

Applicant Information Sheet

1. Applicant Identification

Ventura Land Trust
 Mailing address: P.O. Box 1284, Ventura, CA 93002
 Physical address: 353 Sanjon Road, Ventura, CA 93001

2. Website URL

<https://venturlandtrust.org>

3. Funding Requested

- a. Grant Type: Multipurpose
- b. Federal Funds Requested: \$1,000,000

4. Location

Ventura
 Ventura County
 California

5. Target Area and Priority Site Information

The **Target Area** is comprised the project site census tract as well as three adjacent tracts:

- Project location tract 06111009500 (population 3,486)
- adjacent tract 06111002302 (population 4,456)
- adjacent tract 06111002301 (population 2,859)
- adjacent tract 06111002200 (population 6,791)

The Target Area includes residential neighborhoods within what is known as the North Ventura Avenue Area, approximately 1.5 miles from the City of Ventura. These neighborhoods are alongside a stretch of highway running along N. Ventura Avenue/Ojai Freeway from the Pacific coast in downtown Ventura (4 miles from the project site) to the Ventura Water Purification Plant, 0.25 miles upstream of the project site.

The **priority sites** are located within a 101.5-acre property at 4777 Crooked Palm Road, Ventura, California, 93001.

6. Contacts

a. Project Director:

Daniel “Dan” Hulst, Deputy Director, Ventura Land Trust
 Email: dan.hulst@venturlandtrust.org
 Phone: (805) 643-8044
 Mailing address: 353 Sanjon Road, Ventura, CA 93001

b. Chief Executive/Highest Ranking Elected Official:

Melissa Baffa, Executive Director, Ventura Land Trust
 Email: melissa@venturlandtrust.org
 Phone: (805) 643-8044
 Mailing address: 353 Sanjon Road, Ventura, CA 93001

7. Population

The **priority sites** are within unincorporated Ventura County. The target area includes both the unincorporated County of Ventura, which has approximately 843,843 residents at the 2020 Census as well as the City of Ventura (110,763 residents at the 2020 Census).

8. Other Factors

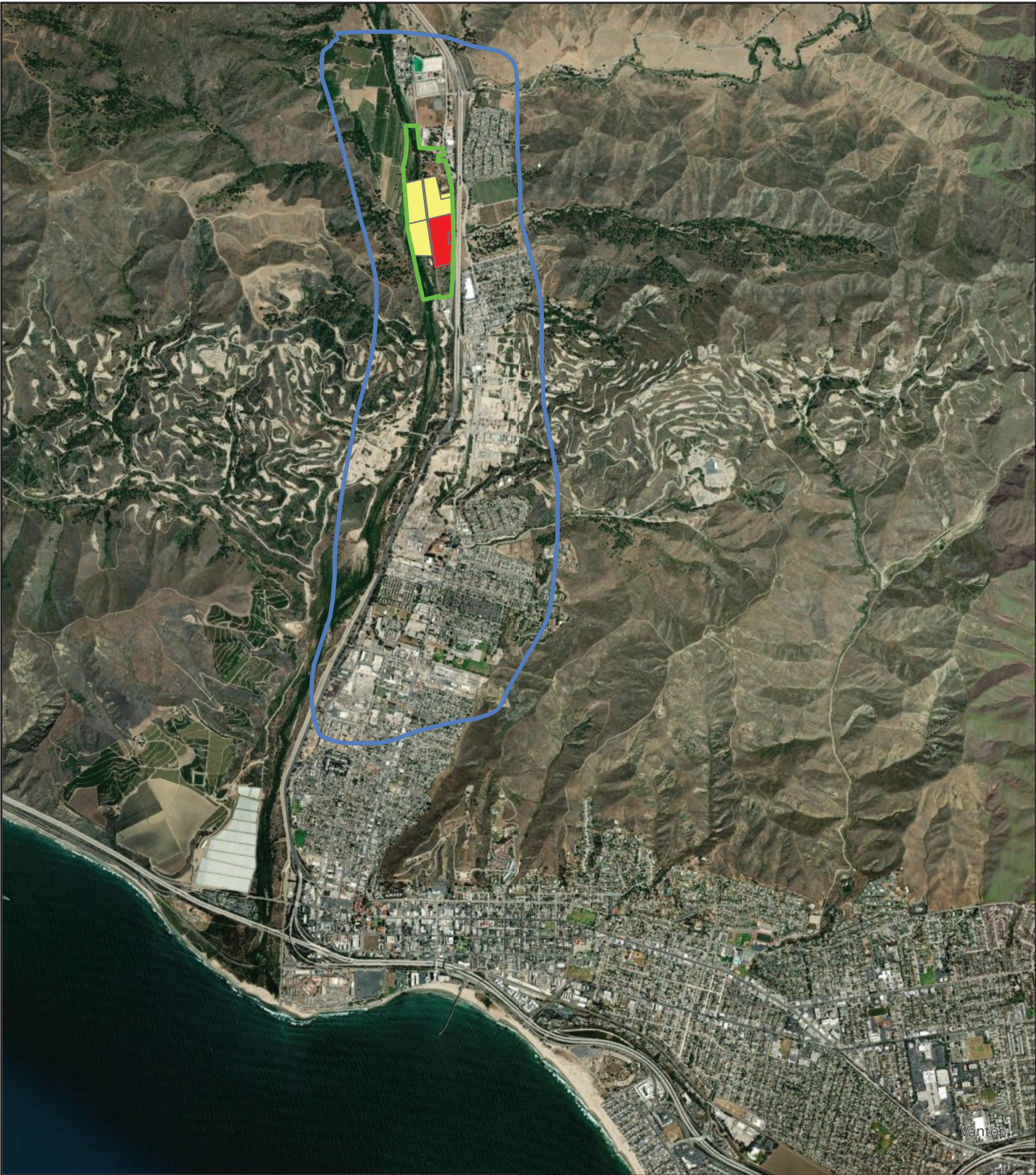
Community population is 15,000 or less	No
The applicant is, or will assist, a federally recognized Indian Tribe or United States Territory	No
The priority site(s) is impacted by mine-scarred land.	No
The priority site(s) is adjacent to a body of water (i.e., the border of the priority site(s) is contiguous 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).	Yes, Pg. 1
The priority site(s) is in a federally designated floodplain.	Yes, Pgs 1 & 4
The reuse of the priority site(s) will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy.	No
The reuse of the priority site(s) will incorporate energy efficiency measures.	Yes, Pg. 4
The proposed project will improve local climate adaptation/mitigation capacity and resilience to protect residents and community investments.	Yes, Pg. 4
At least 20% of the overall project budget will be spent on eligible reuse/ areawide planning activities, as described in Section 3A.(2), for priority site(s) within the target area.	Yes, Pg. 10
The target area is located within a community in which a coal-fired power plant has recently closed (2015 or later) or is closing.	No

9. Letter from the State or Tribal Environmental Authority

A letter from California Department of Toxic Substances and Control (DTSC) is attached.

10. Releasing Copies of Applications

Not applicable



Ventura



VENTURA
LAND TRUST

Ventura Land Trust Brownfield Remediation Project

-  Non-Priority Sites
-  Priority Sites
-  Property Boundary
-  Target Area

N



0 0.15 0.3
Mi

0 0.3 0.6
Km



Yana Garcia
Secretary for
Environmental Protection



Department of Toxic Substances Control

Katherine M. Butler, MPH, Director
9211 Oakdale Avenue
Chatsworth, California 91311

<https://dtsc.ca.gov/>



Gavin Newsom
Governor

January 26, 2026

Mr. Daniel Hulst
Deputy Director
Ventura Land Trust
353 Sanjon Road
Ventura, California 93001

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF A UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
AGENCY MULTI-PURPOSE GRANT PROPOSAL FOR \$1,000,000**

Dear Mr. Hulst,

The Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) of the California Environmental Protection Agency acknowledges and supports the Ventura Land Trust's (VLT) application for a United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) Multipurpose Grant (USEPA Grant) for Fiscal Year 2026. Ventura Land Trust will be requesting a funding amount of \$1,000,000 for multiple uses at the Palm Road property located at 4777 Crooked Palm Road, Ventura California (Site) [Link](#) .

With these USEPA Grant funds, the VLT intends to implement its plan to improve and maintain the 101.5-acre Site in accordance with the terms of the recorded institutional controls, also referred to as the land use covenant (LUC) [Link](#). The Site is located in an unincorporated commercial/industrial area of Ventura County, California. The Site consists of 28 contiguous parcels. Five parcels or about 35 acres were occupied by a fertilizer manufacturer and by an oil refinery.

Brief history:

- Pre-1952. Lemon orchard owned by the Morrison Family

Mr. Daniel Husk
January 26, 2026
Page 2

- 1953-1975. Shell Chemical Corporation constructed and operated an anhydrous ammonia and urea fertilizer production facility. Added a nitric acid plant in 1970.
- 1975-1984. USA Petrochem constructed an oil refinery and AST tank farm on the northern portion of the Site. Operations ceased in 1984.
- 1904 to the 1990s. A main-line railroad transected the site, and spurs were located on the central portions of the site from the early/mid 1950s to the 1990s.
- 1987 to 2019. Site investigations, soil removal actions and facility decommissioning performed under ownership of USA Petrochem.
- 2019 to 2024. Palm Road LLC acquires property. Continued site characterization, facility decommissioning and removal actions.

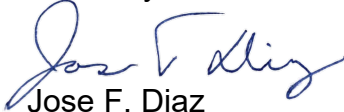
The VLT will hold community input sessions in collaboration with a consultant; perform Phase II ESAs: assess existing buildings and determine feasibility for reuse; building remediation/remodeling; and conduct some Site remediation. Ultimately, the site would stay open space to be managed by VLT. Buildings would be remodeled and used for VLT or community use, such as public events, a plant nursery, and more. There is strong community need for readily accessible green space with public access for nature and recreation. The adjacent communities are low-income.

DTSC looks forward to the possible award of the USEPA Grant to VLTA to facilitate the success of assessment and future redevelopment of the Site. DTSC is ready to provide the necessary technical support and regulatory oversight, as needed, for projects and sites covered by the grant. DTSC will provide a cost estimate upon receiving a scope of work for any project involving the removal or disturbance of soil contaminated with hazardous substances.

If you need further information or assistance regarding specific brownfield sites, or any of DTSC's brownfields programs, please feel free to contact me via phone at (818) 717-6614 or via email at Jose.Diaz@dtsc.ca.gov.

Mr. Daniel Husk
January 26, 2026
Page 3

Sincerely,



Jose F. Diaz
Brownfields Coordinator
Department of Toxics Substances Control
Site Mitigation and Restoration Program
Southern California Division – Chatsworth Office

cc: Maryam Tasnif-Abassi
Brownfield Development Manager
Site Mitigation & Restoration Program
Southern California Division – Cypress Office
Maryam.Tasnif-abassi@dtsc.ca.gov

(1) PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION AND PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION

Target Area and Brownfields

a. Overview of Brownfield Challenges and Description of Area

Overview of the Brownfield Challenges: In December 2025, in furtherance of its mission to acquire, steward, and conserve open space for the benefit of the public, Ventura Land Trust (VLT) acquired 4777 Crooked Palm Road, Ventura, California (the Property). Zoned industrial and located in unincorporated Ventura County (County), the Property is 101.5 acres and 28 parcels, 6 of which are brownfields. These 6 Sites total 54.43 acres and were contaminated from decades of use as a petroleum facility. Since 2015, the Sites have been governed by a Land Use Covenant (LUC) from the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC). Prohibited uses include residences, schools, hospitals, or day cares. Prohibited activities include drilling for water or oil. These Sites are among dozens¹ documented by the County and EPA including landfills, oil fields, dumps, and wildfire-impacted areas that are releasing contaminants to air, soil, and groundwater.

The LUC exists due to known Contaminants of Concern (COC) including volatile organic compounds (VOCs), petroleum hydrocarbons (TPH), and metal contamination exceeding safe levels in the Property's soil, water, and soil vapor; of these, TPH (diesel and heavy-oil) is the most predominant. These COC have been identified in multiple reports². The presence of brownfields throughout the Target Area (described below) directly limits public access to open space in a community already burdened by poor air quality, radon exposure³ from the Rincon Formation, pesticide drift from surrounding ranches, and elevated respiratory disease rates. EPA Brownfields funding is necessary to plan for and remediate Priority Sites for safe recreational use by the public. With this funding, VLT will perform environmental assessments (including Phase II ESAs); assess buildings; engage the public on reuse; develop a site revitalization and reuse plan; develop specific cleanup plans; and remediate at least one Priority Site.

Description of the Target Area: As shown on the attached map, the Target Area (Area) is approximately four (4) census tracts within the **North Ventura Avenue Area** in both unincorporated County and the City of Ventura (City) as well as part of the Ventura River (River). Situated in a federal floodplain, the Area runs 4 miles from the Property south to the City. Treated wastewater is discharged less than 0.5 miles north by the Ojai Valley Wastewater Treatment Plant. The Area includes housing mixed with industrial facilities and commercial buildings and is adjacent to 3,400 acres of active oil fields. The Ventura River Watershed is one of three major County watersheds and water consumption is 100% local.

b. Description of the Priority Brownfield Site(s)

As shown on the attached map, there are 6 brownfields, of which 2 are Priority Sites. **Site 1 (APN 063-0-120-215; 0.82 acres)** is a **Priority Site** due to an existing 6,000sf building built in 1952 that was remediated asbestos and asbestos but is planned for further assessment, remediation, and reuse. It is also a Priority due to its small acreage and lower per-acre remediation cost. It is closest to the Property entrance and Area residents. **Site 2 (APN 063-0-120-165; 16.45 acres)** is also close to the Property's entrance and has 2 buildings with suspected asbestos and lead that will be assessed.

Non-Priority Sites include Site 3 (APN 063-0-050-265; 0.9 acres), which hosted an industrial oil and fertilizer processing facility that was removed in 2015 and caused suspected petroleum contamination; **Site 4 (APN 063-0-050-245; 12.72 acres)** which had 12+ aboveground storage tanks and a processing facility (both removed in 2015). Minor concrete channels, metal footings, and other infrastructure remain and there is little natural vegetation; **Site 5 (APN 063-0-050-145; 12.38 acres)** which includes part of the River. Two aboveground storage tanks were removed in 2015. About 0.16 miles of the Ventura River Trail, a City-managed level-3 bike path, runs through; **Site 6 (APN 063-0-120-015; 11.16 acres)**, which includes part of the River, and 0.22 miles of the Ventura River Trail. Seven of the 11.16 acres were part of the prior industrial facilities, described in *Past land use*.

Past land use: The Property was a lemon orchard until 1952, when it was sold first to Shell Oil and subsequently several other oil companies. Over the years, industrial facilities (including an oil refinery) were built, and petroleum-based toxic waste caused contamination from leaking tanks and pipes. Decommissioning occurred in the 1970s and 1980s, and some remediation was done including asbestos and lead in at least one of the buildings. In 2019, a

¹ Publicly available number of brownfields in Ventura County is not publicly available, though it is in ACRES, which requires registration.

² Reports include two Phase I ESAs in 2019 and 2025 a Current Conditions Report (CCR) in 2022, and a Human Health and Ecological Risk Assessment (HHERA) in 2023.

³ Documented in multiple surveys, including a special report by Department of Conservation in 2006.

commercial developer bought the Property. When development was stymied by zoning and land-use restrictions, the Property was sold to the Trust for Public Land (TPL), a national nonprofit that acquires and conserves land. TPL transferred title at no cost to VLT in late 2025. Prior to this, illegal dumping and defacement occurred.

Current land use: The Property is zoned industrial. Use is limited to cyclists and pedestrians who use the Ventura River Trail bike path (established as part of the national Rails-to-Trails network) which links Ventura to cities east, including Ojai. There is unauthorized access and use by transients, as evidenced by encampments, graffiti, and refuse. The perimeter is fenced, though the fencing has breached in places, historically permitting access to the interior. Land use within a two-mile radius (12.6 square miles) consists of 28% oil fields, 28% agricultural (primarily ranching), 24% federally managed open space, 8% residential, 5% industrial, and 5% river corridor.

Environmental Concerns: Multiple environmental assessments have been performed at the Sites and identified COC in soil, soil vapor, and groundwater, including volatile organic compounds (VOC), petroleum hydrocarbons (TPH), and metals. The primary, residual COC in shallow soil (<10ft bsg) are: TPHg (to 7900 mg/kg); TPH(d) (to 2360 mg/kg); Arsenic (to 25 mg/kg); Benzene (to 9.1 mg/kg); Ethylbenzene (to 230 mg/kg); Naphthalene (to 22.5 mg/kg). Select soil vapor COC include Tetrachloroethene (to 6.4 µg/m³) and Benzene (to 24 µg/m³). Groundwater COC include Arsenic (to 14 µg/L), Benzene (to 86 µg/L), and Methyl Tertiary Butyl Ether (to 200 µg/L).

b. Identifying Additional Sites

If grant funds remain after addressing Priority Sites 1 and 2, we will prioritize the remaining four Sites for remediation based on **1) Reduction of risk.** We will prioritize Sites that pose potential risk to human health and the environment; **2) Location.** We will select Sites closest to the newly-remediated Sites; **3) Future economic use.** In collaboration with the Project Advisory Board (described in detail in *Partners*), we will evaluate Sites based on their potential economic value; and **4) Community use.** We will prioritize Sites that can meet needs identified during the community engagement process. Other factors include the ecological impact of remediating additional Sites.

Revitalization of the Target Area

c. Overall Plan for Revitalization

There is not an overall plan for revitalization of any or all brownfield sites within the Target Area.

However, development and use of the Sites are governed by the **North Ventura Avenue Area Plan (NVAAP)**, established by the City and the County in 1982, updated in 1990 and 2020, with an update planned for 2026-2028. The NVAAP is part of the County's 2040 General Plan (adopted 9/15/2020). Two County General Plan elements apply to the Sites: the Land Use and Community Character Element (Land Use Element) and the Hazards and Safety Element (Hazards Element). Additionally, though not officially part of City boundaries, the Sites are considered within the City's "Area of Interest," which allows for some unofficial City oversight. **Importantly, rezoning the Sites will not be required to achieve reuse.** The County's General Plan stipulates that Brownfield cleanup followed by trails/habitat uses aligns with the General Plan's Open Space designation goals (LU-9), which explicitly include "preservation of plant and animal life" without mandating a zone change. Some public use may require a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) but not a rezone. VLT's planned reuse is allowable with Planning Director or Designee approval per the Ventura County Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance.

EPA Multipurpose funding will allow VLT to procure consultants to engage the community and create a Revitalization Plan (Plan) for the Sites/Property. Once created, it will align with and advance both City and County government priorities, specifically goals related to environmental remediation, open space preservation, public access to natural areas, sustainable land use, and economic vitality supported by recreation and tourism. The Plan will include a *feasible reuse strategy* for Priority Sites and a strategic plan/roadmap for the entire area governed by the LUC. The Plan and site reuse strategies will be informed by previous and proposed environmental assessment findings. They will also take into account VLT's mission, vision, and programmatic priorities, which revolve around preserving open space, protecting habitats and supporting public access to natural areas. Finally, they will include the needs, concerns, and aspirations stakeholders including residents, adjacent landowners, nonprofits, recreation and conservation groups, housing and economic development interests, and public agencies. This input would be solicited through community outreach efforts and a Project Advisory Board (described later) and will ensure that reuse strategies are realistic, broadly supported, and responsive to local conditions and community priorities.

Beyond local government, this project aligns with:

1. **The Ventura River Parkway Preserve Plan (created 2008):** Current participants include Ventura Land Trust, Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project, Project Advisory Board member Ojai Valley Land Conservancy (OVLC), and the Trust for Public Land (TPL, the creator). This plan is a visionary project aimed at preserving, restoring, and enhancing the natural and recreational resources of the Ventura River and its surrounding areas by creating a continuous network of parks, trails, and natural areas along 16 miles.
2. **Ventura River Watershed Management Plan (approved March 5, 2015):** A collaborative framework developed to protect and restore the Ventura River watershed, guiding long-term stewardship of water quality, ecosystem health, and public access from the river's headwaters to its estuary. The plan emphasizes reducing pollution, restoring aquatic and riparian habitats, promoting responsible land and resource management, and enhancing recreational opportunities for communities within the watershed.
3. **The Ventura River Trails Project:** A City initiative, this effort actively improves sections of the Ventura River Trail. Constructed in the late 1990s on a former railroad, the Trail connects Ventura to Ojai and is a significant recreational and tourism asset. In 2024, a \$5 million project improved 1.8 miles of the Trail.
4. **Community priorities documented by Ojai Valley Land Conservancy (OVLC) in 2023** when they acquired property less than 1 mile from this project site. Feedback was that the community seeks to limit commercial and industrial development and expand safe, natural spaces.

d. Outcomes and Benefits of Overall Plan for Revitalization

VLT will leverage its proven track record in site cleanup and management, reuse planning, and community engagement to transform these brownfield Sites into a free, open, community-serving property that functions as a greenway and recreation corridor, advancing City and County priorities for open space and economic development. Recreation and open space is the most realistic and beneficial reuse option for these Sites (rather than residential or commercial) given VLT's mission to conserve open space, the LUC restrictions, the proximity to the Ventura River, the existing bike path, existing zoning, and more.

Most County visitors are for tourism and recreation, both of which depend on access to nature and open space. Transforming the Site(s) into open natural spaces will build on the County's existing 164,000 acres of greenbelts which are heavily used and economically valuable for the region. Each year, approximately 100,000 people access the Ventura River and its associated recreation areas for walking, fishing, boating, watching, and other nature-based activities. Each year, 1.5–2 million people visit the County's Pacific coastline and beaches. According to Visit Ventura, in 2024, Countywide visitor spending reached \$1.93B (a 3.4% increase over 2023), and tourism and recreation supported 16,620 local jobs and generated \$68 million in local tax revenues.

Beyond general tourism spending, this project would complement nearby Rancho Cañada Larga (Cañada Larga), a 6,474-acre conserved landscape managed by the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy (OVLC). Opening to the public in the next decade, Cañada Larga will provide outdoor recreation, including hiking, biking, equestrian use, and wildlife viewing. However, this project provides many amenities that Cañada Larga will not, including use for people with limited mobility and infrastructure (especially buildings) repurposed with community input for community use. Having both this project and Cañada Larga within a few miles of each other will amplify the region's already-healthy reputation for nature-based amenities. It will also likely support the local economy by increasing visitor length of stay and spending. Finally, this project will be used by internal and external educational audiences including local K-12 schoolchildren. VLT has robust nature-based educational programming that serves 1,500 students/year over 16 different programs. Most students served are underserved and from Title 1 schools. This Site will be a new location.

There are economic benefits beyond tourism and recreation spending. Numerous studies⁴ show that parks and open spaces increase home prices by 5-20%. Similarly, proximity to toxic sites is a well-documented⁵ driver of low home values. In the long term, increased home values are shown to strengthen the local tax base and improve long-term economic resilience⁶. Secondly, revitalizing the Sites will also reduce City and County costs for unauthorized and illegal Site usage. In 2025, the County Sheriff's department was on property 42 times, 16 for trespassing.

⁴ The impact of parks on property values: A review of the empirical evidence. *The Park Catalog*, 2018

⁵ EPA and National Center for Environmental Economics (NCEE) (2021); National Institutes of Health study: *Environmental Health Risks and Housing Values: Evidence from 1,600 Toxic Plant Openings and Closings* (2016); University of Cincinnati, *Journal of Environmental Assessment Policy and Management* (2013)

⁶ Harvard Business School, *The Local Issue That's Driving Up Your Property Taxes*, 2025; EPA Brownfields Accomplishments Oct 2025 ([EPA.gov](https://www.epa.gov/brownfields)); Federal Reserve Board: *The Connection Between House Price Appreciation and Property Tax Revenues* (2008)

Local resilience to the impacts of extreme weather events and natural disasters: Revitalizing the sites will improve local resilience/ The Sites are within a floodplain which sees minor floods every couple of years, and moderate floods every 5-10 years. The Great Flood of 1969 saw dozens of homes flooded and demolished, and a major flood January 2023 saw flows over 35,000 cfs, which resettled parts of the floodplain. Improving the Sites will reduce floodwater impacts to the thousands of nearby City and County residents, the bridges, levees and other supportive infrastructure, and the high value farmlands that line the River. Because the floodplain terminates in the Pacific Ocean, removing COC from soils before future floods occur will prevent those contaminants from reaching the ocean, spreading across neighboring properties or into homes and public spaces, or from entering the shallow groundwater on which residents and farmers depend in this entirely local water consumption area.

Depending on the specific reuse plans, the project will also improve local climate adaptation and resilience by replacing contaminated, non-porous ground materials (such as asphalt) with native habitats. This will increase infiltration, reduce polluted runoff during rain, and lower flood-related risks to nearby residents. Additionally, native plants increase carbon sequestration, while shade helps reduce the urban heat-island effects. Re-established native habitats also improve ecosystem health, which in turn supports biodiversity, pollinators, and nature-based flood management. Together, these actions preserve the community’s investments in housing, infrastructure, recreation, and tourism. Finally, there are no plans to facilitate renewable energy. Buildings may be reused; they were constructed in long before current energy efficient codes. Any changes made will incorporate current required energy efficiencies.

Strategy for Leveraging Resources

e. Resources Needed for Site Reuse:

VLT has a \$1M endowment for the Property which produces approximately \$40,000 per year, or \$200,000 over the grant project. VLT also received \$200,000 in unrestricted funding for the Property, with an additional \$500,000 pledged to be donated over the 5-year period if EPA funds are won. **This funding, coupled with EPA funds, will ensure VLT can achieve the assessment, reuse planning, and priority site remediation portion of this project.**

To achieve realize the community’s vision for the Property and achieve full reuse beyond the end of the grant period, VLT will launch a multi-million-dollar, multi-year capital campaign, which will focus on fundable elements like trails, signage, construction, and amenities that appeal to donors. Strategies will include naming opportunities, special events, direct appeals, and seeking additional grants (described below) once the community reuse vision and revitalization plan are complete. VLT’s fundraising capacity and success is detailed in *4a. Organizational Capacity*.

Funding Source/Strategy and type of funding	History of Giving to VLT	Relationship to Project/Likelihood of Providing Funding	Target Ask
Cotyledon Fund (private)	\$500,000	Highly likely donor. Has supported similar projects.	\$250,000
DTSC Brownfield Funding (state)	\$0	Future cleanup beyond priority sites.	\$500,000
Holdfast Collective (private)	\$1.2M	Current project donor (\$200,000). Highly likely to provide additional funds. Will serve on the Project Advisory Board (PAB); co-purchased Property with TPL.	\$500,000
California Wildlife Conservation Board (state)	\$800,000 expected	Likely. Received pre-application for project site; conducted site visit, expressed interest if Brownfields funding won. Favors projects with multiple funders.	\$500,000
EPA Brownfields (federal)	None	Future cleanup beyond priority sites	\$500,000
Ventura County Environmental Grant Program (county)	None	Habitat restoration and reuse (education programming)	\$15,000
Dept of Fish and Wildlife (state)	\$10,000	Restoration and remediation near the River	\$50,000
Ventura County CDBG (county)	None	Reuse activities supporting public amenities	\$25,000
DTSC Equitable Community Revitalization Grant (ECRG)	None	Likely. Future cleanup beyond priority sites	\$500,000
Ventura County Resource Conservation District (VCRCD)	None	Restoration and remediation	\$20,000

f. Use of Existing Infrastructure:

There are 6 buildings, a paved road, metal fencing, and industrial facilities remnants (e.g. concrete pads). There are shut off water, electricity, and gas utilities. Separate from these grant funds, 1-3 of the buildings would eventually be rehabilitated, if supported by the community reuse vision and revitalization plan. Rehab will use green building/energy efficient practices. Existing roads at the entrance will be reused with modifications necessary by code/for ADA compliance. No new roads would be added (unless required by code). To the extent possible, existing utilities will be maintained and upgraded for reuse using non-grant funds. No new structures will be built. Additional infrastructure needs for reuse will be funded through the capital campaign (above) and will adhere to CALGreen Tier 1/Ventura County Building Code requirements for passive recreation.

(2) COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community Need

a. The Community’s Need for Funding:

VLT acquired the Property because of 1) the strong alignment with VLT’s mission, 2) the significant need for free, safe, open recreational space in the Area, and 3) the need to remove environmental hazards/COC and neighborhood blights from the Area. Most area communities are in the unincorporated County and do not benefit from City amenities, despite living a few miles away. Residents lack a mechanism (such as a homeowners association) to seek funding. The Area community is under resourced and includes two mobile home parks.

Demographic	Target Area	Ventura City	Ventura Co	California	U.S.
Population	16,698	109,831	835,427	39,431,263	340,110,988
Minority (incl. Hispanic)	55.5%	46.7%	58.3%	75.4%	42.5%
Median Household Income	\$75,175	\$100,407	\$107,327	\$96,334	\$78,538
Tract Poverty Percentile ⁷	56% ave (27%-77%)	N/A	N/A	50%	N/A
Persons in Poverty, %	16.2% ave (12%-25%)	10.4%	9.8%	11.8%	10.6%
Per Capita Income (2023)	\$48,750 ⁸	\$49,411	\$48,416	\$47,977	\$43,289
Median Home Price	\$785,000 ⁹	\$870,000	\$920,000	\$866,000	\$400,000
Affordability (HPI) ¹⁰	10	8.6	8.5	8.9	5.1

Communities outside the Area are unlikely or unable to contribute to a project of this magnitude despite being invested in the outcome. Neither the County nor City have allocations for brownfield cleanup and reuse. The County’s budget is focused on, among other priorities, public housing: the County is one of the most unaffordable counties in the state with the 8th highest cost of living among California’s 58 counties. As a nonprofit, VLT cannot introduce bond measures or make government budget allocations but is committed to fundraising for the costs needed to complete the project. Despite existing project funding and successful track record (see 4a. *Organizational Capacity*), a lack of EPA brownfields funding would delay the project by years, if not decades.

b. Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations:

The remediation of one or more of the Area’s brownfields will eliminate COC, exposure to which has the potential for severe acute (short-term) and chronic (long-term) effects. The County suffers from **poor air quality and has failed federal standards** for most years since 1970 (Ca Air Resources Board 2025). It is classified by the U.S. EPA as a serious nonattainment area for the federal 8-hour ozone standard, and federal 8-hour National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) (VCAPCD Air Quality Standards, 2025). Residents are subjected to 3,400 acres of oil and gas operations (which emit VOCs, methane, and other pollution) as well as smoke plumes and particulate pollution from wildfires, which have grown in number and scale and are amongst the most destructive in the nation (e.g. the January 2025 fires destroyed Altadena and Pacific Palisades.) The County is also located atop the Rincon Formation, which releases radon gas. Past studies found a large proportion of homes had radon levels above the EPA action level, and

⁷ California’s CalEnviroScreen mapping tool, maintained by the office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment

⁸ Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis mapping tool (FRED)

⁹ Estimates from Redfin.com

¹⁰ The House-Price-to Income (HPI) ratio is a standard measure of a region’s affordability and is a more accurate than using household income alone, which is misleading in high cost-of-living areas like Ventura County. HPI is calculated by dividing the median home price by the median household income.

radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the U.S.¹¹ Pesticides were detected in nearly 80% of air samples collected at monitoring sites in California farm communities, including in Ventura County¹². Ventura County is heavily agricultural, the project site is ringed by active ranches, and Area residents are low income with elevated rates of hypertension, heart disease, and respiratory illness, so even before brownfield exposure they are already at high risk for poor health outcomes.

Especially sensitive populations include **those who are elderly and aging** (19% of the total population¹³); they are more at risk for respiratory problems exacerbated by air pollutants like PM2.5, ozone, and nitrogen dioxide. Problems this population faces include Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), Asthma, acute respiratory infections, and more. According to numerous health data¹⁴, County residents have measurable rates of these diseases and conditions, many at or above state or national benchmarks. According to the County's 2025 Community Health Needs Assessment, an effort by about a dozen health plans, clinics, health agencies, and CBOs, 17.1% of adults report having been diagnosed with asthma, which is higher than the overall U.S. (15.7%) and similar to California (17%). 12.3% of children and teens are reported to have asthma. COPD among Medicare enrollees (who are older adults) is about 9%, higher than the California average (8%). **Children** (21% of the population, of which 5% are children under 5), are particularly vulnerable to all pollutants due to their still-developing organs and brains. **Women** (50% of the population) as well as **pregnant women or those who have recently given birth** (10.22 births per 1,000 in 2024, or 8,586 births in 2023), are also sensitive populations. Environmental exposures like air pollution are linked to higher risks of preterm birth (6.6% of births), low birthweight, and pregnancy complications. **Individuals with disabilities** number 10.5%, higher than California's average when broken down by both adults under 64, and adults 65+.

Welfare data for the Area indicates that the population is economically disadvantaged by several factors, detailed below in *d. Economically Impoverished/Disproportionately Impacted Populations*. This grant will transform a contaminated industrial site into a safe and *free* open space where communities can meet, exercise, and play.

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

County residents experience higher than normal instances for asthma, etc which are described above in *b. Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations* and have more than likely been exacerbated by the region's 75+ years of petroleum contamination. This grant will allow for multiple Phase II ESAs, the development of site-specific cleanup plans, and the remediation of at least one Priority Site. These COC are less than ¼ mile from hundreds of Area houses, and feet away from the Ventura River. The Ventura River Trail (a bike path) travels through the contaminated sites, exposing thousands of walkers and cyclists to toxins each year. Stewardship of the Site will also reduce susceptibility to wildfires.

d. Economically Impoverished/Disproportionately Impacted Populations:

Area residents are majority-minority (Hispanic¹⁵) and are victims of industrial, commercial, and governmental policies and practices that, for decades, have eroded the natural environment around them and limited opportunities to build generational wealth. Similarly, the policies and practices have created a neighborhood that suffers from numerous economic injustices, including nearby manufacturing facilities that drive low home prices (causing less home equity), lack of public parks (only 1), lack of accessible open space, and more. Minority populations tend to have more health issues, suffer from higher rates of acute and chronic disease, and have fewer resources to overcome health challenges. Reuse of the site will create *free* accessible open space and improve recreation and physical activity opportunities. This encourages physical activity via walking, jogging, biking, and more, which helps combat obesity, cardiovascular disease, and mental health issues. Access to natural space is widely shown to reduce stress, anxiety, and depression. Reuse of the site will also support local schools and school-aged children via school tours, guided hikes, Ventura River exploration, and more. VLT will host new educational programming at the remediated Site. Children reap enormous benefits from being in nature, and the thousands of children in the Area have few open spaces to choose from.

¹¹ Discovery Of Radon Potential In The Rincon Shale, California – A Case History Of Deliberate Exploration (1993); California Geological Survey Special Report 194: Radon Potential in Ventura County, California (2006)

¹² California Department of Pesticide Regulation's 2023 Air Monitoring Network Report

¹³ American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year Estimates for Ventura County, CA

¹⁴ 2025 Community Health Needs Assessment for Ventura County, Ventura County Public Health Respiratory Dashboard 2026

¹⁵ U.S. Census Bureau 2020 Census, as collected via the Census Demographic Data Map Viewer

Community Engagement

e. Prior/Ongoing Community Involvement:

VLT became aware of the Sites a year before acquiring in December 2025. Due to the timeframe of title transfer, VLT did no community engagement prior to this application, however, TPL (the intermediary owner) did as part of its purchase. And, the Area community was recently engaged by Ojai Valley Land Conservancy (OVLC) (another local nonprofit and land trust) during OVLC's acquisition of a similar site less than a mile away from this project. VLT is embracing the community priorities conveyed to TPL and OVLC.

f. and g. Project Involvement and Project Roles:

This complex project has many partners with different levels of involvement. The following partners will serve on a Project Advisory Board (PAB) led by Project Director Daniel Hulst. They will meet 2–3 times per year, receive modest (\$500/year) stipends, and include:

- **Ojai Valley Land Conservancy (OVLC)**, whose mission is to protect and restore the natural landscapes of the Ojai Valley forever. They will collaborate on developing a strategy for overall development and use of the larger green space in the region, portions of which they co-own and co-manage, as well as advise on the community engagement process and existing community needs. **Point of Contact (POC):** Brendan Taylor, Director of Field Programs, brendan@ovlc.org
- The **City of Ventura**, whose mission is to enhance the quality of life and the environment through the professional delivery of all-hazards emergency response, community education, and inspection services. They will support permitting and regulatory processes. **POC:** Joey Waltz, City Surveyor, surveyinfo@cityofventura.ca.gov
- **Patagonia Clothing Company** whose mission is as follows: “We’re in business to save our home planet.” As a neighboring landowner, one of the largest corporations and employers in the County, and significant past funder of the Property (via Holdfast Collective), Patagonia will collaborate on reuse plans. **POC:** Jean-Baptiste “JB” Cotte, Sr. Brand Strategy and Go To Market Manager, Jean-Baptiste.Cotte@patagonia.com
- **Visit Ventura** who is responsible for promoting the coastal community as an attractive leisure and business travel destination. As an economic partner, they will advise on reuse strategies aligned with tourism objectives to increase tourism to the region. **POC:** Marlyss Auster, CEO, marlyss@visitventuraca.com
- The mission of the **Trust for Public Lands (TPL)** is to protect land, provide green spaces, and change communities across the US. We strive to share the benefits and joy the outdoors brings. As the initiator of the Ventura River Parkway Plan (one of the major plans governing this project) and an active organization related to the Ventura River Corridor, they will collaborate on the reuse options for the site.

Many agencies will issue permits, provide approvals, and coordinate activities. They include but are not limited to:

- **Ca Dept of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC):** Approve Voluntary Cleanup/Remedial Action Plan (RAP).
- **County Public Works Agency (VCPWA):** Stormwater, roads, and transportation permits and plans, such as the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SPPP). **POC:** Hayley Luna, Stormwater Program Mgr and Deputy Director of Watershed Protection District, hayley.luna@ventura.org
- **County Health Department:** approve Hazardous Materials Business Plan. **POC:** Matthew Madison, Program Supervisor, matthew.madison@venturacounty.gov
- **County Resource Management Agency (RMA): Planning Division:** Site Plan Review or Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for remediation on industrial-zoned land, Zoning Clearance Certificate, CEQA compliance documentation if necessary; **Building & Safety Division:** Building/demo permits; approve soils engineering reports; **Environmental Health Division:** Hazardous Materials handling permits
- **County Watershed Protection: Watershed Planning and Permits Division:** Issue Watercourse Permit
- **County Fire Protection District:** approve Hazardous Materials Business Plan; review fire safety plan for excavation & grading; issue high-hazard operations permits
- **California Department of Fish & Wildlife (CDFW):** issue Streambed Alteration Agreement (1602 permit) if waters/wetlands affected (possible)
- **Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB):** Site cleanup oversight (if groundwater impacted); issue dewatering/discharge permits.

Partners with specific and/or limited roles who will *not* be part of the PAB include:

- **Ventura County Sheriff's Office - Homeless Liaison Unit (HLU)** is a collateral team addressing the ever-

growing demand for homeless services. They will support efforts to prepare the site from a health and safety perspective, including removing homeless population and referrals. **POC:** Captain John Hajduko, John.Hajducko@venturacounty.gov

- The **Ventura County Continuum of Care Alliance** is a collaborative group dedicated to ending homelessness in Ventura County. They will collaborate on activities related to relocating existing homeless/unhoused population and referring for services. **POC:** Jennifer Harkey, jennifer.harkey@ventura.org
- The **Surfrider Foundation** is dedicated to the protection and enjoyment of the world’s ocean, waves and beaches, for all people, through a powerful activist network. As an ecological partner, they will provide water quality testing throughout the project; inform on ecological issues that affect the project.
- The mission of the **Ventura River Watershed Council** is to facilitate and support efforts by individuals, agencies, and organizations to maintain and improve the health and sustainability of the Ventura River watershed for the benefit of the people and ecosystems that depend upon it.

h. Incorporating Community Input

Community Input: VLT is experienced in collecting and incorporating community input, having previously planned and opened similar sites as nature preserves. For this project, VLT will procure a community engagement consultant to lead the process, as it has done on past projects. In general, the larger Ventura community values nature and is very receptive to open recreational spaces and there is rarely if ever opposition to a project VLT undertakes.

Municipal Input: The City and County’s input will be through the PAB. Both are key governance partners. Additionally, there are municipal and legislative restrictions: The Property’s zoning (industrial) combined with its brownfield status and LUC limits development options. The project is also restricted by SOAR Ventura, a series of voter-approved initiatives that require public votes before open space can be rezoned for urban development. SOAR effectively eliminates competition from developers seeking to rezone brownfield or industrial sites. The County has land use authority and the City is notified as an affected agency during the permitting process.

Communicating Progress: We will establish a project webpage on VLT’s main website, on which we will maintain FAQs, an email address and phone number for queries, and a project email update sign-up. Queries will be responded to, and we will post project updates to social media. Beyond digital communication, residents and businesses directly impacted by construction or fieldwork (generally with a ½ mile boundary) will receive door-to-door flyers or mailed notices at least two weeks before work begins. Communications will be translated into Spanish. After major community outreach efforts, the community engagement consultant will document all input received and create a written report summarizing how feedback was incorporated. This report will be published on the webpage & distributed by email. Finally, we will create media (video, imagery, writing) to support engagement efforts.

Soliciting Feedback: The community engagement consultant will host 3-5 in-person meetings (with a virtual joining option) at an easily accessible site to present the project to Area residents and gather feedback, record meetings, and post to the project webpage. We will build an accessible feedback portal on the project website and build awareness using major outreach channels. We will send surveys to the project email list.

Considering and Responding to Feedback: VLT and the consultant will review community feedback, some of which will be discussed with project partners and PAB members. Beyond this, feedback received to the dedicated email or to the phone number will be routed internally and a reply made promptly. Municipal and agency feedback and involvement, such as that from the City, the County, and/or DTSC regarding land use, permitting, approvals, and more, will be collected during the PAB meetings or on an ad-hoc basis. Having completed multiple similar projects that require County and City approval, the Project Director has experience with each agency for previous projects.

(3) TASK DESCRIPTIONS, COST ESTIMATES, AND MEASURING PROGRESS

Description of Tasks/Activities and Outputs

a. Project Implementation, b. Anticipated Project Schedule, d. Task/Activity Lead, d. Outputs

Task 1: Project Administration and Management (\$14,200)	
Outputs: 1 Cooperative Agreement, 1 project tracking system; 1 project manual (roles & responsibilities), 20 quarterly performance and financial reports to EPA, 10-15 Project Advisory Board meetings & summaries, 60 project team meetings; 3+ conferences/trainings attended	
Project Implementation	Schedule

Execute Cooperative Agreement (CA). Lead: Project Director (PD)	Y1, Q1
Establish project tracking and financial systems, drives, and documentation and hold project kickoff meeting (milestone) Lead: PD, Co-Project Director (CoPD), Project Manager (PM), Communications Manager (CM), Grant Administrator (GA), Financial Lead (FL)	Y1, Q1
Submit quarterly EPA performance & financial reports Lead: PD, CoPD, PM, GA, FL	Y1-5
Launch Project Advisory Board (PAB) (milestone); hold meetings 2-3 times/year. Lead: PD/CoPD, CM	Y1-5
Attend EPA National Brownfields Conferences (2027, 2029, 2031) and other annual state conferences as needed to learn best practices, get guidance, and network with other organizations. Lead: PD/CoPD	Y1-5
Project Team meetings to provide status updates, discuss issues, coordinate with partners and agencies, prepare reports, and advance communications. Lead: PD/CoPD & Project Team members	Monthly Y1-5

Task 2: Community Engagement and Communications (\$37,500)	
Outputs: 1 webpage; 1 FAQs list; 1 embedded feedback form; 1 distribution list; 1 comms plan; 1 press release; #TBD social media posts; 3-5 in-person meetings; #TBD project update emails; #TBD media collateral (e.g. flyers); #TBD updates to ACRES	
Project Implementation	Schedule
Set up communications systems and translate materials as needed into Spanish; release grant award announcement press release. Lead: PD overseeing CM in collab with EPA, DTSC	Y1, Q1
Procure community engagement consultant (milestone). Lead: PD/CoPD, CM	Y3
Conduct outreach to select stakeholder partners regarding current use and hoped reuse of the Sites; host community engagement meetings. Lead: Community engagement consultant, PD, PAB, partners	Y3
Summarize and publish findings (milestone), review with PAB and regulatory partners. Lead: Community engagement consultant, PD, PM, Co-PD	Y3
Update Assessment, Cleanup, and Redevelopment Exchange System (ACRES) as needed. Lead: PD	Y1-5

Task 3: Testing, Planning, and Monitoring (\$333,100)	
Outputs: 1-2+ Phase II ESAs, 1-6 building reports, 1 Revitalization Plan, 1-2 workplans, 1-2 Remedial Action Plans (RAP), 1-2+ soil management plans, 1-2+ site reuse plan, 5 annual DTSC inspections & reports, 1 DTSC 5-year inspection & report, 1+ Analysis of Brownfield Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA); #TBD QEPs procured	
Implementation	Schedule
Procure qualified environmental professionals (QEP) and consultants for permitting, assessments, and plans (detailed below). Lead: PD in collaboration with GA and VLT advisory committee	Y1 & 2
Prepare site for access by QEPs. Coordinate re: existing homeless population. Lead: PD, PM, Ventura County Continuum of Care, Sheriff's office Homeless Liaison	As needed
Prepare workplans for & conduct 1-3 Phase II ESA including building assessment (milestone). Lead: PD/Co-PD overseeing QEP	Y2
Create Analysis of Brownfield Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA). Lead: PD/Co-PD overseeing QEP.	Y4
Create Soil Management Plan (if required for testing) and gain DTSC approval. Lead: DTSC, PD, Co-PD, plan contractor	Y4
Create site-specific reuse plans. Lead: PD overseeing QEPs	Y4
Create Revitalization Plan (milestone). Lead: PD overseeing consultant	Y4
Conduct annual & 5-Yr DTSC-required inspections and reports. Lead: PD/CoPD	Y1-5

Task 4: Site Remediation (\$615,200)	
Outputs: 1-2 cleaned priority Sites; #TBD cleaned additional Sites; 0.82+ remediated acres, #TBD remediated or demolished buildings, 1 HASP, 1 ABCA, #TBD cleanup documents	
Project Implementation	Schedule

Confirm Site(s) for remediation. (milestone). Lead: PD, Co-PD, DTSC	Y5
Procure QEP for remediation activities and plans. Lead: PD, GA, PM, Co-PD	Y5
Generate remediation plans (Remedial Action Plan (RAP), Health & Safety Plan (HASP); site access protocols; dust and erosion controls/air monitoring; species and habitat monitoring plans). Lead: QEP with oversight from PD/CoPD in collaboration with County of Ventura	Y5
Secure permits and approvals. Lead: PD, DTSC, CalTrans, County of Ventura, City of Ventura	Y5
Provide access & prepare site; coordinate with contractors. Lead: Field Team, VLT, PM	Y5
Remediate acreage according to RAP (milestone). Lead: QEPs, DTSC, PD	Y5
Remediate OR demolish building(s) if necessary for remediation. Lead: QEPs	Y5

We do not plan to include participant support costs to pay for activities associated with a community liaison. Leveraged resources include pro-bono services by Surfrider, who will test Ventura River and notify of issues.

e. **Cost Estimates:** The project is estimated at \$2,254,800 and VLT seeks \$1,000,000 in EPA Brownfields Multipurpose funding. **No Personnel, Fringe Benefits, Equipment, Supplies, or Indirect are part of the grant request** and are not included below. \$812,200, or 81% of the request is for site-specific work; of this, \$615,200, or 62%, is for site remediation. All construction, assessment, and remediation costs were provided by Tim Garvey, a former EPA contractor and an environmental remediation consultant with 30 years experience in California. Estimates use publicly available information from the TAB, the EPA, and environmental contractors in the region, as well as actual costs from similar projects.

Budget Categories	Project Tasks					
	Project Admin & Management	Community Engagement & Comms	Testing, Planning, & Monitoring	Site Remediation	Admin	Total
Personnel	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Fringe Benefits	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Travel	\$14,200	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$14,200
Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Supplies	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Contractual	\$0	\$22,000	\$333,100	\$0	\$0	\$355,100
Construction	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$615,200	0	\$615,200
Other	\$0	\$15,500	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$15,500
Total Direct Costs	\$14,200	\$37,500	\$333,100	\$615,200	\$0	\$1,000,000
Indirect Costs	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Budget	\$14,200	\$37,500	\$333,100	\$615,200	\$0	\$1,000,000

- **Travel** includes attendance by the PD & Co-PD at the National Brownfield conference in fall 2027, 2029, & 2031. Economy-rate airfare is estimated for typical locations. Per-diem and mileage align with federal regulations. Conference registration is based on prior years' actual published costs. **Calculation:** 2 people x 3 conferences x [1 RT flight @ \$600+\$200 conf reg fee+hotel (\$200/night*3 nights) food, incidentals (\$100/day*3 days) = \$600+\$200+\$600+\$300=\$1,700] = \$10,200. Travel also includes annual in-state travel to Brownfields conferences and workshops for PD and Co-P (\$400/trip/person*5 years=\$4,000.) \$10,200+\$4,000=\$14,200.
- **Contractual** includes QEPs/consultants for **supporting the permitting and plan process** (\$36,100 grant funded/\$59,900 org funds @ \$150/hr x 120 hrs/year x 5 years); developing a **remedial action plan (RAP;** \$20,000); **site reuse plans** (2@\$13,000ea=\$26,000); an Analysis of Brownfield Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA; \$35,000); **soil management plans** (2@\$13,000ea=\$26,000); **Phase II ESAs with building materials survey** (2@\$45,000ea=\$90,000); the **Revitalization Plan** (1@\$100,000); and the **community engagement consultant** (\$22,000). **Calculation:** \$36,100+\$35,000+\$20,000+\$26,000+\$26,000+\$90,000+\$100,000+\$22,000=\$355,110.
- **Construction** includes 1) **Building remediation.** On Priority Site 1, there is 1 6,200sf building and a 2,100sf building. **Calculation:** \$44/sq ft x 8,300sf = \$365,200; and 2) **Soil remediation.** Costs are a weighted average of standard in-situ and ex-situ remedial alternatives including excavation and disposal. **Calculation:** (2,000 cu yds of soil @ \$125/cu yd = \$250,000). Total \$250,000+\$365,200=\$615,200.

- **Other** includes media costs associated with keeping the community informed, such as printing, language translation, mailings, and more (\$3,000) and stipends for PAB members (\$500/yr*5members*5yrs=\$12,500). Costs are based on similar costs incurred for similar projects. **Calculation:** \$3,000+\$12,500=\$15,500.

f. **Plan to Measure and Evaluate Environmental Progress and Results:** During the grant period, VLT will track **outputs** (e.g. 20 EPA reports, 3 PAB meetings, etc) and **outcomes** (e.g. community engagement, other project funding received) using a centralized tracking system mirroring the 5-year schedule, with monthly team reviews, quarterly progress assessments against milestones, and PAB input at key points. Data will be entered into ACRES, summarized in EPA reports, and evaluated for adjustments. Beyond the grant term, VLT is required by the LUC to conduct annual and 5-year environmental inspections in perpetuity and report to DTSC. This will ensure that environmental progress made by the cleanup is maintained as well as indicating new issues. Surfrider will continue water quality testing on the Ventura River which will indicate water quality. Finally, VLT will conduct regular conservation and stewardship monitoring through aerial imagery, walkabout data, and collecting public visitor data.

(4) PROGRAMMATIC CAPACITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE

Programmatic Capability

a. Organizational Capacity, b. Organizational Structure, c. Description of Key Staff

Organizational Capacity: VLT is experienced in all major activities that this project will entail, including fundraising for major capital projects, cleanup of sites, community engagement, and working with/securing approvals and permits from multiple overlapping agencies at the local, county, and state level. Its 2026 budget is \$3.2m, with \$2m budgeted income from grants. It is eligible for (and has historically received) a wide range of funding, including grants from local, state, and federal agencies and corporations and family foundations, and donations from individuals. VLT benefits from a stellar reputation and long history in the region; as a result, it has a robust donor pool of approximately 6,000 individuals. VLT has strong relationships with local lawmakers and has historically received state budget allocations, for major projects; this includes \$7.2M in 2022 for a land acquisition and reuse project. VLT has received grants for similar projects (detailed in *4f: Past Performance and Accomplishments*); these include \$1.1M from FEMA, \$540,155 from California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA), \$1,299,520 from the County of Ventura, \$730,000 from Southern California Edison; \$200,000 from Cotyledon Fund, and more. Annual fundraising raises \$3M+ from individuals, government, corporations, and foundations. Staff include a grantwriter with a portfolio of 50+ annual applications totaling \$8M+. In 2025, 40 applications were submitted for \$5.7M; 15 grants totaling \$425k were won (30% win rate), exceeding industry averages. VLT manages 6 preserves totaling 3,800 acres (2% of all County open space). It completed 5 similar projects, 4 of which required capital campaigns:

1. **Big Rock Preserve (20 acres):** VLT completed post-fire erosion and debris flow cleanup. Partners: the City
2. **Harmon Canyon Nature Preserve (2,100 acres):** Completed post-fire remediation. Major funders included a \$1.2m FEMA grant, \$2m from Ca Wildlife Conservation Board, and other county/state/private funding.
3. **Willoughby Preserve (9 acres):** Completed cleanup of long-term dumping & homeless encampments and performed habitat restoration. Partners: Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board and Calif State Parks.
4. **Ventura Hills Nature Preserve (1,645 acres):** Redeveloped site for public use. Navigated utility easements, sensitive habitats, and CEQA exemption. An \$11m project, VLT secured \$7.2m in state funds.
5. **Hayden Preserves (2.2 acres):** Completed debris and illegal dumping cleanup and homeless encampment cleanup and relocation. Partners include the County Watershed Protection District for a floodplain permit.

Organizational Structure: Established 2003, VLT is nonprofit with 501c3 status. It is a **conservation land trust** (a legal entity that permanently conserves land for the benefit of the public). It is accredited by the Land Trust Alliance, a designation given to fewer than 500 land trusts nationwide that meet the highest standards for fiscal accountability, strong organizational leadership, and lasting stewardship of the land it conserves. It is governed by an 11-member board of trustees (Trustees) with governance responsibilities, with a 38-member Advisory Council comprised of prospective and termed-out Trustees who support in fundraising, program development, event coordination, and more. Executive Director Melissa Baffa (since 2021) leads 29 full and part-time staff. VLT's internal policies, and procedures comply with federal regulations, and it has clean financial audits. VLT possesses infrastructure (software) to track expenditures and monitor performance and ensure timely and accurate reporting.

Key Staff: This project’s grant management team includes a Project Director, a Co-Project Director, a Grant Administrator, a Communications Manager, a Financial Lead, and an Administrative Assistant. Deputy Director Daniel “Dan” Hulst (Project Director), has experience since 2018 in managing public access, trail development, fuel load management, and restoration across VLT preserves; he holds a B.S. in Business Administration from San Diego State University and has directed numerous similar large-scale projects. Conservation Director Laura Pavliscak (Co-Project Director) has a B.A. Environmental Studies/Agroecology from UC Santa Cruz, an M.S. Aridland Ecology from Univ. of Arizona and 20+ years as a field biologist, consultant, and land manager specializing in ecological research, restoration, and mitigation, including prior stewardship at Tejon Ranch and Santa Clara River Conservancies. Field Manager Quill Yates (Project Manager) has a B.S. in Environmental Policy and U.S. Government from Colby College along with years of conservation work, and recent lab/field roles at UCSB Marine Science Institute. Outreach Coordinator Jeff Young (Communications Manager) will lead community engagement. He holds an M.A. in Nature Documentary Filmmaking from University of the West of England, and has BBC/National Geographic experience. Grant Officer Sheena Link (Grant Administrator) has managed over a dozen federal awards including from IMLS (\$500K) and CARES Act (\$1M+).

d. Acquiring Additional Resources:

Several members of VLT’s advisory board (in particular, the Land Committee members) have extensive experience with contaminated property and procuring contractors for assessment and remediation. They will be involved in the procurement process to ensure any QEPs contracted are fully qualified. To procure expertise needed to execute this project (e.g. QEPs for Phase II ESA, building inspections, cleanup implementation, and revitalization plan writers), VLT’s PD and GA will procure QEPs with support from a consultant, which will be procured in accordance with 2 CFR 200 and other statutes. VLT will develop and post widely via local outlets and VLT channels (including the partners and PAB members) all Requests for Proposals (RFPs); ensure the minimum number of bids has been received; develop criteria for evaluating bids and selecting a final based on cost, qualifications, past performance, and EPA-required criteria, with documentation retained for audits; execute contracts/subawards with clear scopes, budgets, schedules, and compliance clauses, and monitor via the project tracking system. Some technical, community, and regulatory expertise or services may be performed by partners without cost (e.g. water testing by Surfrider).

Past Performance and Accomplishments

f. Has Not Received an EPA Brownfields Grant but has Received Other Federal or Non-Federal Financial Assistance Agreements

- 1. Walker Hearne Ranch Hazard Mitigation (10/28/2021 – 3/22/2026):** \$1,338,611 project, \$1,015,832 awarded by FEMA’s Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) subawarded by Ca Governor’s Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES). A capital campaign funded remaining costs. **Purpose:** To perform hazard-reduction vegetation management activities, including invasive species control, soil stabilization, and erosion mitigation at Walker-Hearne Ranch, a 2,100 acre public preserve in Ventura. **Accomplishments:** All project goals on track. Minor scope of work/budget/schedule modifications requested and approved. Reports on-time and approved. No corrective measures. **Outputs/Outcomes:** 10 acres remediated. Drip irrigation installed. Fire hazards removed.
- 2. Harmon Canyon Phase 1 Trail Development (1/1/2021-12/31/2026):** \$523,850 project, \$458,348 awarded by the State of Ca Resources Agency (CNRA), Department of Parks and Recreation’s Recreational Trails Program (RTP). **Purpose:** To construct 26k feet of new multi-use non-motorized recreational trails with signage in Harmon Canyon Preserve, a 2,123 public access nature preserve in Ventura, CA which opened in January 2026. Trail development utilized both U.S. Forest Service Standard Trail Plan and the International Mountain Bike Association design standards. The project required coordination with multiple municipal agencies and procuring subcontractors according to state standards. **Accomplishments:** All goals of project met. Reports on-time and approved. No corrective measures. **Outputs/Outcomes:** 26,000 feet of new trail & 6 new trail “loops” created.
- 3. Ventura Land Trust Hillside Project (9/6/22-3/31/2027):** \$10,000,000 project, \$7,200,000 awarded by the State of Ca Natural Resources agency, to the County of Ventura (as the grantee), to the Ventura Land Trust (as the subgrantee). **Purpose:** To complete capital campaigns for Harmon Canyon Preserve and Mariano Rancho Preserve and to acquire an off-site building to be used as VLT's offices and as a Welcome Center for the local community. **Accomplishments:** All project goals on-track. Reports on-time and approved. No corrective measures. **Outputs/Outcomes:** Harmon Canyon Preserve acquired and opened; Ventura Hills Nature preserve acquired and opened; off-site building acquired; Welcome Center remodel plans approved.

Threshold Criteria

1. Applicant Eligibility

- a. Applicant Type: Ventura Land Trust (VLT) is a nonprofit organization described in section 501(c)(3) of title 26 of the Internal Revenue Code. IRS Determination letter is attached.
- b. Applicant is not a 501(c)(4).

2. Community Involvement

We intend to **inform** the community and other stakeholders through media collateral; printed materials; public meetings with a virtual attendance option; a dedicated project webpage; a regular project notification email; a list of FAQs; direct responses to calls and/or emails; and other methods recommended or identified as the project progresses. We will translate all printed materials into Spanish. Informing the community will be an ongoing effort: it will begin with a press release if grant funds are won, and will continue throughout the project, especially as it relates to assessment and cleanup activities that may impact local communities.

We intend to **involve** the broader community and other stakeholders in the planning through a public engagement process led by procured consultant with expertise in those activities. The public will be introduced to the project and will give feedback and make recommendations. Those will be summarized, reviewed, and prioritized based on funding, restrictions, alignment, and other factors.

We also intend to **involve** the community through a Project Advisory Board, which will be comprised of representatives from local housing developers; nonprofits with projects adjacent to or complementary to this; regulatory and municipal representatives; neighboring landowners; ecological groups; recreational groups; city and/or county economic development/business entities; tourism organizations; and more. This diverse, cross-sector Advisory Board will provide ongoing input throughout the assessment, cleanup, and reuse planning phases, helping to ensure that project decisions reflect community priorities, support economic revitalization, protect ecological resources, and advance long-term, sustainable reuse. The broad representation of industries and partners will help ensure that the project is supported holistically and remains responsive to local needs.

3. Target Area

Our target area is identified in the narrative. The **Target Area** is comprised the project site census tract as well as three adjacent tracts:

- Project location tract 06111009500 (population 3,486)
- adjacent tract 06111002302 (population 4,456)
- adjacent tract 06111002301 (population 2,859)
- adjacent tract 06111002200 (population 6,791)

The Target Area includes residential neighborhoods within what is known as the North Ventura Avenue Area, approximately 1.5 miles from the City of Ventura. These neighborhoods are alongside a stretch of highway running along N. Ventura Avenue/Ojai Freeway from the Pacific coast in downtown Ventura (4 miles from the project site) to the Ventura Water Purification Plant, 0.25 miles upstream of the project site.

4. Affirmation of Brownfield Site Ownership

Ventura Land Trust affirms that it owns a site that meets the CERCLA § 101(39) definition of a brownfield. This site is:

- a. not listed (or proposed for listing) on the National Priorities List;
- b. not subject to unilateral administrative orders, court orders, administrative orders on consent, or judicial consent decrees issued to or entered into by parties under CERCLA; and
- c. not subject to the jurisdiction, custody, or control of the U.S. government.

5. Use of Grant Funds

VLT will meet the requirements of a Multipurpose Grant, including the following activities:

- a. Conduct at least one Phase II environmental site assessment: Pages 1, 6, 9, 10, 12.
- b. Remediate at least one site. Page 10.
- c. Develop an overall plan for revitalization of the target area that includes a feasible reuse strategy for at least one priority site. Page 2, 9

6. Expenditure of Existing Grant Funds

Not applicable. Applicant does not have an existing EPA Brownfields grant.

7. Contractors and Named Subrecipients

Contractors: VLT has neither selected nor entered any discussions with any potential contractors.

Named Subrecipients: VLT has neither selected nor entered any discussions with any potential contractors.