



RO6-26-A-011

1. Applicant Identification

City of Brownsville
1001 E Elizabeth Street
Brownsville, Texas 78520

2. Website URL: <https://www.brownsvilletx.gov>

3. Funding Requested

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

4. Location

a) City of Brownsville, b) Cameron County, c) Texas

5. Target Area and Priority Site Information

Target Area: West Brownsville Historic District (WBHD)

- Census tracts 48061013700, 48061014002, and 48061014001

Priority Sites:

- Former Rail Switchyard – 25°54'16.88"N / 97°30'33.13"W, Brownsville, TX 78520
- Former Oil & Freight Depots – 25°54'10.50"N / 97°30'24.92"W, Brownsville, TX 78520

6. Contacts

a. Project Director

Mr. Carlos Lastra, City Engineer
956-547-6812
Carlos.Lastra@brownsvilletx.gov
404 E Washington
Brownsville, Texas 78520

b. Chief Executive/Highest Ranking Elected Official

Mayor John Cowen Jr.
956-548-6007
John.Cowen@brownsvilletx.gov
1001 E Elizabeth Street
Brownsville, Texas 78520

7. Population

City of Brownsville, Texas – 188,023 (US Census 2019–2023 American Community Survey)



8. Other Factors

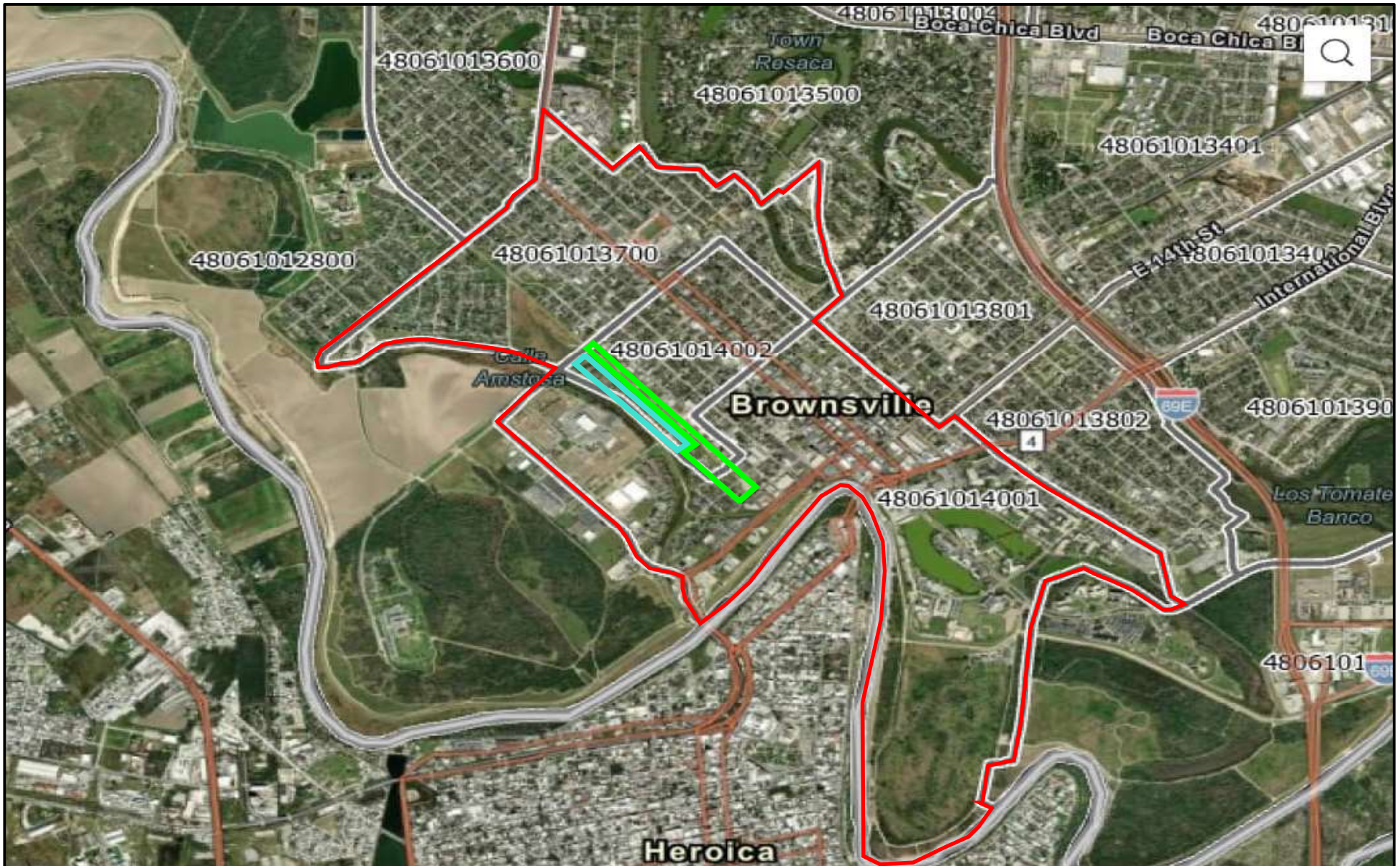
Other Factors	Page #
Community population is 15,000 or less.	4
The applicant is, or will assist, a federally recognized Indian Tribe or United States Territory.	N/A
The priority site(s) is impacted by mine-scarred land.	N/A
The priority site(s) is adjacent to a body of water (i.e., the border of the 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.



- WBHD Census Tracts
- Former Rail Switchyard
- Oil & Freight Depots

DIAGRAM IS FOR GENERAL LOCATION ONLY, AND IS NOT INTENDED FOR CONSTRUCTION PURPOSES



Community Wide Assessment Map

West Brownsville Historic District (WBHD)

Census Tracts 48061013700, 48061014002, 48061014001
Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

Brooke T. Paup, *Chairwoman*
Catarina R. Gonzales, *Commissioner*
Tonya R. Miller, *Commissioner*
Kelly Keel, *Executive Director*



TEXAS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Protecting Texas by Reducing and Preventing Pollution

December 17, 2025

Doroteo Garcia Jr.
City of Brownsville
Assistant City Manager
1001 E. Elizabeth
Brownsville, TX 78520

Sent via email

Subject: City of Brownsville Proposal for a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency FY26
Brownfield Community-Wide Assessment

Dear Mr. Garcia:

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) **acknowledges** the City of Brownsville's proposal for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency FY26 Brownfields Community-Wide Assessment Grant. TCEQ believes the work completed under the grant will significantly impact the enhancement of this community and supports the grant proposal. You may contact me at 512-239-2023 or anukriti.mahayan@tceq.texas.gov if you have any questions or if you would like additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Anukriti Mahayan".

Anukriti Mahayan
Brownfields Program Manager
Remediation Division

AM/dl



1. PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION AND PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION

Target Area and Brownfields. a. Overview of Brownfield Challenges and Description of Target Area: Brownsville, Texas (City), has grown from a military post to the largest city in the Rio Grande Valley (pop. 188,023).¹ The City was founded shortly after the Mexican–American War. Due to its strategic location along the Rio Grande and near the Gulf of Mexico, the City thrived as a trade hub. Its unique position attracted settlers, traders, and soldiers, fostering a vibrant cultural environment. The arrival of railroads in the late 1800s further fueled economic growth, making the movement of goods and people more efficient, and expanding the City’s role in regional trade. As the City grew, manufacturing and agriculture flourished; however, this industrial boom left a legacy of sites with **brownfield challenges**. In the late 20th century, the City encountered economic decline, reduced property values, and social dislocation. The City’s downtown area was particularly affected, leading to a significant economic decline during the past few decades.

The **geographic boundary** for this application is the **city limits**, with a **target area of the West Brownsville Historic District (WBHD)** located in **census tracts (CTs) 48061013700, 48061014002, and 48061014001**. The WBHD is home to a large minority population with **92% Hispanic people** who are living with socioeconomic difficulties such as lack of education, high poverty (**40% of all people**), and blighted and distressed neighborhoods.¹ **Over 52%** of people ages 25 years and older in the WBHD have **less than a high school diploma**.² The area also experiences severe transportation barriers, as residents in 29% of all occupied housing units have no vehicle available (US 8%).¹ These conditions limit access to jobs, healthcare, and essential services, making safe and connected redevelopment critical. The City recognizes the need for an environmental assessment and plans to move forward with redevelopment. A collaborative planning effort with project partner organizations, supported by EPA Brownfields funding, will allow for **identification of contaminants and cleanup planning** to drive redevelopment of blighted and abandoned brownfields, bringing prosperity back to the community.

b. Description of the Priority Brownfield Site(s): Counting **an estimated 50+** brownfield sites in the **WBHD** alone, the City has identified properties that present a potential hazard to residents, including former industrial buildings, warehouses, fuel stations, maintenance facilities, dry cleaners, a former rail switchyard and railcar yard, and several oil refining and storage facilities. Potential environmental concerns in the WBHD range widely: **petroleum hydrocarbons (PHs), metals, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, pesticides, herbicides, lead-based paint (LBP), and asbestos-containing materials (ACM)**. The City will work with target-area residents to identify additional sites through a grant-funded site inventory, then will create an evaluation ranking tool that will prioritize the identified brownfield sites based on need and current redevelopment plans. The following priority sites were selected based on their potential for redevelopment, on-site hazards, and prime locations.

Priority Site 1, the Former Rail Switchyard site (FRS), is 5.32 acres consisting of 7 parcels, and is part of the **largest undeveloped tract of land** in the WBHD. The FRS served as a large switchyard for nearly a century dating prior to 1900s and was immediately adjacent to a wide variety of industrial sites ranging from oil refineries to warehouses and repair shops, most of which have not been in operation since the mid-1900s. The unsecured site has been abandoned since 2015 and adjoins residential properties and is close proximity to the Consulate General of Mexico and Texas Southmost College. Potential contaminants of concern include **PHs, VOCs, herbicides,**

¹ US Census 2019–2023 American Community Survey.

² <https://public-environmental-data-partners.github.io/j40-cejst-2/en/#13.19/25.89363/-97.49836>



pesticides, asbestos, and metal. The City has access to the site for assessment which is owned by the county.

Priority Site 2, the Former Oil & Freight Depots site (OFD), is a 9.67 acre tract of land comprising 15 parcels, situated adjacent southeast of the FRS site. The site is currently vacant, with former building slabs where the old oil and freight depots were previously located. The 15 parcels, when combined with FRS, make up an almost 4,000-foot-long-by-300-foot-wide tract of land that bisects the historic downtown area from residential areas and the Consulate General of Mexico and Texas Southmost College. As a result, dirt foot paths traverse the property. The unsecured site has been abandoned since 2015 and is close to churches, schools, and residences, creating a safety hazard for residents. The OFD has a long history of industrial use, including the Magnolia Petroleum Oil Depot, Texas Co. Oil Depot, a large freight depot, and a flour mill from approximately 1900 until the 1960s, a rail switchyard on the southern portion from 1900 until 2015, and as a fuel and lubricant storage and distribution facility (1995–2000). From 2000 until 2015, it continued to be used for rail operations under the St. Louis, Brownsville, and Mexico Railway Company. Sanborn fire insurance maps dating as far back as 1894 depict adjoining industrial properties used as ice factories, oil refining and storage, iron shops, and cottonseed oil factories. Potential contaminants of concern include PHs, VOCs, herbicides, pesticides, asbestos, and metals. The City owns the site and has site access for assessment.

c. Identifying Additional Sites: The City will determine additional eligible sites within the WBHD. An in-depth, grant-funded site inventory and evaluation ranking criteria process will be established as the City works with WBHD residents and project partners to identify and prioritize sites. Those properties will be researched further by City staff using Cameron County’s GIS website. The evaluation criteria used to determine the order in which sites will be addressed will be based on community need, project partner and resident input, and US Census data to ensure distressed communities’ benefit from each project. Once the entire target area has been addressed with grant funding, the City will work with the community to identify sites throughout its geographic boundary using the same evaluation ranking criteria to ensure sensitive populations benefit from brownfield assessment and redevelopment.

Revitalization of the Target Area. d. Reuse Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans: The City brought together local and regional partners and stakeholders to create the 10-year 2015 **Imagine Brownsville Comprehensive Plan (Plan)** to guide future development, redevelopment, and community enhancement efforts. The Plan includes goals for **downtown revitalization** and increased foot traffic and highlights Urban Smart Growth Principles for the City as follows: **(1) Economic Development** through enhancement of economic health and growth of the community; **(2) Equity** by focusing on increasing accessibility and opportunities for all members of the community; **(3) Connectivity** by creating physical and natural linkages between blocks and neighborhoods; **(4) Transitions** by methods of which hard edges can be softened; and **(5) Legibility** by generating cognitive awareness of place through wayfinding and distinctive elements of design. Recently named a National Historic District by the National Park Service, the City has already taken steps toward breathing new life into downtown through new events, celebrations, and market days to draw visitors to the area; however, redevelopment of downtown-adjacent properties, specifically the **two priority sites** identified in this application, would **greatly contribute to all five of the City’s Smart Growth Principles**.

The projected reuse of **FRS and OFD priority sites** will integrate the final, and most environmentally challenged, segment of the West Rail Trail as part of a **mixed-use development**, offering a unique way to promote sustainability, health, and connectivity within urban spaces. The



priority sites reuse **will expand the existing trail** and will be further enhanced with cross streets and shops that **connect the historic downtown area to the residential areas, college, and Mexican Consulate**. Such developments combine residential, commercial, and recreational elements to enhance community engagement, reduce car dependency, and support local economies. The reuse strategies for **both priority sites** align with the **Plan** and will address the environmental and economic needs of this **distressed** community.

e. Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategy:

The **FRS and OFD** reuse will extend the existing multiuse trail system and create economic and noneconomic benefits like generating **new business opportunities, attracting visitors which will generate tax revenue, increase property tax values, create affordable living via mixed use development, expand the walkable and bikeable community, while increasing local employment** at trailside businesses and providing recreational elements that can enhance community engagement, promote physical activity, and improve public health. The overall redevelopment includes an additional 20 city blocks integrated into the multiuse trail, housing, retail, and more. Expansion of the historic downtown district is a very unique opportunity to redefine the area with sustainable urban development. This planned trail extension will connect downtown to residential areas, colleges, the Mexican Consulate, and the Rio Grande River. For cities like Brownsville, this approach offers a long-term investment in **resilience**, livability, and community vitality, aligning with goals of **sustainable urban development** and quality of life enhancement.

The City is subject to numerous types of **extreme weather and natural disasters** such as excessive heat, hurricanes, unusual cold snaps, droughts, and wildfires. The City will work with developers so that the planned redevelopment will also improve **environmental resilience**. **Improving greenspace and walkability will reduce pollutants** and improve air quality. By ensuring developers are using **energy-efficient measures** in their designs, **promoting sustainability**, and encouraging use of **renewable energy** through **solar lighting or wind energy**, the City will build a resilient community that will continue to grow for many years to come.

Strategy for Leveraging Resources. f. Resources Needed for Site Reuse: The City, as a local unit of government, is eligible to apply for county, state, and federal grant funding and is making every effort to secure additional funding to further its Brownfield Program goals. **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)** funds are available for the removal of blight and infrastructure improvements. The **Brownsville Community Improvement Corporation (BCIC)** provides funding and support for economic development projects, including site reuse initiatives that align with community needs. BCIC's programs aim to make revitalized sites economically viable, helping attract businesses and community services. **Brownsville Public Utilities Board (BPUB)** collaborates with the City to integrate sustainable practices in site redevelopment, especially regarding stormwater management and utility infrastructure. For projects that involve **green infrastructure or energy-efficient designs**, BPUB offers guidance on water conservation, renewable energy resources, and sustainable stormwater management solutions, crucial for transforming brownfields into eco-friendly spaces. The City offers **tax abatements and other incentives** to encourage private investment in redevelopment of brownfield and vacant sites. The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality also issues a **Brownfields Site Assessment Program** that assists in funding any additional assessments needed. Once sites are assessed, the City will apply for **EPA Brownfield Cleanup** funding to remove contamination and further redevelopment. Each of these potential funding sources will stimulate the availability of additional funds to support project completion, creating a brighter tomorrow for this sensitive population.



g. Use of Existing Infrastructure: In FY25, the City invested over \$670,000 in street and drainage improvements, including repaving projects. The City has embarked on a significant initiative to modernize its downtown water and wastewater lines using American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding totaling over \$12,500,000. The project is on track for a May 2026 completion. Therefore, infrastructure (streets, water, sewer, broadband, power) within the WBHD and at the two priority sites is sufficient for immediate redevelopment. There are no structures on site at the priority sites that will be or are able to be reused in the planned redevelopment of the sites. In the event additional infrastructure improvements are needed, the City will look to state and federal funding.

2. COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community Need. a. The Community's Need for Funding: Revitalizing the **WBHD** is the first step in forging a new future for a community that has suffered from poverty for generations. The WBHD is a **small community of only 8,466 residents** suffering from **low per capita income of \$14,199** (US \$43,289) and **low median household income of \$25,743** (US \$78,538).³ The WBHD **poverty rate is an astounding 40% of all people** (US 12%).³ The target area is in the **94th percentile for low income**.⁴

The City's current tax revenues are expended on basic city services, with no budget available for assessment activities to allow for much needed redevelopment. With the **high level of poverty** and an **extremely distressed community**, the City does not have the ability to raise additional tax revenue. With no additional funding for assessments, these underserved residents will continue to endure the harmful health effects and blight currently controlling the target area. Brownfield Assessment Grant funding would help the City provide resources, identify environmental hazards, and generate revitalization to create opportunities and a brighter future.

b. Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations: Target-area **sensitive populations** are those **living in poverty, the elderly, and youth**. The **elderly and youth** (under 18) population is **47%** (US 42%) which adds to the target area's vulnerability.³ Extremely low incomes force an elevated number of residents to depend on **government food assistance (50%)**, **nearly four times more than the US average (11%)**.³ In this area, over **43% of children under 18 years live below the poverty level** (US 13%) as well as **49% of all families with children under the age of 18** (US 14%).³ In addition to these sensitive populations, the target-area is **92% Hispanic** (US 19%).³

The target area experiences **welfare issues** such as **linguistic isolation, high unemployment, lack of affordable housing, and lack of education**. **Over 52% of people 25 years of age and older have less than a high school diploma** in the target area.³ Residents are in the **98th percentile for linguistic isolation**, meaning households where no one over the age 14 speaks English well, and the target area suffers from a **60th percentile unemployment rate**.⁵ The area also experiences severe transportation barriers, as residents in **29% of all occupied housing units have no vehicle available** (US 8%).³ **Housing has become a pressing welfare issue** in the target area, where the median home value is only \$55,500 (US \$303,400), yet residents still face affordability challenges reflected in a median monthly mortgage of \$890 (US \$1,902).³ Even renters feel the strain, with median rent at \$567 compared with \$1,348 nationally, and a 16% local housing-vacancy rate, far higher than the US rate of 10%, **highlighting deep mismatches between available housing and what residents can realistically access**.³

These factors limit employment opportunities. Low educational attainment and poverty can also lead to criminal activity. The chance of becoming a victim of either violent or property crime in

³ US Census 2019–2023 American Community Survey

⁴ <https://public-environmental-data-partners.github.io/j40-cejst-2/en/#3/33.47/-97.5>

⁵ <https://pedp-ejscreen.azurewebsites.net/>



Brownsville is 1 in 48 (target area data not available).⁶ Relative to Texas, Brownsville's crime rate is higher than 86% of the state's cities and towns of all sizes.⁷ The overall redevelopment plan of this project includes an additional 20 city blocks integrated into the multiuse trail, housing, retail, and more generating a generational change in this distressed community. Assessment of brownfield sites will remove vacant locations where criminal activity can occur, allow for redevelopment to improve the connectivity of the downtown and residential areas, add mixed use affordable housing within walking distance to new employment options, and bolster the local economy, bringing new opportunities to residents.

c. Greater Than Normal Incidence of Disease and Adverse Health Conditions: The City has a long history in the oil and gas industries. Though critical to the economic well-being of the community, these industries have created adverse health conditions. Brownfield sites are extremely prevalent along the old rail sites, and the potential for contaminants on those sites are causes for concern, especially when potential contaminants at the priority sites are **resistant to natural attenuation and are well known carcinogens** that can affect the residents' health. The target area ranks in the **89th percentile for Particulate Matter, 81st percentile for Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂), and 91st percentile for Underground Storage Tanks (USTs)**, indicating elevated exposure to pollutants and contamination sources such as those suspected at the priority sites.⁷ Health indicators are equally troubling: **11% of adults report asthma, and 19% of residents experience low life expectancy**, underscoring the disproportionate burden of disease and environmental stressors.⁸

Sensitive populations face a higher risk of disease and health conditions such as **birth defects and asthma**. The risk for disease and health conditions within the target population continues to increase, with **proximity to risk management plan (RMP) facilities in the 84th percentile**.⁷ From 1986 to 1991, the City suffered **neural tube birth (NTB) defects**, which are mostly fatal, at a rate roughly **five times the national average** and was the subject of worldwide attention and numerous studies.⁹ While these studies were not conclusive on the cause, the poverty and living conditions along with the amount of pollution in the area were the focus of many of the studies. Time has passed since the NTB defects were first reported, but the target area still suffers from elevated rates of birth defects. In the region of Texas that includes Brownsville, 44,234 babies had reportable birth defects in 1999–2020, with the highest rates among Hispanic mothers.¹⁰ Contaminants, including **pesticides** found at agricultural properties and **metals** at industrial properties and along railroads, are suspected to contribute to NTB defects.¹¹ Within the target area, residents are in the **84th percentile for asthma** in the state.⁷ The contaminants present throughout the area only worsen symptoms and may be contributing to the diseases themselves. Residents are also in the **99th percentile for diabetes** and the **97th percentile for heart disease**.⁵ All of these health conditions are compounded by the difficulty of affording medical care, and target-area residents are in the **99th percentile for lack of health insurance**.⁷ By developing the priority sites with greenspace and **hiking and biking trails**, and **improving the walkability** of the downtown area, healthy alternatives to driving will be available. **Cancer** is always a risk in blighted, contaminated brownfield areas. Cervical cancer rates are approximately **55% higher** in the Rio Grande Valley (CT data not available) along the Texas–Mexico border compared to the US rates.¹²

⁶ <https://www.neighborhoodscout.com/tx/brownsville/crime#description>.

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

⁸ Environmental and Residential Population Indicators <https://tinyurl.com/y543666y>

⁹ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1995/09/17/years-after-cluster-of-birth-defects-pain-and-mystery-linger-in-brownsville/97a5d18a-3959-49b9-bb8b-529cc708ea60/>.

¹⁰ The Texas Birth Defects Registry Annual Report -Birth Defects Among 1999–2020 Deliveries.

¹¹ Prenatal Exposure to Toxic Metals and Neural Tube Defects: A Systematic Review of the Epidemiologic Evidence. Eaves, L, Volume 131, Issue 8, August 2023.

¹² <http://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov>.



By assessing and ultimately cleaning up old target-area industrial properties, as well as creating new local jobs that do not expose residents to harmful contaminants, target-area redevelopment through the Brownfield Grant will improve the health and wellbeing of the local community.

d. Economically Impoverished/Disproportionately Impacted Populations: The target-area priority sites span three distressed census tracts burdened by decades of rail abandonment and over 50 acres of blight. These conditions have led to declining property values, reduced tax revenue, and severe socioeconomic challenges. Making matters worse, the community citywide is impoverished (**37% of all people living below the poverty level**), with extremely low income levels (**per capita \$15,193 – 2.8 times lower than the national level**), and limited access to employment opportunities that fit the residents educational attainment (**23% no high school diploma/US 6%**).¹³ Not only are the target area residents disproportionately burdened by environmental hazards, including legacy contamination and proximity to industrial facilities, which compound health and quality-of-life risks, but so are all residents in the geographic boundary of the city limits. A Brownfield Assessment Grant will allow the City to identify and address contaminants that pose health and environmental threats, laying the groundwork for cleanup and reinvestment. This work will remove barriers that have long discouraged economic growth and redevelopment. Planned reuse of the sites as greenspace and an extension of the multiuse trail system will improve walkability, connect neighborhoods to downtown and educational institutions, and incorporate stormwater management. These improvements will attract new businesses, create opportunities for residents, and restore vitality to a community that has faced persistent economic and environmental challenges.

Community Engagement. e. Project Involvement & f. Project Roles: The following project partners will actively contribute to this grant by supporting community outreach and education, assisting with site reuse planning, and helping with site inventory and identification.

Name of organization & mission	Point of contact	Specific involvement in the project or assistance provided
Skinner Elementary School: Provide a safe, healthy, and nurturing learning environment for students.	Ms. Mary Allen, Principal maryerodriguez@bisd.us	Assistance/Decision Making: community outreach and education.
Healthy Communities of Brownsville: To develop and foster environmental, educational healthy living programs through a grassroots effort.	Rose Timmer hcb@healthybrownsville.org	Assistance/Decision Making: future site reuse planning, site identification, and prioritization.
City Cruisers (Nonprofit): To provide healthier activities for the community.	Jose Rivera citycruiserscyclin@gmail.com	Assistance/Decision Making: future site reuse planning and outreach.
Cyclobia Brownsville: To create a safe place to bike, move, and play.	Juan Pena Juan.pena.jr@brownsvilletx.gov	Assistance/Decision Making: community outreach, site identification, future site reuse planning, and site inventory.
Brownsville Wellness Coalition: To address the community's poor health status by providing programs	Edward Garcia	Assistance/Decision Making: community outreach, site

¹³ US Census 2019–2023 American Community Survey



that promote nutrition and healthy lifestyles.	egarcia@brownsvillewellnessassociation.com	identification, future site reuse planning, and site inventory.
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g. **Incorporating Community Input:** The City recognizes the importance of including community residents and stakeholders throughout project planning and implementation. The City Council approved the resolution to apply for Brownfield Assessment funding at their January 20, 2026, regularly scheduled meeting. A Community Involvement Plan (CIP) will be created to outline the planned community engagement activities, schedule, project background, and key players. The CIP will be available for review at City Hall and on the City’s website and will ensure engagement with the target area’s distressed community. To educate city residents on the Brownfield Program and identify potential target-area brownfield sites, the City will perform community outreach events and review suggested sites provided by community members during quarterly meetings. The **Brownfield Project Team** will solicit, review and evaluate comments and community input during quarterly meetings, recording all suggestions and information in the minutes and posting them on the City’s Brownfield Program webpage. All suggestions and input will be addressed on an individual basis within a week and promptly posted to the City’s Brownfield Program webpage and social media accounts for further public review. The Brownfield Project Team will maintain a site inventory of the suggested brownfield sites and will review the list routinely, updating it at each quarterly meeting. The community and Brownfield Project Team will work together to prioritize sites based on community need and the City’s Brownfield Program goals. Priority will be given to sites that most benefit the target area’s sensitive populations. The City’s CIP will incorporate several forms of media, with updates posted to the City’s Facebook page and Brownfield Program webpage. To reach those residents without internet access, the City will use the community’s monthly water bills to share project information on inserted flyers. Mobile message boards and digital displays throughout the City also may be used. The City will provide resident interaction via the website and social media as a supplement to in-person community engagement. 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 target area, and charrettes/visioning sessions. All promotional materials will be **available in English and Spanish**, and the names and contact information of the City’s Brownfield Project Team will be posted on the City’s brownfield webpage. A translator will be available at all events due to the high Hispanic population.

3. TASK DESCRIPTIONS, COST ESTIMATES, AND MEASURING PROGRESS

Description of Tasks/Activities and Outputs:

Task 1: Community Engagement & Site Inventory	
a.	<i>Project Implementation:</i> <u>EPA Funded:</u> Community Involvement Plan (CIP), outreach materials, Brownfield (BF) webpage, and social media posts will be developed by the City’s BF Project Manager with assistance from the qualified environmental professional (QEP). City staff will lead the community/educational meetings discussing project plans and updates. The City’s BF Project Manager 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 GIS and the property appraiser’s website. QEP will work with City staff to create an evaluation ranking tool to determine the order the sites will be addressed. Supplies: printing of outreach materials (brochures/handouts) and office supplies to manage the grant.
b.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> CIP created in Q1. Community/educational meetings held Q1 & Q3 in Y1–3 and Q2 in Y4. BF webpage and outreach materials created in Q1 and posted throughout the grant



	project. 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: Mr. Robert Baez, BF Project Manager
d.	<i>Outputs:</i> CIP, BF webpage, 7 community/educational meetings, handouts, social media posts, summary of community meetings in EPA-required quarterly reports, evaluation ranking tool, site inventory list.
Task 2: Assessment	
a.	<i>Project Implementation: <u>EPA Funded:</u></i> The QEP conducts Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs), starting with the priority sites listed in this application. ASTM-AAI-compliant Phase Is; Generic Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP); Phase IIs will include the Sampling and Analysis Plans (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 begin Q2 and continue throughout the grant project.
c.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> The QEP will implement the technical aspects of the project with oversight from the City: Mr. Carlos Lastra, Brownfield Project Director.
d.	<i>Outputs:</i> 13 Phase I ESAs, 1 Generic QAPP, 6 Phase II ESAs including SAP, site access agreements, property eligibility determinations, Section 106 determinations (if applicable).
Task 3: Cleanup Planning	
a.	<i>Project Implementation: <u>EPA Funded:</u></i> Projects identified for cleanup. The QEP will prepare the Analysis for Brownfield Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA) and/or Cleanup Plans, which include evaluating cleanup alternatives, calculating cleanup costs, and determining site-appropriate remediation and/or reuse planning to reduce health/environmental risks. The QEP will assist the City in hosting charrettes/visioning sessions. A planner will create the following EPA-approved planning documents: Site Reuse Assessments.
b.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> Plans and charrettes begin in Q6 and will continue throughout the grant.
c.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> The QEP will implement the technical aspects of the project with oversight from the City: Mr. Robert Baez, BF Project Manager.
d.	<i>Outputs:</i> 4 ABCAs, 2 vision sessions/charrettes, 2 Site Reuse Assessments
Task 4: Program Management	
a.	<i>Project Implementation: <u>EPA Non-funded:</u></i> Utilizing its own funding, the City will procure a QEP to assist with the BF Grant project. The City’s BF Finance Director will oversee grant implementation and administration to ensure compliance with the EPA Cooperative Agreement work plan, schedule, and terms and conditions. <i><u>EPA Funded:</u></i> The QEP will assist in completing ACRES database reporting, yearly financial reporting, quarterly reporting, and additional programmatic support for the four-year term of the grant. The travel budget allows for two staff to attend three BF training conferences/workshops.
b.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> Procure QEP in Q1. ACRES & quarterly reporting begins in Q1 and continues throughout the grant. Annual reporting and forms created in Q5, Q9, Q13, and final closeout.
c.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> City: Mr. Stephen Muse, Brownfield Finance Director
d.	<i>Outputs:</i> ACRES database reporting, 4 annual financial reports, 16 quarterly reports, programmatic support for the four-year grant period. Two staff to attend three conferences.
Task 5: Administrative Indirect Cost: a. – d. See below for the cost breakdown.	

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, other (conference registration) supplies, personnel, fringe, administrative and contractual costs.



- Of the budget, 51% will be spent on site-specific work and 31% for area-wide planning activities.
- Personnel pay rates average \$40 per hour and fringe rate 25%.

Task 1 Community Engagement & Site Inventory: Personnel (\$40/hr): CIP \$1,200 (30 hrs); BF webpage, outreach brochure/handouts, social media posts \$1,600 (40 hrs); 7 community/educational meetings \$2,800 (10 hrs per meeting to include preparation and execution; \$800 each meeting); site inventory management \$2,000 (50 hrs). Fringe: \$1,900 (25% rate). Contractual: CIP \$2,560 (16 hrs × \$160); BF webpage, outreach brochure/handouts, social media posts \$2,240 (14 hrs × \$160); 7 community/educational meetings \$12,250 (\$1,750 per mtg.; 10 hours per meeting to include preparation and execution × \$175); BF site inventory and evaluation ranking tool creation \$8,000 (50 hrs × \$160). Supplies: \$1,150 (\$500 [500 printouts at \$1 each]; \$400 [4 display board printouts at \$100 each]; pens, markers, paper \$250).

Task 2 Assessment: Personnel (\$40/hr): Report review \$800 (1 hr per report; 20 reports). Fringe: \$200 (25% rate). Contractual: 13 Phase I ESAs \$58,500 (\$4,500 each); 1 Generic QAPP \$6,500; 6 Phase II ESAs including SAP \$168,000 (\$28,000 each).

Task 3 Cleanup Planning: Personnel (\$40/hr): vision sessions/charettes \$800 (20 hrs); report review \$480 (2 hrs/report; 6 reports). Fringe: \$320 (25% rate). Contractual: 4 ABCAs \$24,000 (\$6,000 each); 2 vision sessions \$4,000 (\$2,000/meeting); 2 Site Reuse Assessment \$150,000 (\$75,000 each [Principal Planner: 100 hrs × \$250; Senior Planner: 100 hrs × 200; PM Planner: 100 hrs × \$175, Support Personnel: 100 hrs × \$125]).

Task 4 Program Management: Personnel (\$40/hr): \$9,600 (240 hrs). Fringe: \$2,400 (25% rate). Contractual: ACRES database reporting, yearly financial reporting, quarterly reporting \$12,000 (75 hrs × \$160). Travel: 2 staff to attend 3 conferences for a total of \$10,500 (flights at \$600, 3 nights in hotel at \$250/night, incidentals and per diem at \$100 per day × 4 days × 2 staff × 3 events). Other: conference registration at \$1,200 (\$200 per staff for each event)

Task 5 Administrative Indirect Costs: Other: Costs of operating and maintaining facilities \$5,000 (based on average costs). Personnel: General administration consisting of the salaries of executive officers, personnel administration, and accounting \$10,000 (\$40 × 250hrs).

Category	Tasks					Totals
	Community Engagement & Site Inventory	Assessment	Cleanup Planning	Program Management	Administrative Indirect Costs	
Personnel	\$7,600	\$800	\$1,280	\$9,600	\$10,000	\$29,280
Fringe	\$1,900	\$200	\$320	\$2,400		\$4,820
Travel				\$10,500		\$10,500
Supplies	\$1,150					\$1,150
Contractual	\$25,050	\$233,000	\$178,000	\$12,000		\$448,050
Other				\$1,200	\$5,000	\$6,200
Total Budget	\$35,700	\$234,000	\$179,600	\$35,700	\$15,000	\$500,000

f. Plan to Measure and Evaluate Environmental Progress and Results: To ensure timely project completion, the City's internal Brownfield Team, including the EC, will meet quarterly to track **outputs identified in 3.d.** and will record progress using Excel to track the scope of work, goals, and objectives. The City will submit quarterly and annual reports to the EPA. Project expenditures and activities will be monitored quarterly against the four-year timeline. Site-specific information will be recorded in the ACRES database. Key performance indicators/outputs, such as the number of neighborhood, community group, and partner meetings; environmental



assessments; and cleanup plans, will be tracked. Additionally, outcomes like community participation; acres assessed; acres made ready for reuse; redevelopment dollars leveraged; and jobs created will be monitored. To address potential project delays, the City has contingency plans in place, including monthly communication with the EPA Project Officer and the development of a Corrective Action Plan if necessary to ensure the project is completed on schedule.

4. PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE

Programmatic Capability. a. Organizational Capacity, b. Organizational Structure, &

c. Description of Key Staff: The City operates under a mayor-council form of municipal government. The City has the organizational capacity to handle a project through the office of the City Administrator with support from the City's government officials (City Council) led by the mayor. The City Engineer, **Mr. Carlos Lastra**, will be the **BF Project Director**. Mr. Lastra has been the City Engineer since 2022 and is responsible for the City's land development, infrastructure, and traffic aspects. Mr. Lastra was previously the Streets and Drainage Manager for Cameron County, affording him key experience in directing this grant in terms of priority site reuses. **Mr. Robert Baez**, Senior Construction Manager for the City, will be the **BF Project Manager**. Current duties include leading a team of project analysts and coordination of project execution for various projects. Mr. Baez's has over 13 years' experience in local government roles, most prominently as the City's Change and Strategy Manager. Mr. Baez's diverse experience with the City perfectly positions him to manage grant activities and subcontractors while understanding the goals and vision of the brownfield projects. The **BF Finance Director** will be **Mr. Stephen Muse**. Mr. Muse has been the City's Finance Director for over 13 years and is responsible for overseeing the City's accounting and compliance, budget and capital improvement planning, and treasury divisions. Mr. Muse is proficient in the City's accounting software, online banking service, accounting, and reporting. He will be responsible for managing the finances and all draw downs through ASAP.gov for this EPA grant project. A qualified environmental professional (QEP) will assist with the technical portions of the Brownfields Project.

d. Acquiring Additional Resources: The City will hire a QEP to support the technical and reporting aspects of the Brownfield Community-wide Assessment Grant, adhering to EPA's Professional Service procurement process and local contracting requirements. Throughout the project, additional resources or contractors will be acquired as needed.

Past Performance and Accomplishments e. Currently Has or Previously Received an EPA

Brownfields Grant: (1) Accomplishments: The City was awarded an EPA Brownfield Assessment Pilot Grant in FY1998 in the amount of \$200,000. The FY98 grant allowed four properties to be assessed. The grant was closed on schedule. The assessments focused on recreational facilities, environmental investigations into Gonzales and Courthouse Parks, and funded assessment to a rail line at the Palo Alto Battlefield National Historical Park. Due to the age of the grant, City staff that originally provided service to the grant have since moved on or retired and cannot provide further information; however, the City's commitment to its parks and recreation program remains just as strong.

(2) Compliance with Grant Requirements: The City was in full compliance with its prior FY98 EPA Brownfield Grants, having drawn down \$198,529 of the original \$200,000 and closed on schedule. Based on available files, all reporting was turned into the EPA Project Officer in a timely manner, and the grant met its desired outcomes. The City's current Brownfield Project Team has the capability of managing this grant implementation, updating ACRES, and completing all ASAP.gov draw downs.



Threshold Criteria

1. Applicant Eligibility

- a. The City of Brownsville, TX (City), is eligible to apply for the EPA Brownfield 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 recognizes the importance of including community residents and stakeholders throughout project planning and implementation. The City Council approved the resolution to apply for Brownfield Assessment funding at their January 20, 2026, regularly scheduled meeting. A Community Involvement Plan (CIP) will be created to outline the planned community engagement activities, schedule, project background, and key players. The CIP will be available for review at City Hall and on the City's website and will ensure engagement with the target area's distressed community. To educate city residents on the Brownfield Program and identify potential target-area brownfield sites, the City will perform community outreach events and review suggested sites provided by community members during quarterly meetings. The **Brownfield Project Team** will solicit, review and evaluate comments and community input during quarterly meetings, recording all suggestions and information in the minutes and posting them on the City's Brownfield Program webpage. All suggestions and input will be addressed on an individual basis within a week and promptly posted to the City's Brownfield Program webpage and social media accounts for further public review. The Brownfield Project Team will maintain a site inventory of the suggested brownfield sites and will review the list routinely, updating it at each quarterly meeting. The community and Brownfield Project Team will work together to prioritize sites based on community need and the City's Brownfield Program goals. Priority will be given to sites that most benefit the target area's sensitive populations. The City's CIP will incorporate several forms of media, with updates posted to the City's Facebook page and Brownfield Program webpage. To reach those residents without internet access, the City will use the community's monthly water bills to share project information on inserted flyers. Mobile message boards and digital displays throughout the City also may be used. The City will provide resident interaction via the website and social media as a supplement to in-person community engagement. 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 target area, and charrettes/visioning sessions. All promotional materials will be **available in English and Spanish**, and the names and contact information of the City's Brownfield Project Team will be posted on the City's brownfield webpage. A translator will be available at all events due to the high Hispanic population.

3. Expenditure of Existing Grant Funds

The City affirms that it does not have an active EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant or Multipurpose Grant.



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