in the 86th percentile statewide weighted percentage of people told they have asthma**.⁷ Without the EPA Brownfields funding, the City will be unable to identify potential contaminants exacerbating these underlying health conditions. By addressing brownfield sites, the City can mitigate the serious health concerns they cause for residents.

d. Economically Impoverished/Disproportionately Impacted Populations: Many properties within the TA are vacant or abandoned and present an ongoing environmental threat and a continuous source of industrial and commercial blight for the community. The environmental issues stemming from the **three priority sites** in the CHD create a ripple effect of negative consequences, including **decreased taxable revenue, decreased property values, a reduced ability to market properties for redevelopment**, and disproportionately impacted populations with **low income, high unemployment, substandard housing, lack of transportation options, and distressed neighborhoods**. Obtaining the Brownfield Assessment Grant will help address and reduce the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial and commercial operations afflicting the CHD TA, which **suffers from the following environmental issues**: 85th percentile for ozone, 74th percentile toxic releases to air, 88th percentile hazardous waste proximity, 79th percentile UST, and 80th percentile wastewater discharge.⁷ The City’s **low-income residents (95th percentile), residents living in poverty (93rd percentile), and unemployed residents (82nd percentile)** are the most adversely affected by these environmental stressors as properties continue to sit idle and vacant.⁸ Support from the EPA Assessment Grant to redevelop these priority sites into mixed-use commercial space, affordable housing, and new parks and greenspace, connected by the 8 Mile Creek Trail, will reduce environmental and socioeconomic challenges and relieve the disproportionate burdens on this distressed community.

Community Engagement. e. Project Involvement & f. Project Roles: Project partners will help guide site selection and prioritization, lead outreach and public education, and support cleanup planning and future reuse strategies.

Name of org. & mission	Point of contact	Specific involvement/ assistance provided
<u>Economic Development Corp. of Paragould</u> : Nonprofit (501(c)(6)) is charged with directing all economic development efforts within the city ensures land, buildings, and necessary resources are ready for redevelopment.	Allison Hestand ahestand@paragould.org	<u>Assistance/Decision Making</u> : Site identification and prioritization and future reuse planning
<u>Paragould Regional Chamber of Commerce</u> : Nonprofit (501(c)(6)) serves Paragould in business, economic development, tourism, and education.	Robbie Young robyoung@rylawfirm.com	<u>Assistance/Decision Making</u> : Site identification, marketing assessed sites to interested developers for revitalization

⁷ <https://pedp-ejscreen.azurewebsites.net/>.

⁸ <https://public-environmental-data-partners.github.io/j40-cejst-2/en/#12.2/36.0763/-90.47166>.



**City of Paragould, AR
FY2026 US EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant**

Main Street Paragould: Nonprofit (501(c)(3)) acts as a downtown business liaison and coordinates with local industry to ensure historic preservation of City assets.	Andrea Dickey Andrea.dickey@fnbank.net	Assistance/Decision Making: Education & community outreach via small business connections
Greene County Future Fund: Grassroots nonprofit (501(c)(3)); young professionals promoting urban biking/hiking trails, greenspace, and recycling efforts.	Kimberly Dale kdale@paragouldlawyer.com	Assistance/Decision Making: Future land-use planning and community outreach/education
First United Methodist Church: Local church (501(c)(3)) located next to Priority Site 1.	Rev. Dane Womack dane.womack@fumcparagould.org	Assistance/Decision Making: Community outreach, education, and meeting space
Paragould Housing Authority: Local housing organization offering a variety of housing options and programs for low-income individuals and senior citizens.	David Lange director@paragouldha.com	Assistance/Decision Making: Future land-use planning for affordable housing plans and community outreach/education

g. Incorporating Community Input: The City announced its intent to reapply for an EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant for the CHD at the January 12, 2026 City Council meeting. It will continue engaging TA residents and community organizations, especially those most affected, to help identify priority brownfield sites. A Community Involvement Plan (CIP) will outline engagement activities, key partners, and project background, and will be available at City Hall and on the City’s website to ensure inclusive participation, including from sensitive populations.

To identify potential brownfield sites in the TA, the City will perform community outreach and review the suggested sites provided by community members during quarterly meetings. The Brownfield Project Team (BPT), made up of city staff, will solicit, review, and evaluate comments and community input during quarterly meetings, recording all community member suggestions and information in meeting minutes and posting them on the City’s Brownfield Program webpage. The BPT will maintain a site inventory of the suggested brownfield sites and will review the list routinely, updating it at each quarterly meeting. The BPT will work with residents to prioritize sites based on community need and the City’s Brownfield Program goals. Priority will be given to those sites that most benefit sensitive populations in the TA. The City’s CIP will incorporate several forms of media. Brownfields updates will be posted to the City’s Facebook page and on the City’s Brownfield Program webpage. The City will provide resident **interaction via website and social media as a supplement to in-person community engagement**. For residents without transportation or internet access, the City will mail information for other committees and meetings. The City will disseminate Brownfield Project information through signage in government buildings, press releases, and local newspapers, and will update organizations and community members through City Council meetings, community education meetings held throughout the TA, and charrettes/vision sessions. All promotional materials and the names and contact information of the City’s BPT will be posted on the City’s brownfield webpage, facilitating community member contact with BPT members.

3. TASK DESCRIPTIONS, COST ESTIMATES, AND MEASURING PROGRESS

Description of Tasks/Activities and Outputs:

Task 1: Outreach & Site Inventory	
a.	<i>Project Implementation: EPA-funded:</i> Community Involvement Plan (CIP), outreach materials, Brownfield (BF) project webpage, and social media posts will be developed by the City’s BF Project Director with assistance from the environmental contractor (EC). City staff will lead the community/educational meetings discussing the project plans and updates. The City’s BF Project Director will work with target-area residents during outreach events to add to the site inventory. Identified abandoned and underused properties will be researched further by City staff using the GIS and property appraiser’s website. EC will work with City staff to create an evaluation ranking tool

	to determine the order the sites will be addressed. Supplies: printed outreach materials (brochures/handouts) and office supplies to manage the grant.
b.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> CIP created 1 st quarter. Meetings held in Q1 & Q3 in Year 1–3 and Q2 of Year 4. BF webpage and outreach materials created in Q1 and posted quarterly throughout the grant. Meeting held in Q1 will continue the preliminary inventory process. Evaluation ranking process begins in Q2 and continues throughout the grant.
c.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> City: Tara Sexton, Brownfield Project Director
d.	<i>Outputs:</i> CIP, BF webpage, 7 community meetings, brochures/handouts, social media posts, evaluation ranking tool, site inventory list, summary of community meetings in EPA-required quarterly reports.
Task 2: Assessment	
a.	<i>Project Implementation: EPA-funded:</i> The EC will conduct Environmental Site Assessment (ESAs) activities starting with the priority sites listed in this application. ASTM-AAI-compliant Phase Is; Generic Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP); Phase IIs that will include the Sampling and Analysis Plan (SAP). Prior to assessment, site access agreements and property eligibility determinations approval will be obtained. National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 consultations will be addressed when applicable.
b.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> Assessments will take place in Q2 and continue throughout the grant.
c.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> EC will implement the technical aspects of the project with oversight from the City: Kevin Lang, Brownfield Project Manager.
d.	<i>Outputs:</i> 13 Phase I ESAs; 1 Generic QAPP; 8 Phase II ESAs including SS-QAPP, Site Access Agreements, Property Eligibility Determinations, and Section 106 determination (if applicable).
Task 3: Reuse Planning	
a.	<i>Project Implementation: EPA-funded:</i> For projects identified for cleanup, the EC will prepare the Analysis for Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA), which include evaluating cleanup alternatives, calculating cleanup costs, and determining site-appropriate remediation/reuse planning to reduce health/environmental risks. The EC will assist the City in hosting charrettes/vision sessions. A planner will create the following EPA-approved planning documents: Site Reuse Assessments, Market Study, and a Brownfield Area Wide Plan.
b.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> Plans & charrettes begin in Q6 and continue throughout the grant.
c.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> The EC will implement the technical aspects of the project with oversight from the City: Kevin Lang, Brownfield Project Manager.
d.	<i>Outputs:</i> 3 ABCAs, 2 vision sessions/charrettes, 2 Site Reuse Assessments, 1 Market Study, 1 BF Area Wide Plan.
Task 4: Programmatic Support	
a.	<i>Project Implementation: Non-EPA-funded:</i> Using its own funding, the City will procure an EC to assist with the Brownfield Grant Project. The City’s BF Finance Director oversees grant administration to ensure compliance with the EPA Cooperative Agreement Work Plan, schedule, and terms and conditions. <i>EPA-funded:</i> The selected EC will assist the City in completing ACRES database reporting, yearly financial reporting, quarterly reporting, and all additional programmatic support for the four-year term of the grant. The travel budget allows for two staff to attend three brownfield training conferences/workshops.
b.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> Procure EC in Q1. ACRES & quarterly reporting begins in Q1 and continues throughout the grant. Annual reporting and forms created in Q5, Q9, Q13, and during final closeout.
c.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> City: Shelia Ragsdell, Brownfield Finance Director.
d.	<i>Outputs:</i> ACRES database reporting, 4 annual financial reports, 16 quarterly reports, and programmatic support for the four-year grant period. Two staff to attend three events/trainings.

e. Cost Estimates: Below are the anticipated cost estimates for this project *based on past Brownfield Projects as determined by local market standards with contractual hourly rates based on the skills needed for the specific tasks.* The budget for this project includes travel, conference registration (other) supplies, personnel and contractual costs only. No administrative costs are included. The personnel rate is an average of \$25 per hour to include fringe.

- **Fifty-four percent (54%) of the budget will be spent on site-specific work and 33% on area-wide planning activities.**

Task 1 Outreach & Site Inventory: Personnel (\$25 per hour): CIP \$1,250 (50 hrs); BF webpage, outreach brochure/handouts, social media posts \$2,500 (100 hrs); 7 community education meetings/events \$3,500 (\$500 per mtg.; 20 hrs per mtg. to include preparation and execution); Site Inventory \$1,250 (50 hrs). Contractual: CIP \$3,000 (20 hrs × \$150); Brownfield website, outreach brochure/handouts, social media posts \$2,550 (17 hrs × \$150); 7 community education events/meetings \$9,450 (\$1,350/meeting; 9 hrs × \$150); Site Inventory \$10,050 (67 hrs × \$150). Supplies: \$700 (printed brochures \$450 [450 × \$1.00]; printed display boards \$200 [2 × \$100]; notebooks, paper, pens, other miscellaneous office supplies \$50).

Task 2 Assessment: Personnel (\$25 per hour): Report review \$550 (1 hr per report; 22 reports). Contractual: 13 Phase I ESAs \$52,000 (\$4,000 each); 1 Generic QAPP \$7,000; 8 Phase II ESAs including SAP \$192,000 (\$24,000 each).

Task 3 Reuse Planning: Personnel (\$25 per hour): Vision session \$500 (10 hrs per session, 2 sessions); report review \$350 (2 hr per report; 7 reports). Contractual: 3 ABCAs \$18,000 (\$6,000 each); 2 vision sessions \$4,000 (\$2,000/meeting); 2 Site Reuse Assessment Plans \$66,000 (\$33,000 each [Principal Planner: 35 hrs × \$250; Senior Planner: 50 hrs × \$200; Project Management (PM) Planner: 50 hrs × \$175; Support Personnel: 44 hrs × \$125]); 1 Market Study \$22,000 (Principal Planner: 42 hrs × \$250; Senior Planner: 40 hrs × \$200, PM Planner: 20 hrs × \$175); 1 BF Area Wide Plan \$75,000 (Principal Planner: 150 hrs × \$250; Senior Planner: 100 hrs × \$200; PM Planner: 100 hrs × \$175).

Task 4 Programmatic Support: Personnel (\$25 per hour): \$7,500 (300 hrs). Contractual: ACRES database reporting, yearly financial reporting, quarterly reporting, programmatic support for the four-year grant period \$10,050 (67 hrs × \$150). Travel: 2 staff to attend 3 events \$9,600 (flights at \$800, hotels at \$250 × 2 nights, per diem at \$100 per day × 3 days × 2 staff × 3 events). Other: \$1,200 conference registration (\$200 × 2 attendees × 3 events).

Category	Tasks				Totals
	<i>Outreach & Inventory</i>	<i>Assessment</i>	<i>Reuse Planning</i>	<i>Programmatic Support</i>	
Personnel	\$8,500	\$550	\$850	\$7,500	\$17,400
Travel				\$9,600	\$9,600
Supplies	\$700				\$700
Contractual	\$25,050	\$251,000	\$185,000	\$10,050	\$471,100
Other				\$1,200	\$1,200
Totals	\$34,250	\$251,550	\$185,850	\$28,350	\$500,000

f. Plan to Measure and Evaluate Environmental Progress and Results: To ensure this EPA Brownfields Project is on schedule, the City's internal Brownfield Project Team, which includes the environmental contractor, will meet quarterly to track all outputs identified in 3.d. using an Excel spreadsheet and will report all progress in fulfilling the scope of work, goals, and objectives to the EPA via quarterly reports. In addition, project expenditures and activities will be compared to the project's schedule to ensure the grant project will be completed within the four-year time frame. Site-specific information will be entered and tracked in the ACRES database. Tracked outputs include the number of neighborhood meetings, public meetings, meetings with community groups and project partners, environmental assessments, ABCAs, and cleanup/redevelopment plans. Tracked outcomes include community participation, acres assessed, acres ready for reuse, redevelopment dollars leveraged, and jobs created. In the event the project is not being completed in an efficient manner, the City has countermeasures in place to address this problem by making monthly calls to its EPA Project Officer and, if needed, create an EPA Corrective Action Plan.

4. PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE

Programmatic Capability. a. Organizational Capacity, b. Organizational Structure, & c. Description of Key Staff: The City uses a mayor–council system, with an eight-member City Council serving as its legislative and policy-making body. City staff are familiar with successfully managing federal- and state-funded grant projects for their jurisdiction. The Team, described below, and their supporting staff are well capable of successfully managing this Brownfield Assessment Grant. **Ms. Tara Sexton**, the City’s Grants Administrator, will serve as the **Brownfield Project Director**. Ms. Sexton has worked for the City for three years. Prior to holding this position, she was a paralegal for ten years, where she honed her technical and legal writing skills composing legal briefs and legal discovery. She maintained dozens of client files and lawsuits for three attorneys, showing her ability to multitask, perform efficient work, and move seamlessly from subject to subject. Ms. Sexton will be the project’s primary point of contact and will be responsible for the overall management of the grant, including directing team members. **Mr. Kevin Lang**, the City’s Director of Planning and Development, will serve as the **Brownfield Project Manager**. Mr. Lang has served in this position for four years and manages the Inspector’s office; reviews plans for new projects; administers the building, plumbing, electrical and zoning codes; and assists citizens and developers through the permitting and rezoning process. Prior to his role in the City’s Planning and Development office, Mr. Lang was a veteran firefighter for 24 years and fire chief for 14 years in Paragould. Mr. Lang will assist Ms. Sexton in the day-to-day tasks involved with this project. **Ms. Shelia Ragsdell** will serve as **Brownfield Finance Director**. She has been with the City for over 15 years and is the City Treasurer. She is responsible for the financial and programmatic reporting for the City’s state and federal grants. She will be responsible for managing the finances of this grant and will complete all draw downs through ASAP.gov. The environmental contractor (EC) will handle the technical and reporting portions of this project. d. Acquiring Additional Resources: The City will procure a qualified EC and subcontractors to assist with technical and reporting aspects of the Brownfield Assessment Grant, if awarded. Procurement procedures will comply with both the local contracting and procurement process and with EPA requirements for Professional Service.

Past Performance and Accomplishments. f. Has Not Received an EPA Brownfields Grant but has Received Other Federal or Non-Federal Financial Assistance Agreements: (1) Purpose and Accomplishments: In 2021, the City was awarded Phase IV of an Arkansas Department of Transportation—Transportation Alternatives Program Grant, for \$300,000, followed by an award for Phase V in 2024 (\$500,000), and Phase VI in 2025 (\$500,000). These three grants in addition to three prior grants total \$2,256,000 in grant funds awarded to date, for a project total of \$2,800,000 used to build the 8 Mile Creek Trail, a multiuse trail for bike and pedestrian activity. Phase IV funding will closeout in early 2026, while Phase V and VI are awaiting construction. The trail boasts 6,500 visitors a month (78,000 annually). In 2025, the City was awarded \$584,250 from the Federal Aviation Administration for an Infrastructure Grant. The funds were used to build a new hangar at the airport. The new airport hangar houses 2–3 planes throughout the year and will generate an estimated \$27,000 a year in revenue. All funds were expended, and the project was completed in October 2025. (2) Compliance with Grant Requirements: The City has a history of compliance with grant work plans, schedules, terms, conditions, and has an excellent history of timely reporting with all award agencies. The City is on schedule for all active grants. Ms. Ragsdell along with the Brownfield Project Team is skilled in project management and will monitor all grant activities to ensure compliance with all financial reporting requirements. Ms. Sexton is well versed in grant reporting and will input all project information into ACRES.

Threshold Criteria

1. Applicant Eligibility

- a. The City of Paragould, AR (City), is eligible to apply for the EPA Brownfields Community-wide Assessment Grant as a general-purpose unit of local government as defined under 2 CFR § 200.64.
- b. The City is not exempt from Federal taxation under section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code.

2. Community Involvement

The City informed the public of their intent to reapply for an EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant for the CHD at the City council meeting held on January 12, 2026. The City will cultivate productive and thought-provoking interactions between TA residents and community organizations, **especially those directly impacted by the project**. The City has and will continue to seek valuable input from residents and community organizations to help identify potential brownfield sites, as they are the most aware of the urgent needs. The City will create a Community Involvement Plan (CIP), which will provide an event schedule, an outline of planned community engagement activities, a project background, and a list of key players. The CIP will be made available for review at City Hall and on the City's website and will ensure engagement with sensitive populations.

To identify potential brownfield sites in the TA, the City will perform community outreach and review the suggested sites provided by community members during quarterly meetings. The Brownfield Project Team (BPT), made up of city staff, will solicit, review, and evaluate comments and community input during quarterly meetings, recording all community member suggestions and information in meeting minutes and posting them on the City's Brownfield Program webpage. The BPT will maintain a site inventory of the suggested brownfield sites and will review the list routinely, updating it at each quarterly meeting. The BPT will work with residents to prioritize sites based on community need and the City's Brownfield Program goals. Priority will be given to those sites that most benefit sensitive populations in the TA. The City's CIP will incorporate several forms of media. Brownfields updates will be posted to the City's Facebook page and on the City's Brownfield Program webpage. The City will provide resident **interaction via website and social media as a supplement to in-person community engagement**. For residents without transportation or internet access, the City will mail information for other committees and meetings. The City will disseminate Brownfield Project information through signage in government buildings, press releases, and local newspapers, and will update organizations and community members through City Council meetings, community education meetings held throughout the TA, and charrettes/vision sessions. All promotional materials and the names and contact information of the City's BPT will be posted on the City's brownfield webpage, facilitating community member contact with BPT members.

3. Expenditure of Existing Grant Funds

The City affirms that they do not have an open EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant or Multipurpose Grant.



4. **Contractors and Named Subrecipients**
Not Applicable.