

CITY HALL  
374 EAST MAIN STREET  
VERNAL, UTAH 84078

PHONE: 435-789-2255  
FAX: 435-789-2256  
WWW.VERNAL.GOV

# VERNAL CITY

1. Applicant Identification

Vernal City  
374 East Main Street  
Vernal, UT 84078

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

3. Funding Requested

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

4. Location

a) Vernal City, b) Uintah County, c) Utah

5. Target Area and Priority Site Information

**Target Area**: Census tract: 49047968401

**Priority Site Information:**

- Former Post Office: 92 West Main Street, Vernal, UT 84078
- Basin Garage: 51 South Vernal Ave, Vernal, UT 84078
- Auto Works: 182 East 100 South, Vernal, UT 84078

6. Contacts

a. Project Director

Quinn Bennion, City Manager  
435-781-7110  
[gbennion@vernal.gov](mailto:gbennion@vernal.gov)  
374 East Main Street  
Vernal, UT 84078

b. Chief Executive/Highest Ranking Elected Official

Corey Foley, Mayor  
435-781-7110  
[mayor@vernal.gov](mailto:mayor@vernal.gov)  
374 East Main Street  
Vernal, UT 84078

7. Population

Vernal City, UT: 10,254 (US Census: 2019–2023 American Community Survey)

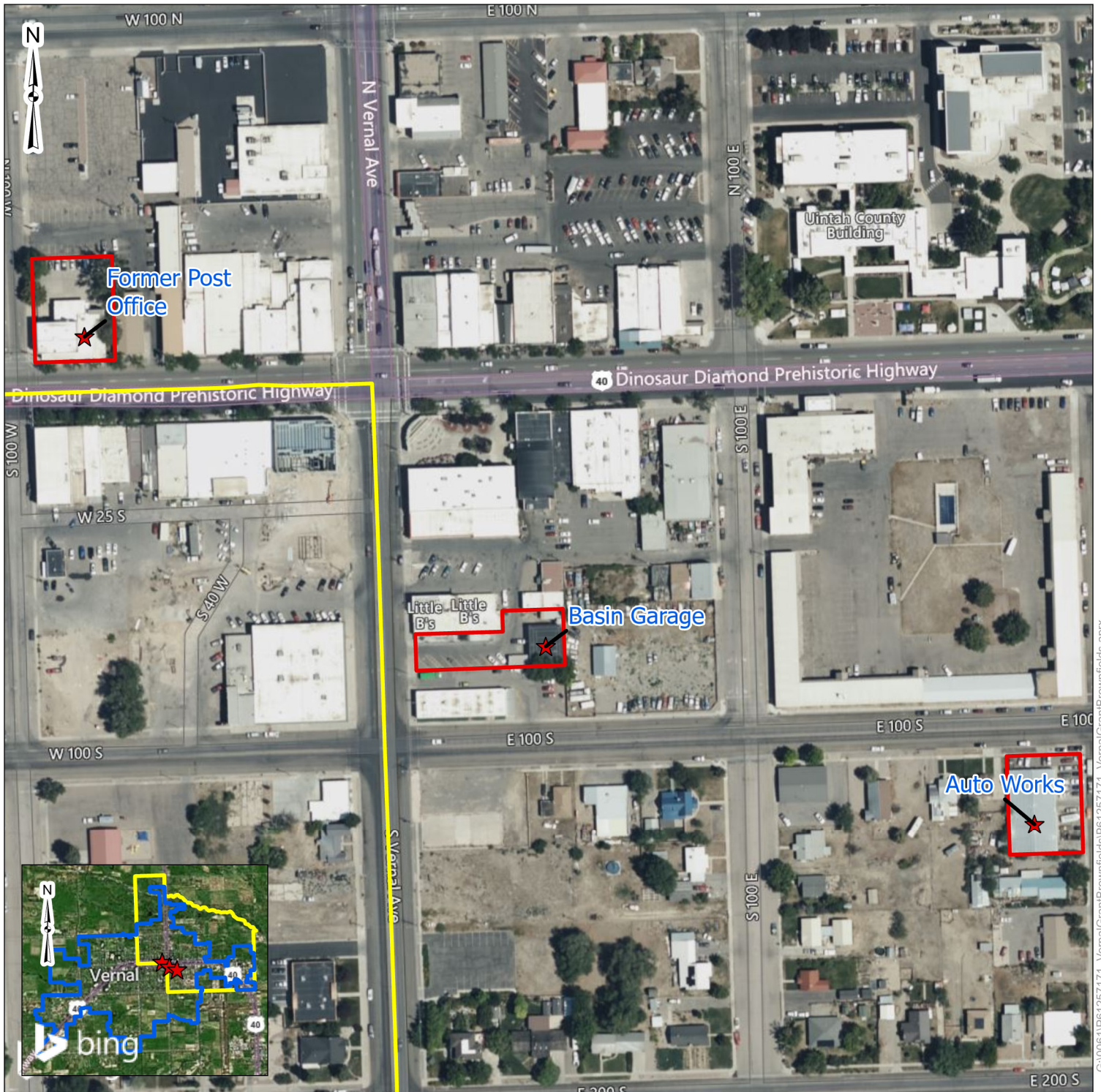


8. Other Factors

<b>Other Factors</b>	<b>Page #</b>
Community population is 15,000 or less.	1, 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.

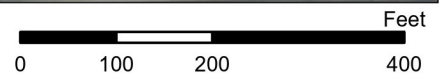


★ Priority Sites

□ Approximate Site Boundary

□ Target Area (Census Tract: 49047968401)

□ Vernal City Boundary



DATA SOURCES:  
ESRI - Basemaps



FY26 EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant

Vernal City Assessment Grant  
Vernal, Utah

Exhibit

1



State of Utah

SPENCER J. COX  
Governor

DEIDRE HENDERSON  
Lieutenant Governor

Department of  
Environmental Quality

Tim Davis  
Executive Director

Ashley Sumner  
Deputy Director

Jill Burton  
Deputy Director

ERRC-009-26

January 22, 2026

Quinn Bennion, City Manager  
Vernal City  
374 East Main Street  
Vernal, Utah 84078

**Re: DEQ Support Letter - FY26 EPA Brownfields Program Community-Wide  
Assessment Grant – (Vernal City)**

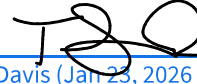
Dear Mr. Bennion:

Thank you for involving the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) in Vernal City's (City) economic development and planning discussions regarding the City's application for a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Brownfields Program Community-Wide Assessment grant. The assessment grant will allow the City to evaluate eligible sites identified within the Downtown Corridor, such as the former Post Office, Basin Garage, and Auto Works properties. The DEQ believes assessment is an important and significant step towards the goal of revitalizing properties in Utah communities and is committed to seeing Brownfields-caliber sites assessed, remediated and redeveloped to a higher and better use wherever possible.

The DEQ supports the City in its application for an FY26 EPA Brownfields Program Community-Wide Assessment grant to address both petroleum and hazardous substance contamination. The benefits of assessing properties within the City boundaries include removing the potential stigma associated with impacted or potentially impacted properties, protecting public health and reclaiming valuable property for economic development and future, sustainable growth. The DEQ is committed to assisting the City as it seeks to address Brownfields. Additionally, the DEQ encourages use of the Voluntary Cleanup Program and Enforceable Written Assurances as vehicles for addressing contaminated properties and returning Brownfields properties to productive use.

We look forward to continuing our partnership with the City to address Brownfields concerns. Should you have any questions, please contact Allison Stanley, the Division of Environmental Response and Remediation project manager, at (801) 536-4100.

Sincerely,



[Tim Davis \(Jan 23, 2026 14:39:34 MST\)](#)

Tim Davis  
Executive Director

TD/AS/jn

cc: Joe Hadlock, Environmental Health Director, Tri-County Health Department  
Nathan Hall, District Engineer, Utah Department 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: Vernal City (City), located in Ashley Valley in northeastern Utah, sits approximately 20 miles west of the Colorado border in the Uintah Basin and is surrounded by mountain ranges. Originally designated in 1861 by President Abraham Lincoln as part of the Uintah Indian Reservation, Vernal became the county seat of Uintah County in 1880 and was incorporated in 1897. The area gained national attention in 1909 with the discovery of a 150-million-year-old dinosaur bone quarry, which laid the foundation for a tourism economy that continues today. With a population of approximately 10,254,<sup>1</sup> Vernal is a small rural community whose economy has historically been shaped by cycles of resource extraction. The first oil boom in 1948 spurred growth, followed by a shift toward ranching and dairy processing. In the 1980s, another mining surge occurred but ended abruptly in 1983, leaving behind vacant industrial properties and economic instability. These historic boom-and-bust cycles contributed to disinvestment and blight in the downtown core and increased brownfield challenges.

The **geographic boundary** for this project is the **city limits of Vernal**, with a target area focusing on the **downtown** located in census tract (CT) 49047968401. The downtown has experienced economic decline due to the rise of big-box and strip mall developments on the City's outskirts, which diverted consumer traffic away from Main Street. As a result, downtown Vernal suffers from **lost vibrancy, vacancy, and blight**. Industrial activity in neighboring city Naples and **legacy contamination from oil and gas operations** have left behind environmental concerns and lasting **brownfield challenges** that hinder redevelopment. Downtown is further challenged by perceptions of **poor walkability, inadequate pedestrian infrastructure and parking, and lack of gathering spaces**, which discourage community engagement and tourism. These issues disproportionately affect Vernal's vulnerable populations: **13% of residents are families with low incomes (8% US), 8% are unemployed (5% US), and 4% are American Indian (0.9% US)**.<sup>1</sup> EPA Brownfields funding will serve as a catalyst for revitalization and enable the City to assess and address contamination, restore economic vitality, and improve environmental health outcomes for vulnerable residents throughout the downtown target area.

b. Description of the Priority Brownfield Site(s): Vernal's economic fluctuations and shifts have contributed to diminished employment opportunities, reduced investment in the downtown, and a growing inventory of underused and potentially contaminated properties. The target area encompasses approximately 0.5 square miles, in which there are **more than 100 potential brownfield sites**, including former gas stations, auto repair shops, industrial facilities, and aging commercial buildings. Many of these properties are **likely to contain environmental contaminants** due to their age, historic uses, and lack of investment. The east end of downtown includes several industrial parcels with suspected petroleum and hazardous substance concerns. Priority sites were selected based on their redevelopment potential, proximity to sensitive populations, and suspected environmental conditions that could hinder reuse.

The first priority site is the **Former Post Office** located at 92 West Main Street. This 0.38-acre property features a three-story building constructed in the 1950s, originally serving as Vernal's post office until 1987. The building has housed various businesses, including a printing shop, scrapbooking supply store, and a liquid herbal oils company. The site has been intermittently vacant and is currently unoccupied. The structure is utilitarian in design, with beige stucco, stone veneer, narrow vertical windows, and no elevator access. Located on busy Main Street, the site is near schools, churches, and residential neighborhoods. Nearby adjoining properties include a

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<sup>1</sup> US Census: 2019–2023 American Community Survey.

former gas station facility to the west and a former dry-cleaning facility east of the site. Potential environmental concerns include **volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and petroleum hydrocarbons from prior use as a printing shop and potential fuel oil tanks, lead-based paint (LBP), asbestos-containing materials (ACM), universal hazardous waste, and radon.** The City has confirmed site access for assessment.

The second priority site is the **Basin Garage** located at 51 South Vernal Avenue. This 0.10-acre property includes a single-story concrete block building of approximately 3,800 square feet that was used as an automotive repair garage beginning in the 1930s. The industrial structure features large overhead bay doors and a flat roof. The building has been intermittently vacant for 20 years and is currently being used for storage. The site is centrally located off Main Street, near schools, churches, and tourism attractions, making it highly visible and well-positioned for future redevelopment. It sits adjacent to Fashion Cleaners, a former dry-cleaning facility and known source of contamination, and immediately west of the former Basin Laundry property, another impacted site. Previous assessments of this site and neighboring properties have identified dry-cleaning products **trichloroethylene (TCE) and perchloroethylene (PCE) concentrations in groundwater and soil vapor** exceeding state and federal screening levels. Further environmental concerns are **petroleum hydrocarbons, including VOCs and semivolatile organic compounds (SVOCs), metals, LBP, ACM, and radon.** Although some assessments have been completed at the site, additional testing is needed for remediation and redevelopment. The site is not fenced and public access is unrestricted, which poses potential exposure risks. The City has obtained access for assessment in collaboration with the owner.

The third priority site is **Auto Works** located at 182 East 100 South. This 0.34-acre property houses a single-story mechanic shop that has operated for approximately 75 years. The building is deteriorating and needs major upgrades. The building is approximately 8,000 square feet and contains multiple bay doors. Multiple deteriorating vehicles and 55-gallon storage drums are present around the property, which is located 50 feet south of the former Lamplighter Hotel property, another property with PCE- and TCE-contaminated groundwater. Schools and churches are nearby, and a planned 6.5-acre redevelopment area is directly across the street. Potential environmental concerns include **VOCs, SVOCs, petroleum hydrocarbons, metals, and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) in soil and groundwater, and LBP, ACM, and radon.** The City has obtained access for assessment.

c. Identifying Additional Sites: The City will collaborate with residents and community project partners to create a tool for identifying and prioritizing brownfield sites within the target area. Properties will be evaluated using municipal records, planning authority input, site inspections, and census data to ensure that areas of greatest socioeconomic need are considered. Sites will be ranked based on barriers to revitalization, anticipated community and economic benefits, readiness for redevelopment, and consistency with local plans. After addressing the target area and the priority sites, any remaining funds will be used to apply this same process to additional sites that most benefit vulnerable populations throughout the City's **geographic boundary.**

**Revitalization of the Target Area.** d. Reuse Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans: City officials and residents recognize the importance of restoring vibrancy to downtown Vernal as a catalyst for economic renewal. The City's **2020–2029 General Plan** identifies the following key goal: **“To encourage the re-establishment of Main Street Vernal City as the ‘heart’ of the community.”** Supporting policies include implementing streetscape improvements, encouraging cultural and arts events, and promoting mixed-use development to enhance livability and economic activity. The **2019 Downtown Revitalization Plan** outlines a vision for transforming underused

properties into community assets that support economic growth, walkability, and public engagement. The three priority sites are centrally located within the downtown core and are positioned to support this vision. Each site is within walking distance of schools, churches, residential neighborhoods, and tourism attractions, which makes them ideal candidates for reuse that will benefit the broader community.

The **Former Post Office** is slated for **redevelopment into a mixed-use building**, with demolition and construction costs to be covered by the owner. The project will enhance access to local businesses, support walkability, and address long-standing infrastructure gaps that have limited private investment. By activating an underutilized property with diverse and flexible uses, the redevelopment will stimulate economic activity and contribute to a more vibrant and resilient downtown district. The **Basin Garage** and **Auto Works** sites will undergo **EPA-approved planning activities to determine the most beneficial reuse, guided by community input** and local revitalization goals. The **Basin Garage** priority site is envisioned as a mixed-use space that supports local entrepreneurship and serves as a flexible venue for neighborhood-serving retail, office uses, food establishments, and community meeting and event space. This reuse aligns with Main Street revitalization efforts and contributes to a more vibrant and economically diverse downtown. The **Auto Works** priority site will be integrated into the public square and amenities for the conference center located directly across the street. This reuse will enhance public gathering space, support cultural programming, and improve connectivity between key downtown destinations.

e. Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategy: The City’s revitalization plans, developed through extensive community engagement, aim to transform blighted properties into vibrant, accessible public spaces that foster economic growth and community well-being. The priority sites are located within Vernal’s downtown core, where **unemployment (8%) exceeds the national average (5%).**<sup>2</sup> Environmental assessment will help remove barriers to redevelopment, improve access to downtown businesses, and encourage increased foot traffic. By improving connectivity and identifying environmental risks early, the project will **encourage investment and stimulate local commerce and job creation**, directly addressing economic disparities. Assessment and reuse planning will also enhance community health and cohesion by supporting the development of safe, walkable spaces for residents to gather, recreate, and participate in cultural events. Notably, **4% of Vernal’s population identifies as American Indian, more than four times the national average (0.9%),**<sup>2</sup> which underscores the importance of designing public spaces that reflect and support the cultural identities and traditions of all community members.

Where possible, reuse will incorporate **climate resilience** measures by improving stormwater management, reducing impervious surfaces, and integrating green infrastructure **to mitigate flooding risks from extreme weather events**. Future redevelopment will encourage **energy-efficient** building practices and explore opportunities for **renewable energy integration, such as incorporating solar-powered solutions into new or renovated buildings, utilizing solar-powered lighting in public spaces**. The “Future Uses and Patterns of Growth” section of **Vernal’s General Plan** emphasizes that **“Downtown Vernal in particular should reflect a more urban, mixed-use model of development that supports infill development and the conversion of underused existing buildings and sites into more appropriate uses.”** EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant funding is essential to initiate these outcomes and ensure that future redevelopment efforts are inclusive, sustainable, and aligned with the City’s long-term planning goals.

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<sup>2</sup> US Census: 2019–2023 American Community Survey.

**Strategy for Leveraging Resources.** f. Resources Needed for Site Reuse: The City has access to a wide range of funding sources to support the reuse and redevelopment of brownfield sites. After environmental assessment, these sources can be strategically applied to specific sites to ensure successful implementation. For the **Former Post Office site**, the owner intends to cover demolition and construction costs to mediate and convert the building into a mixed-use space. For the **Basin Garage site**, the City can use Community Reinvestment Area (CRA), Tax Increment Financing (TIF), and Special Assessment Area funds to stimulate economic development and support adaptive reuse. EPA-approved planning activities will be used to evaluate reuse options for both the Basin Garage and Auto Works sites, with community input guiding final decisions. The **Auto Works site** reuse will complement the public square and amenities surrounding the conference center. Matching funds from the Utah Rural Opportunity Grant program can be used to enhance the impact of EPA Brownfields funding. Together, these resources ensure that the EPA grant will serve as a catalyst to stimulate additional investment and enable the City to move beyond environmental remediation toward sustainable redevelopment.

g. Use of Existing Infrastructure: The priority sites are well-served by existing infrastructure, including efficient buildings and roadways, which will significantly facilitate site reuse following assessments. The area has access to updated water, sewer, and wastewater systems. In addition, public transit and a state highway run through the downtown, both of which support accessibility and future redevelopment. In anticipation of revitalization efforts, the City recently completed a major sewer rebuild and expansion south of the priority sites, ensuring sufficient capacity for new development. Should minor upgrades be needed to enhance site readiness, the City will seek funding through existing sources such as City capital improvement funds, Utah Department of Transportation grants, and Community Impact Board resources.

## **2. COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

**Community Need.** a. The Community's Need for Funding: The priority sites are located in a small, rural community with a target area population of 3,827.<sup>3</sup> Target area residents face significant economic challenges: a **low median household income of \$52,180** (US \$78,538) and **low per capita income of \$30,104** (US \$43,289).<sup>3</sup> Within the target area, **20% of families live below the poverty line**, and the area ranks in the **70th percentile nationally for households living at or below the federal poverty level**.<sup>4</sup> These indicators reflect a community with limited financial capacity to independently address environmental concerns. The City's operating budget is allocated to essential services such as police, fire protection, and street maintenance, leaving no discretionary funds to address contamination at the priority sites. Without EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant funding, the City cannot proceed with assessment and revitalization efforts.

b. Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations: The target area faces a range of welfare challenges, including economic hardship, environmental contamination, and limited access to safe public spaces. Sensitive populations in the target area are its **youth (29% under age 18/US 22%) and families living in poverty (13%/US 8%)**.<sup>3</sup> The area's **American Indian residents (4.1%/US 0.9%)** are also **vulnerable**.<sup>3</sup> Economic indicators further highlight the area's vulnerability: **33% of households rely on SNAP benefits (US 11%), and the unemployment rate stands at 8% (US 5%)**.<sup>3</sup> Public safety is also a concern. The City's **violent crime rate is 3.22 per 1,000 residents (Utah: 2.32), meaning residents face a 1 in 311 chance of becoming a victim of violent crime (Utah: 1 in 431)**.<sup>5</sup> Blighted, contaminated, and vacant properties contribute to elevated rates of poverty, crime, and poor health outcomes by discouraging foot traffic and

<sup>3</sup> US Census: 2019–2023 American Community Survey.

<sup>4</sup> <https://public-environmental-data-partners.github.io/j40-cejst-2/en/#8/0/0>.

<sup>5</sup> [www.neighborhoodscout.com/ut/vernal/crime](http://www.neighborhoodscout.com/ut/vernal/crime)

reducing community presence, limiting economic opportunity, and exposing residents to dangerous contaminants. The priority sites are located near schools, churches, and residential neighborhoods, placing vulnerable populations in close proximity to suspected environmental hazards. Redevelopment of these sites will directly address these concerns by removing contamination, improving walkability, and creating safer, more welcoming spaces for residents. The reuse of these properties is expected to support small business development, enhance public safety, and improve access to services, thereby reducing economic hardship and promoting community well-being. In addition, transforming these underused sites into vibrant commercial and public spaces will inject new energy into the downtown core, create jobs, increase local tax revenue, and eliminate long-standing blight. These improvements will not only benefit sensitive populations but will also strengthen the overall resilience and economic vitality of the community.

c. Greater Than Normal Incidence of Disease and Adverse Health Conditions: Residents of the target area face elevated health risks due to environmental contamination, economic distress, and historic disinvestment. Sensitive populations are disproportionately affected by adverse health conditions linked to legacy brownfield issues and industrial activity. The priority sites are located in areas with suspected contaminants including radon, LBP, and ACM. The community ranks in the **83<sup>rd</sup> percentile for Drinking Water Non-Compliance, 89<sup>th</sup> percentile for Lead Paint, and 87<sup>th</sup> percentile for Underground Storage Tanks**, indicating elevated exposure to contaminants that pose long-term health hazards.<sup>6</sup> Asthma is a particular concern in Uintah County, where 2,831 adults and 843 children are diagnosed with the disease, equivalent to an estimated adult asthma prevalence of about 12%, compared to 8% nationally.<sup>7</sup> These elevated rates are likely influenced by poor air quality and exposure to airborne contaminants such as VOCs and particulate matter smaller than 2.5 micrometers (PM2.5), both of which are known asthma triggers.

While granular health data for the specific target area is not available, the county ranks in the 82<sup>nd</sup> percentile nationally for asthma prevalence.<sup>8</sup> **Cancer** risk is also a concern. **Uintah County has an age-adjusted cancer mortality rate of 134.4 deaths per 100,000**, which is higher than the state average of 119.8.<sup>9</sup> Exposure to VOCs, petroleum hydrocarbons, asbestos, and radon, all potential contaminants at the priority sites, are well-documented risk factors for various cancers, including lung, liver, and kidney cancers.<sup>9</sup> In Uintah County between 2012 and 2013, there were 26 stillbirths and infant deaths, up from 20 in 2010–2011. The 2013 stillbirth rate reached 5.9/1,000 live births, the highest since 1994. Statewide, 3.1% of live births are affected by birth defects and 1 in 4 of those infants dies from related complications.<sup>10</sup> By assessing and ultimately remediating these sites, the City will reduce exposure to hazardous substances, improve public health outcomes, and support long-term community resilience.

d. Economically Impoverished/Disproportionately Impacted Populations: Downtown Vernal is home to populations facing economic hardship and elevated environmental risks. These distressed groups—including low-income families, youth, and American Indian residents—are disproportionately affected by historic patterns of disinvestment and land-use decisions that concentrated industrial and commercial activity near residential neighborhoods. National research consistently shows that communities with limited economic and political influence often bear a greater share of environmental burdens, including exposure to contaminants and degraded infrastructure. This grant will help identify and reduce these threats by funding environmental assessments that uncover contamination and inform safe, community-driven reuse plans.

<sup>6</sup> <https://pedp-ejscreen.azurewebsites.net/>.

<sup>7</sup> <https://ejamapi-84652557241.us-central1.run.app/report?fips=490479684011&buffer=0>.

<sup>8</sup> <https://lung.org/research/sota/city-rankings/states/utah/uintah>.

<sup>9</sup> [statecancerprofiles.cancer.gov/deathrates/index.php?stateFIPS=49&areatype=county&cancer=001&race=00&type=death](https://statecancerprofiles.cancer.gov/deathrates/index.php?stateFIPS=49&areatype=county&cancer=001&race=00&type=death)

<sup>10</sup> Birth Defects Data Tables and Directory | National Birth Defects Prevention Network | nbdpn.org.

Redevelopment of the priority sites will eliminate blight, improve walkability, and create inclusive public spaces that support cultural identity and economic opportunity. By integrating these sites into Vernal’s broader revitalization strategy, the project will reduce exposure to environmental hazards, strengthen public health protections for all residents, and ensure that future City growth benefits those most impacted by historic inequities.

**Community Engagement.** e. Project Involvement & f. Project Roles: Project partners identified below will play a central role in the brownfield redevelopment project by actively participating in site selection; collaborating on cleanup planning, community outreach, and education; and shaping future reuse of the priority sites through meaningful involvement in decision-making processes.

Name of org. & mission	Point of contact	Specific involvement in the project
<b>Downtown Vernal Alliance:</b> Improving the quality of life and economic stability of Vernal through the continual vitalization of downtown and supporting local businesses.	Aaron Averett, Chair <a href="mailto:aaverett@sunrise-eng.com">aaverett@sunrise-eng.com</a>	<b>Assistance/Decision Making:</b> promote public engagement opportunities with downtown business owners, future planning for brownfield sites, and site identification.
<b>Charitable Friends of Ashley Valley:</b> Supporting local nonprofits and the community by enabling them to focus on strengthening families, promoting the arts, preserving heritage, and enhancing community development.	Joel Brown, Chair [REDACTED]	<b>Assistance/Decision Making:</b> site reuse planning, preserving culture of community, and public engagement.
<b>Vernal Area Chamber of Commerce:</b> Advancing the economic and educational growth and health of the community.	Marty Partridge, Director <a href="mailto:director@vernalchamber.com">director@vernalchamber.com</a>	<b>Assistance/Decision Making:</b> provide outreach to local area businesses to explain the assessment process and site identification and prioritization.
<b>Uintah County Travel &amp; Tourism:</b> Promoting Uintah County as a tourist destination by developing, planning, organizing and overseeing tourism marketing and promotion programs.	Lesha Coltharp, Travel & Tourism Specialist <a href="mailto:info@utahtourism.org">info@utahtourism.org</a>	<b>Assistance/Decision Making:</b> outreach and solicit direct input from the community. They are also a potential stakeholder for one of the priority sites.
<b>Ashley Valley Farmer’s Market:</b> Uplifting our local farmers, growers, and artisans by creating a space where their products can be shared directly with the community.	Teddy Cohen, Director <a href="mailto:avfarmersmarket@gmail.com">avfarmersmarket@gmail.com</a>	<b>Assistance/Decision Making:</b> outreach and community engagement and education serving as a place to interact with community members.
<b>High Desert Center for the Arts:</b> Building a world-class arts & entertainment venue where our community can gather and enjoy the arts, while offering a unique professional experience for artists, performers, and audiences.	Robin McClellan, Co-Executive Director <a href="mailto:hdcenterforthearts@gmail.com">hdcenterforthearts@gmail.com</a>	<b>Assistance/Decision Making:</b> outreach and community engagement and education serving as a place to interact with community members.

g. Incorporating Community Input: The City informed the public of their intent to pursue an EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant for the Former Post Office, Basin Garage, and Auto Works priority sites at the City Council Meeting held on September 3, 2025. The City understands that working closely with community members is the key to implementing a successful Brownfield Program. The City will cultivate productive and thought-provoking interactions between target-area residents and community organizations. The City has and will continue to seek valuable input from residents and community organizations to help identify potential brownfield sites. Over 1,000 residents were involved in the Downtown Revitalization Plan, which identified sites for redevelopment and public use. The City will create a Community Involvement Plan (CIP) that will provide an event schedule, outline of planned community engagement activities, and a list of key players involved in the grant. A hardcopy of the CIP will be available for review at City Hall and

electronically on the City’s Brownfield Program webpage. The City will perform community outreach through educational meetings, project partners, social/digital media, and local news and radio outlets. The City’s internal Brownfield Project Team, made up of city staff, will solicit, review, and evaluate comments received from the community during quarterly meetings; record all community member suggestions and information in the meeting minutes; and post them on the City’s Brownfield Program webpage. The City’s CIP will incorporate several forms of media. Brownfield Program updates will be posted to the City’s Facebook page in addition to the City’s Brownfield Program webpage. The City will provide resident interaction via the brownfield website and social media as an **alternative to in-person community engagement** and will share that information via newspapers and radio ads **for those residents who do not have internet access**. The City will disseminate brownfield project information through the City’s brownfield webpage, press releases, email newsletters via the Vernal Alliance, the Chamber, 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 outreach materials and contact information of the Brownfield Program Team will be posted on the City’s brownfield webpage.

**3. TASK DESCRIPTIONS, COST ESTIMATES, AND MEASURING PROGRESS**

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

<b>Task 1: Program Management</b>	
a.	<i>Project Implementation: EPA Non-funded:</i> Using its own funding, the City will procure an environmental contractor (EC) to assist with the Brownfield (BF) Grant project. The City’s BF Project Finance Director will oversee grant implementation and administration to ensure compliance with the EPA Cooperative Agreement work plan, schedule, and terms and conditions. <i>EPA Funded:</i> The EC 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 EC in 1 <sup>st</sup> quarter. ACRES & quarterly reporting begins in 1 <sup>st</sup> quarter and continues throughout the grant. Annual reporting and forms will be created in the 5 <sup>th</sup> , 9 <sup>th</sup> , and 13 <sup>th</sup> quarters, and final closeout.
c.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> City: Nick Rousseau, Director of Finance, BF Project 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.
<b>Task 2: Outreach &amp; Site Inventory</b>	
a.	<i>Project Implementation: EPA Funded:</i> CIP, outreach materials, BF webpage, and social media posts will be developed by the City’s BF Project Manager with assistance from the EC. City staff will lead the community/educational meetings to discuss 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 windshield surveys, federal and state facility database tools, and the 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: printing of outreach materials (brochures/handouts) and office supplies to manage the grant.
b.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> CIP created in 1 <sup>st</sup> quarter. Community/educational meetings held in the 1 <sup>st</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 5 <sup>th</sup> , 7 <sup>th</sup> , 9 <sup>th</sup> , 11 <sup>th</sup> , and 14 <sup>th</sup> quarters. BF webpage and outreach materials created in 1 <sup>st</sup> quarter and posted throughout the grant project. Meeting held in the 1 <sup>st</sup> quarter will continue the preliminary inventory process. Evaluation ranking process begins in 2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter and continues throughout the grant.

c.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> City: Keith Despain, Public Works Director, BF Project Manager
d.	<i>Outputs:</i> CIP, BF webpage, 7 community/educational meetings, brochures/handouts, social media posts, summary of community meetings in EPA-required quarterly reports, evaluation ranking tool, site inventory list.

**Task 3: Assessment**

a.	<i>Project Implementation: EPA Funded:</i> The EC 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 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 begin in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter and continue throughout the grant project.
c.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> The EC will implement the technical aspects of the project with oversight from the City: Quinn Bennion, City Manager, BF Project Director.
d.	<i>Outputs:</i> 9 Phase I ESAs, 1 Generic QAPP, 5 Phase II ESAs including SAP, site access agreements, property eligibility determinations, Section 106 determinations (if applicable).

**Task 4: Reuse Planning**

a.	<i>Project Implementation: EPA Funded:</i> Projects identified for cleanup. The EC 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 EC will assist the City in hosting charrettes/visioning sessions. A planner will create the following EPA-approved planning documents: BF Area-wide Plan and Site Reuse Assessments.
b.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> Plans & charrettes to begin in the 6 <sup>th</sup> quarter and will 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: Quinn Bennion, City Manager, BF Project Director.
d.	<i>Outputs:</i> 3 ABCAs, 2 vision sessions/charrettes, 2 Site Reuse Assessments, 1 BF Area-wide Plan.

**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, supplies, personnel, fringe, contractual and other/conference costs only.**
- **No administrative costs are included in the budget.**
- **Of the budget, 50% will be spent on site-specific work and 34% for area-wide planning activities.**
- **Personnel pay rates average \$49 per hour and fringe rate 44%.**

**Task 1 Program Management:** Personnel (\$49/hr): \$5,145 (105 hrs). Fringe (44% rate): \$2,264. Contractual: ACRES database reporting, yearly financial reporting, quarterly reporting, and general programmatic support \$22,100 (130 hrs × \$170). Travel: \$7,464 for 2 staff to attend 3 conferences (flights at \$500, 2 nights in hotel at \$234/night, incidentals and per diem at \$92 per day × 3 days × 2 staff × 3 events). Other: \$1,800 conference registration (\$300 per event per person).

**Task 2 Outreach & Site Inventory:** Personnel (\$49/hr): CIP \$588 (12 hrs); BF webpage, outreach brochure/handouts, social media posts \$637 (13 hrs); 7 community/educational meetings \$3,430

(10 hrs per meeting to include preparation and execution; \$490 each meeting); site inventory management \$1,960 (40 hrs). Fringe (44% rate): \$2,911. Contractual: CIP \$3,400 (20 hrs × \$170); BF webpage, outreach brochure/handouts, social media posts \$2,040 (12 hrs × \$170); 7 community/educational meetings \$12,600 (\$1,800 per mtg.; 10 hours per meeting to include preparation and execution × \$180); BF site inventory and evaluation ranking tool creation \$11,050 (65 hrs × \$170). Supplies: \$1,455 (\$800 [800 printouts at \$1 each]; \$400 [4 display board printouts at \$100 each]; pens, markers, paper \$255).

**Task 3 Assessment: Personnel (\$49/hr)**: Report review \$735 (1 hr per report; 15 reports). Fringe (44% rate): \$323. Contractual: 9 Phase I ESAs \$40,500 (\$4,500 each); 1 Generic QAPP \$5,500; 5 Phase II ESAs including SAP \$172,500 (\$34,500 each).

**Task 4 Reuse Planning: Personnel (\$49/hr)**: vision sessions/charettes \$980 (20 hrs); 6 report reviews \$588 (2 hrs/report). Fringe (44% rate): \$690. Contractual: 3 ABCAs \$29,580 (\$9,860 each); 2 vision sessions \$4,760 (\$2,380/meeting); 2 Site Reuse Assessment \$75,000 (\$37,500 each [Senior Planner: 55 hrs × \$200; PM Planner: 80 hrs × \$175; Support Personnel: 100 hrs × \$125]); 1 BF Area-Wide Plan \$90,000 (Principal Planner: 59 hrs × \$250; Senior Planner: 80 hrs × \$200; PM Planner: 300 hrs × \$175; Support Personnel: 54 hrs × \$125).

Category	Tasks				Totals
	<i>Program Management</i>	<i>Outreach &amp; Site Inventory</i>	<i>Assessment</i>	<i>Reuse Planning</i>	
Personnel	\$5,145	\$6,615	\$735	\$1,568	\$14,063
Fringe	\$2,264	\$2,911	\$323	\$690	\$6,188
Travel	\$7,464				\$7,464
Supplies		\$1,455			\$1,455
Contractual	\$22,100	\$29,090	\$218,500	\$199,340	\$469,030
Other	\$1,800				\$1,800
<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>\$38,773</b>	<b>\$40,071</b>	<b>\$219,558</b>	<b>\$201,598</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>

**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, including the EC, will meet quarterly to track project progress of outputs identified in 3.d. Progress and outputs will be tracked internally as well as reported in the ACRES database and quarterly reports to the EPA. Project expenditures and activities will be monitored to ensure timely completion within the four-year time frame. Site-specific information will be entered into the ACRES database. Key outputs will be tracked and will include the number of community meetings with residents and community partners; public meetings; environmental assessments; ABCAs; and cleanup redevelopment plans. Key outcomes to be tracked include community participation, acreages assessed, acreage ready for reuse, leveraged redevelopment dollars, and jobs created. If project efficiency is inadequate, the City has countermeasures in place, including monthly calls with the EPA Project Officer and, if necessary, a Corrective Action Plan to get the project back on track.

**4. PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE**

**Programmatic Capability.** a. Organizational Capacity, b. Organizational Structure, & c. Description of Key Staff: Vernal City operates under a Mayor–Council form of municipal government and has the organizational capacity to successfully manage the proposed EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant. The City Manager will oversee the project with support from the Public Works and Finance Departments. **Quinn Bennion**, City Manager, will serve as the **Brownfield Project Director**. Mr. Bennion has held this position for eight years and oversees all municipal operations, including police, airport, finance, public works, utilities, planning and

zoning, and administration. He manages 80 full-time employees, oversees department budgets, and holds a central role in the City's downtown revitalization efforts. Mr. Bennion will provide strategic oversight and ensure coordination across departments throughout the grant life cycle. **Keith Despain**, Public Works Director, will serve as the **Brownfield Project Manager** and be responsible for day-to-day implementation of the grant. Mr. Despain has served in this role for five years and oversees four divisions that provide public works services, including water, sewer, storm drain utilities, streets and sidewalks, facilities, and fleet management. He also manages capital improvement projects citywide. Mr. Despain has more than 15 years of experience in public works and civil engineering and will ensure that assessment activities are executed efficiently and in compliance with state and federal regulations. **Nick Rousseau**, Director of Finance, will serve as the **Brownfield Finance Manager**. Mr. Rousseau oversees the City's financial operations, including the General Fund, Airport Fund, Utility Funds, and Capital Improvement Fund. Mr. Rousseau currently oversees financial management for 15 active grants and will be responsible for managing the financial aspects of this grant, including draw downs and compliance with federal reporting requirements. A qualified environmental contractor (EC) will be procured to perform the technical aspects of the grant and ensure all environmental reporting and documentation are completed in accordance with EPA standards.

d. Acquiring Additional Resources: Using local contracting requirements and procurement processes, the City will hire a qualified EC to assist with technical and reporting portions of the EPA Brownfields Assessment, in addition to any other contractors needed to complete the project. The City will ensure compliance with the EPA's Professional Service procurement process.

**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 2018 and 2020, the City received two separate grants from the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT), each totaling \$1.5 million, to fund critical infrastructure improvements. The 2018 grant supported upgrades along 500 North from Vernal Avenue to 500 East, including sidewalks, curbs and gutters, shoulder widening, storm drain installation, and roadway resurfacing. This project was fully completed in 2023. The 2020 grant funded enhancements along Vernal Avenue from Main Street to 200 South, which included sidewalks, curbs and gutters, pedestrian crossings, storm drains, street lighting, landscaping, and full roadway reconstruction. This project was successfully completed in 2024. In addition, the City was awarded \$5 million in 2022 from the Utah Community Impact Board (CIB), consisting of a \$3 million grant and a \$2 million loan, to advance downtown revitalization efforts. This funding supports major infrastructure upgrades such as water, sewer, and power utility installations, new streets, sidewalks, and ADA-compliant features.

(2) Compliance with Grant Requirements: The City has a history of compliance with grant work plans, schedules, and terms and conditions, and has an excellent history of timely reporting with all award agencies. The City successfully completed the 2018 and 2020 UDOT grants on time and in full compliance. The City remains on schedule and in compliance with the Utah CIB award, with the loan portion closed in 2024 and the grant portion on track for closeout in the first quarter of 2026. All funds are expected to be fully expended by their respective deadlines. The Brownfield Project Team brings extensive project management experience and will closely monitor all activities to ensure compliance with financial and reporting requirements with an EPA Brownfields grant.

## Threshold Criteria

### 1. Applicant Eligibility

- a. Vernal City (City), Utah, is eligible to apply for the EPA Brownfields Community-wide Assessment Grant as a unit of local government as defined under 2 CFR § 200.1.
- 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 pursue an EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant for the Former Post Office, Basin Garage, and Auto Works priority sites at the City Council Meeting held on September 3, 2025. The City understands that working closely with community members is the key to implementing a successful Brownfield Program. The City will cultivate productive and thought-provoking interactions between target-area residents and community organizations. The City has and will continue to seek valuable input from residents and community organizations to help identify potential brownfield sites. Over 1,000 residents were involved in the Downtown Revitalization Plan, which identified sites for redevelopment and public use. The City will create a Community Involvement Plan (CIP) that will provide an event schedule, outline of planned community engagement activities, and a list of key players involved in the grant. A hardcopy of the CIP will be available for review at City Hall and electronically on the City's Brownfield Program webpage. The City will perform community outreach through educational meetings, project partners, social/digital media, and local news and radio outlets. The City's internal Brownfield Project Team, made up of city staff, will solicit, review, and evaluate comments received from the community during quarterly meetings; record all community member suggestions and information in the meeting minutes; and post them on the City's Brownfield Program webpage. The City's CIP will incorporate several forms of media. Brownfield Program updates will be posted to the City's Facebook page in addition to the City's Brownfield Program webpage. The City will provide resident interaction via the brownfield website and social media as an **alternative to in-person community engagement** and will share that information via newspapers and radio ads **for those residents who do not have internet access**. The City will disseminate brownfield project information through the City's brownfield webpage, press releases, email newsletters via the Vernal Alliance, the Chamber, 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 outreach materials and contact information of the Brownfield Program Team will be posted on the City's brownfield webpage.

### 3. Expenditure of Existing Grant Funds

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

### 4. Contractors and Named Subrecipients

Not Applicable.