



CITY OF RENSSELAER

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

CITY HALL, 62 WASHINGTON STREET
 Planning (518) 462-4839 Building (518) 465-1693



Section IV.D. Narrative Information Sheet

The City of Rensselaer is pleased to submit this proposal for FY2025 Brownfields Assessment Grant funding. Below we provide the information requested.

1. Application Identification:

City of Rensselaer
 62 Washington Street
 Rensselaer, NY 12144

2. Website URL: <https://rensselaerny.gov/>

3. Funding Requested

- a. Assessment Grant Type: Community-wide
- b. Federal Funds Requested: \$300,000

4. Location: City of Rensselaer, Rensselaer County, NY

5. Target Areas and Priority Site Information:

| Target Area | Priority Site(s) |
|---|---|
| CT 36083051500, City of Rensselaer, Rensselaer County, NY | Site 1: 615 East Street, City of Rensselaer, NY Site 2: 501 Broadway, City of Rensselaer, NY Site 3: 13 Columbia Street, City of Rensselaer, NY |

6. Contacts:

a. Project Director:

Thomas Hulihan, Director of Planning and Development,
 518-462-4839 x 3 / thomas.hulihan@rensselaerny.gov
 City of Rensselaer, 62 Washington Street, Rensselaer, NY 12144

b. Chief Executive/Highest Ranking Elected Official:

Michael Stammel, Mayor
 518-462-9511 / mike.stammel@rensselaerny.gov
 City of Rensselaer, 62 Washington Street, Rensselaer, NY 12144

7. Population: 9,210 (2020 Census)



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8. Other Factors:

| Other Factors | Page # |
|--|----------------|
| Community population is 10,000 or less | 3 |
| The applicant is, or will assist, a federally recognized Indian Tribe or United States Territory | Not applicable |
| The priority site(s) is impacted by mine-scarred land | Not applicable |
| 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 thoroughfares separating them) | Not applicable |
| The priority site(s) is in a federally designated flood plain | 2 |
| The reuse or the priority site(s) will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy; or will incorporate energy efficient measures | 3 |
| 30% or more of the overall project will be spent on eligible reuse planning activities for priority brownfield site(s) within the target area | 6 |

9. Letter from the State or Tribal Environmental Authority:

Attached.

10. Release Copies of Application:

Not applicable, as the application does not have confidential, privileged, or sensitive information.

NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

Division of Environmental Remediation, Bureau of Program Management

625 Broadway, 12th Floor, Albany, NY 12233-7012

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November 5, 2024

Thomas Hulihan
Director of Planning and Development
City of Rensselaer
62 Washington Street
Rensselaer, NY 12144

Dear Mr. Hulihan:

This is to acknowledge that the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) received a request from LaBella Associates on behalf of the City of Rensselaer, dated October 28, 2024, for a state acknowledgement letter for a Federal Year 2025 United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) Brownfields grant.

I understand that the City of Rensselaer plans to submit a Brownfield Community-Wide Assessment grant application for hazardous substances and petroleum in the amount of \$300,000. Focus of the funding will be to conduct Phase I and II Environmental Site Assessments, particularly at sites within Census Tract 36083051500, a disadvantaged community. Sites include 615 East Street, 501-505 Broadway, and 13 Columbia Street. Funding will also be allocated for associated planning activities. Please note that the USEPA criteria for an assessment grant specifies that, if selected, the City of Rensselaer may only expend up to \$200,000 of the grant on a specific site.

DEC encourages initiatives to redevelop brownfields with the goal of mitigating any environmental and health impacts that they might pose.

Sincerely,

Karen Diligent

Karen Diligent
Director, Bureau of Program Management

ec: A. Everett, USEPA Region 2
Y. DeJesus, USEPA Region 2
R. Mustico, DEC Albany
J. Haugh, DEC Region 4
N. Greenberger, LaBella Associates

1. Project Area Description and Plans for Revitalization

1.a. Target Area and Brownfields

1.a.i. Overview of Brownfield Challenges & Description of Target Area

The proposed project area lies within the City of Rensselaer, New York, encompassing areas along the Hudson River waterfront and its urban core, including disadvantaged Census Tract 36083051500. The City of Rensselaer, incorporated in 1897 and located on New York's Hudson River, holds a rich industrial legacy. Historically, it was a hub for dye production and the first U.S. site to manufacture aspirin, alongside its prominence in the rail industry connected it nationally and internationally. Despite its economic decline following the closure of major manufacturing facilities, Rensselaer's strategic location offers significant redevelopment potential, especially along the Hudson River waterfront and downtown areas near the Albany-Rensselaer Amtrak Station.

The proposed target area is the disadvantaged Census Tract 36083051500 in the City of Rensselaer, New York. This tract includes sections of the Hudson River waterfront and downtown core, which are critical for economic and community redevelopment. The tract is within the Rensselaer Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA); as part of that study, a preliminary review of potential brownfields and opportunities for revitalization were identified.

This tract faces significant brownfield challenges, with many sites affected by contamination from prior industrial uses, impacting health, safety, and development potential. Specifically, 118 parcels, totaling 331.23 acres were identified as potential brownfields in the target area due to past spill history, industrial or auto-oriented uses, and/or the presence of past presence of bulk storage facilities. Environmental hazards, such as residual chemicals, asbestos, and industrial pollutants, limit land usability, deter investment, and threaten public health. Further complicating factors are the location of many of these 118 potential brownfield sites in the floodplain (97 parcels) or along the Hudson River waterfront (17 parcels). Largely due to these contamination concerns and associated investment hurdles, efforts for redevelopment of the properties have often stalled. This EPA Community-Wide Assessment Grant will fund the environmental assessments needed to address these brownfield challenges, unlocking the potential for mixed-use, recreational, and residential redevelopment that will revitalize Rensselaer's economy and enhance the quality of life for its residents.

The target area includes the downtown corridor, waterfront areas, and properties near the Albany-Rensselaer Amtrak Station. This mixed-use redevelopment zone focuses on revitalizing neglected and underutilized properties for residential, commercial, and recreational uses. Located within the Hudson River floodplain, this area also presents unique flood risks and challenges and requires robust planning to incorporate climate resilience into redevelopment initiatives.

1.a.ii. Description of the Priority Brownfield Sites

Within the target area, several brownfield sites have been prioritized for assessment and redevelopment as they leverage previous community engagement from past planning efforts that would have transformational spillover benefits:

- **Amtrak Site (615 East Street):** Owned by the Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA), this site is located in the floodplain, was formerly a gas station, is adjacent to an active rail line and rail yard, has a history of petroleum spills onto bare soil that impacted groundwater, and poses potential environmental concerns. Due to its proximity to the Albany-Rensselaer Amtrak Station, its revitalization is essential for enhancing connectivity and transit-oriented development that aligns with regional growth objectives. This is a strategic site in the Rensselaer BOA, and the property owner is interested in having environmental site assessment completed to help advance revitalization.
- **Zappala Block Sites (501 Broadway):** Owned by V Zappala & Co Inc., this property, and the adjacent 505 Broadway, is located in the floodplain adjacent to an active industrial use, has two inactive USTs and a reported gasoline spill that impacted groundwater. These contiguous parcels are positioned in a high-visibility section of the downtown corridor. With potential for mixed-use development, they are vital for downtown revitalization, contributing to economic vitality and offering retail, housing, and community spaces opportunities. This is a strategic site in the Rensselaer

BOA, and the property owner is interested in having environmental site assessment completed to help advance revitalization.

- **Gateway Auto-Oriented Site (13 Columbia Street):** Owned by AZ Asad Builders LLC, this former gas station is located in the floodplain at a critical entry point to the downtown area. The property has been the site of multiple reported petroleum spills onto bare soil, some of which impacted groundwater. As a brownfield, it presents a key opportunity to transform into an attractive gateway, improving aesthetics and functionality for residents and visitors. This is a strategic site in the Rensselaer BOA, and the property owner is interested in having environmental site assessment completed to help advance revitalization.

1.a.iii. Identifying Additional Sites

If grant funds allow, additional sites within the target area will be identified and prioritized based on criteria, including environmental contamination, potential for economic redevelopment, location relative to sensitive populations, and property owner interest. Some initial (second tier) sites for consideration have already been identified by the City using this framework: 41 Columbia Street, 119-121 Broadway, and 96 Columbia Street. All three sites are vacant or underutilized potential brownfields located in high visibility locations with property owners that are interested in seeing them redeveloped.

Prioritization will consider locations that offer the most substantial community and environmental benefits, particularly within underserved areas, as defined by CEJST. This approach will ensure resources are directed toward sites where revitalization efforts can drive significant socioeconomic and environmental improvements.

1. b. Revitalization of the Target Area

1.b.i. Reuse Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plan

The reuse strategy for priority sites within Census Tract 36083051500 supports the goals of the “Rensselaer Rising” initiative, which combines the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) and Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) plans to create a livable, vibrant, and sustainable urban environment. This initiative aims to provide new opportunities for residential, commercial, and recreational spaces by remediating brownfield sites, particularly in the downtown and waterfront areas. This alignment reinforces the City’s commitment to mixed-use development and sustainable practices, enhancing connectivity between downtown and the waterfront while leveraging Rensselaer’s proximity to Albany and its integrated transportation infrastructure. The planned redevelopment of priority brownfield sites follow the BOA study’s recommendations for public-private partnerships and environmentally sustainable land use, aligning closely with Rensselaer’s long-term vision for economic and community growth.

At the **Amtrak Site**, a multi-story, mixed-use ground up building is envisioned. The project would provide much-needed housing and a ground floor grocery store; there are currently no grocery stores in the City of Rensselaer, of particular concern given the target area’s Disadvantaged Community status. Below these uses would be two levels of parking to continue to support visitors /travelers to the Albany-Rensselaer Amtrak Station.

At the **Zappala Block**, a mixed-use building with upper floor residential and ground floor commercial is envisioned. The development would fill a major hole in the Broadway streetwall in a section between the City’s large waterfront park and the new housing development that has occurred to the north, helping to bridge this existing gap and promote residents to support downtown businesses and frequent the park.

At the **Gateway Site**, a new mixed-use or commercial building could replace this largely asphalt lot. The development would be a significant beautification and would help connect the City’s downtown core (to the north) and an historic residential neighborhood to the south.

1.b.ii. Outcomes and Benefits of the Reuse Strategy

Mixed-use and commercial redevelopment of the priority brownfield sites will provide significant economic, social, and environmental benefits to Rensselaer. Economic stimulation will come through new job opportunities in retail, tourism, and construction and increased property tax revenues, which will bolster public services and infrastructure. The “Rensselaer Rising” initiative will also enhance public

access to the Hudson River, create new recreational spaces, and improve overall community livability. Environmental assessment and cleanup of the priority sites will reduce health risks, improve air and water quality, and mitigate flood risks in this floodplain location, contributing to the City’s resilience against climate change.

Being in a floodplain presents additional challenges, with increased development costs and environmental risks that have traditionally deterred investment. This project’s targeted remediation and redevelopment efforts aim to address these barriers by incorporating robust flood resilience, energy efficiency (e.g. by encouraging the use of renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy), and climate adaptation measures to address human health and environmental concerns. Planned strategies include advanced stormwater management systems—such as bioswales and retention basins—to control runoff, elevation adjustments for critical infrastructure where feasible, and permeable pavement to improve water absorption.

These resilience measures are integral to the redevelopment approach, aligning with EPA’s climate adaptation goals and the community’s need for secure, sustainable development. By prioritizing flood resilience, the project mitigates immediate environmental concerns and ensures stability and safety for future residential, commercial, and recreational uses. This proactive planning signals to funders and stakeholders that the project is designed for long-term viability and will sustain economic and social benefits over time.

1.c. Strategy for Leveraging Resources

1 c.i. Resources Needed for Site Reuse

The City of Rensselaer is pursuing diverse funding avenues that blend public and private sources to support successful brownfield redevelopment. The City has applied for funding from the New York State Department of State Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI). It is also finalizing a New York State Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) plan and will be seeking BOA designation, which will unlock additional BOA Pre-Development grant resources. In July 2024, the City also applied for NYS Homes and Community Renewal (HCR) NY Main Street funding to revitalize buildings and businesses along the Broadway corridor (within the target area). Furthermore, City Industrial Development Agency (IDA) tax incentives will provide financial support to offset private redevelopment costs. Rensselaer will also seek federal resources, including the USDA Community Facilities Program, the US Economic Development Administration (EDA), and relevant State programs focusing on workforce development, infrastructure, and recreational improvements. Rensselaer’s Qualified Opportunity Zone (QOZ) designation is also instrumental in attracting private investment by offering tax incentives to investors, thereby maximizing available resources. The EPA grant will be a catalyst in accessing these additional funds, stimulating more comprehensive assessments, environmental remediation, and subsequent site reuse.

1.c.ii. Use of Existing Infrastructure

This EPA grant will facilitate the effective use of the target area’s existing infrastructure, including municipal roads, water, sewer, power, and broadband services essential for redevelopment. The proximity to the Albany-Rensselaer Amtrak Station provides added connectivity, positioning the target area as a transit-oriented hub. While current infrastructure covers foundational needs, additional enhancements—such as flood resilience measures—may be required due to the area’s location within a floodplain. The City will actively pursue infrastructure improvement funding, including State and Federal sources, to address these needs and ensure the long-term viability of the redevelopment.

2. Community Need and Community Engagement

2. a.i. The Community’s Need for Funding

The City of Rensselaer is limited in resources due to its small size (9,210 as of the 2020 Census) and low household income (median of \$66,136 as of the 2021 ACS, versus \$72,510 County-wide). Conditions within the target area are more dire. Within the target area (Rensselaer’s disadvantaged Census Tract 36083051500), 89% of households have incomes at or below twice the federal poverty level, placing the area significantly above the 65th percentile for low-income status. This high concentration of low-income households underscores the community’s limited capacity to contribute financially toward environmental assessments, remediation efforts, or redevelopment. The economic vulnerability of the people living in the target area emphasizes the critical need for external support, such as the EPA grant, to address

environmental and economic revitalization, thereby alleviating the financial burden on residents and fostering opportunities for sustainable community growth.

2.a.ii. Threats to Sensitive Populations

(1) Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations

The target area (Rensselaer County, Census Tract 36083051500) is home to a diverse population with considerable socioeconomic and health challenges. Using data from the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST), developed by the White House Council on Environmental Quality per Executive Order 14008, to identify disadvantaged communities using geospatial mapping through publicly available datasets, the sensitive populations within the target area include children (13% under 10 years old), elderly individuals (10% over 65), and economically disadvantaged residents, with 89% living below twice the federal poverty level. Health risks are significant, with elevated rates of asthma (85th percentile) and low life expectancy (85th percentile). This grant aims to improve access to human health, will address environmental health conditions at priority brownfield, and provide resources to identify, manage, and mitigate threats to health and welfare within these communities. Projected site reuse strategies focus on remediating environmental hazards and creating sustainable, safe community spaces that reduce exposure to pollutants and increase welfare support.

(2) Greater Than Normal Incidence of Disease and Adverse Health Conditions

The tract exhibits a greater-than-normal incidence of asthma and low life expectancy, with asthma rates in the 85th percentile and a documented low life expectancy that indicates significant health disparities. The targeted reuse strategy will focus on reducing exposure to hazardous substances and pollutants that exacerbate these conditions. The project will directly contribute to mitigating adverse health outcomes by addressing environmental hazards and improving air quality. Assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment of priority sites consistent with the City's redevelopment strategy will result in a more walkable, mixed-use live-work setting which should reduce diesel particulate levels (61st percentile), thus decreasing the local incidence of respiratory diseases and foster healthier living conditions.

(3) Environmental Justice

(a) Identification of Environmental Justice Issues

This disadvantaged community in Rensselaer County has historically encountered environmental justice issues, such as limited access to green spaces (69th percentile for impervious land coverage), high housing costs relative to income, and pervasive lead paint exposure (80th percentile). CEJST identifies this tract as disadvantaged due to a combination of income, health, and environmental burdens, placing residents at higher risk of experiencing ongoing socioeconomic and health issues. The severity of these issues underscores the need for targeted interventions that focus on health, affordable housing, and environmental remediation.

(b) Advancing Environmental Justice

The grant and proposed site reuses will actively advance environmental justice by remediating areas impacted by pollutants and revitalizing sites for community benefit without displacing existing residents. Strategies will include prioritizing affordable housing developments, increasing green spaces, and mitigating exposure to environmental hazards. By fostering a sustainable, inclusive environment, the project seeks to minimize displacement risk and empower residents through improved living conditions and economic opportunities within the community.

2. b. Community Engagement

2. b.i-ii Project Involvement and Roles

The following local organizations, community leaders, and institutions are actively engaged in supporting and advising this project, providing expertise, resources, and connections to the Rensselaer community:

| Organization/Entity | Contact | Role/Specific Involvement |
|---|--|--|
| City of Rensselaer – Mayor’s Office | Michael Stammel mike.stammel@rensselaer.ny.gov | Provides city leadership and oversight, aligning project objectives with local government priorities and resources. |
| Planning & Development Department | Thomas Hulihan thomas.hulihan@rensselaer.ny.gov | Leads project planning and coordination, overseeing remediation efforts and community engagement. |
| Assistant Planning Director | Amy Lolik amy.lolik@rensselaer.ny.gov | Assists with grant administration, community outreach, and ensures compliance with funding requirements. |
| Planning Commission | Fred Weakley [REDACTED] | Advises on land use planning and provides community perspective on project activities and redevelopment goals. |
| Rensselaer Central School | Joseph Kardash jkardash@rcsd.k12.ny.us | Engages students and families in project developments and raises awareness through educational programs. |
| Rensselaer IDA | Madeline Rizzo madeline.rizzo@rensselaer.ny.gov | Provides guidance on incentives and economic development, supporting project financing and investment opportunities. |
| Circles of Mercy | Richard Zazycki circlesofmercy@nycap.rr.com | Community-based organization offering local outreach, especially for underserved populations in the target area. |
| Local Business Representative | Justin Ko [REDACTED] | Represents the business community, advising on commercial redevelopment opportunities and aligning project goals with economic growth. |
| St. Peter’s Health Partners | Leanna Komoroske Leanna.Komoroske@sphp.com | Offers expertise on community health, leveraging the Healthy Schools & Communities Grant to enhance health outcomes. |
| Rensselaer Environmental Coalition | Robert Welton rensenvironcoalition@gmail.com | Citizen led organization focused on addressing public health and environmental concerns in the City of Rensselaer. |
| Rensselaer County Health Department | Mary Fran Wachunas mwachunas@rensco.com | Evaluates health issues and planning. |
| Rensselaer County Chamber of Commerce | Norris Pearson npearson@renscochamber.com | Provides guidance on economic and business opportunities at priority sites |
| Rensselaer County Economic Development & Planning | Linda VonDerHeide LVonDerHeide@rensco.com | Provides guidance on planning and economic development support and opportunities. |

| Organization/Entity | Contact | Role/Specific Involvement |
|--|---|--|
| Capital Region Workforce Development Board | Brian Williams brian@capreg.org | Offers insight into regional economic trends and opportunities. |
| Commission on Economic Opportunity | Tia Nunziato tnunzato@ceoempowers.org | Community-based organization offering local outreach, especially for underserved populations in the target area. |
| St. Paul’s Center | Tracy Pitcher tpitcher@stpaulscenter.com | Community-based organization offering local outreach, especially for underserved populations in the target area. |
| Rensselaer Housing Authority | Josh McCoy jmccoy@rensselaerhousing.org | Offers insight into housing opportunities and serves to connect outreach to underserved populations. |

2.b.iii. Incorporating Community Input

Public engagement is a central component of the City’s revitalization strategy. The City of Rensselaer initially began brownfield planning in 2014; over the past decade, the City has held dozens of committee workshops, focus groups, and public meetings to discuss brownfields and identify a community-supported brownfield revitalization vision. Rensselaer will continue to host public meetings, workshops, and surveys to gather feedback from residents, property owners, and stakeholders. The City will maintain an open dialogue with the community throughout the assessment process, ensuring that redevelopment plans align with local needs and priorities. Additionally, the City will provide regular updates on the project’s progress through social media, newsletters, and public forums.

3. Task Descriptions, Cost Estimates, and Measuring Progress

3.a. Description of Tasks/Activities and Outputs

| |
|--|
| Task 1: Program Management |
| i. Project Implementation: Oversee data input into EPA’s ACRES database; and submit quarterly, annual, and final performance reports |
| ii. Anticipated Project Schedule: Procure Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP): Q1; ACRES and quarterly reports: quarterly and as needed; Annual and closeout reports: Q4, Q8, Q12 |
| iii. Task/Activity Lead: City of Rensselaer, with assistance from QEP |
| iv. Outputs: RFP/QEP contract (1); Quarterly Report (12 total – 4/year); Annual Reports (3); Closeout Report (1) |
| Task 2: Site Inventory & Prioritization |
| i. Project Implementation: The QEP will prepare a brownfields site inventory and database for sites in the TAs and the larger City, including priority sites described in Section 1.a.iii. These properties will be compiled, mapped, and characterized by the City based on the approach identified in Section 1.a.iv. No assessments will be conducted prior to confirming eligibility with EPA. |
| ii. Anticipated Project Schedule: Site inventory and database, prioritization, selection: Q2-Q3. |
| iii. Task/Activity Lead: QEP will prepare/maintain inventory with City staff oversight, assistance with access coordination, and work product review/approval. City will provide input for site selection and prioritization. |
| iv. Outputs: Inventory/Database (1); Prioritization Matrix (1) |
| Task 3: Community Engagement |
| i. Project Implementation: Community outreach and education measures to inform and solicit input from stakeholders, citizens, and private investment entities to achieve redevelopment plans with community buy-in and based on common community goals. Outreach and education will occur for both priority and additional sites as part of Task 2. |

| |
|---|
| ii. Anticipated Project Schedule: Community Involvement Plan: Q1-Q2; Informational Flyer: Q3; Public Meetings/Open Houses: Q3-Q12 |
| iii. Task/Activity Lead: LCLGRPB with support from QEP. |
| iv. Outputs: Public Meetings/Open Houses (4); Community Involvement Plan (1); Informational Flyer (1) |
| Task 4: Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessments |
| i. Project Implementation: The City will prepare Eligibility Determination (ED) requests for priority sites and sites identified in Task 2. The City and QEP will establish site access agreement with property owners. The QEP will conduct Phase I ESAs for 6 sites. Prior to initiating sampling or other field investigation activities, the QEP will prepare a Master Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) for EPA approval. Phase II ESAs will be advanced at 4 sites, and Regulated Building Materials (RBM) surveys will be advanced at 2 sites, and cleanup plans will be prepared for 4 priority sites. |
| ii. Anticipated Project Schedule: Phase I ESAs: Q3-Q10 (after creating inventory database and priority list); QAPP: Q4; Phase II ESAs and RBM surveys: Q5-Q12 (following review of Phase I ESAs, QAPP, and priority list); Cleanup Plans: Q8-Q12 (following review of Phase II ESAs, RBM surveys, and priority list). |
| iii. Task/Activity Lead: The QEPs will complete this task under direction of the City. |
| iv. Outputs: Phase I ESAs (8); Master QAPP (1); Site-Specific Phase II Work Plans (4); Phase II ESAs (4); RBM Surveys (2); Cleanup Plans (4) |
| Task 5: Planning for Remediation and/or Redevelopment |
| i. Project Implementation: For sites addressed through Phase II ESAs, preliminary remediation plans (Analyses of Brownfield Cleanup Alternatives, or ABCAs) and associated cost estimates will be prepared to review alternatives for further environmental investigation and/or remediation, if warranted. City staff and the QEP will also work with the stakeholders to conduct preliminary redevelopment planning for selected TAs and/or site to explore best reuse and economic potential. This may include reuse plans, marketing/feasibility studies, master plans, infrastructure evaluations, and conceptual development plans. |
| ii. Anticipated Project Schedule: Q3-Q12 |
| iii. Task/Activity Lead: QEP will lead this task with the City providing oversight and assistance with property owner coordination and community input and review/approve work products. |
| iv. Outputs: Reuse Plans for Priority Sites and other identified sites (4). |

3.b. Cost Estimates

| Budget Categories | | Task 1: Program Management | Task 2: Site Inventory & Prioritization | Task 3: Community Engagement | Task 4: ESAs | Task 5: Planning | TOTAL |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|-----------|
| Direct Costs | Personnel ¹ | \$6,813 | \$2,409 | \$6,022 | \$0 | \$3,567 | \$18,901 |
| | Fringe Benefits ¹ | \$4,020 | \$1,421 | \$3,553 | \$0 | \$2,158 | \$11,152 |
| | Contractual ² | \$0 | \$12,747 | \$8,000 | \$189,200 | \$60,000 | \$269,947 |
| Total Direct Costs | | \$10,833 | \$16,577 | \$17,575 | \$189,200 | \$68,515 | \$300,000 |

Budget Justification:

Personnel & Fringe¹: Salaries for Thomas Hulihan (\$42.44) and Amy Lolik (\$37.85), plus 59% fringe benefits. Based on 320 hours of Ms. Lolik's time (\$19,257) and 160 hours of Mr. Hulihan's time (\$10,796) for a total of \$30,053.

Contractual²: Costs provided by potential QEPs and include: \$13,745 for QEP to prepare brownfield inventory and GIS-based site prioritization; \$8,000 for community engagement activities; 6 Phase Is at an average cost of \$2,025 x 80 = \$16,200, 1 Master QAPP at a cost of \$8,000, 4 Site-Specific Phase II Work Plans at an average cost of \$4,000 x 4 = \$16,000; 4 Phase IIs at an average cost of \$25,000 x 4 = \$100,000, 2 Regulated Building Materials Surveys at an average cost of \$10,500 x 2 = \$21,000; 4 cleanup

plans at an average cost of \$7,000 x 4 = \$28,000; and 4 site reuse plans at an average cost of \$15,000 x 4 = \$60,000.

3.c. Plan to Measure and Evaluate Environmental Progress and Results

A structured tracking and evaluation system will be implemented to ensure that project goals are met efficiently. This system includes specific metrics for project outputs, results, and outcomes and will regularly report to stakeholders and funders.

- **Tracking Project Outputs:** Key outputs, such as completed Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs), site inventories, and community engagement events, will be logged and monitored on a quarterly basis. Each task will be assigned milestones, and progress will be documented using a project management tool, allowing for real-time updates on tasks, schedules, and deliverables.
- **Evaluating Project Results:** The successful completion of site assessments, remediation plans, and compliance with EPA and state regulations will measure project results. Metrics such as the number of brownfield sites assessed, percentage reduction in environmental contaminants, and remediation actions completed will be monitored. These data points will be reported quarterly to the EPA via the Assessment, Cleanup and Redevelopment Exchange System (ACRES) and shared with the community through public meetings and updates.
- **Assessing long-term project outcomes** will focus on improvements in environmental quality, economic revitalization, and community health. Increases in property values, local investment, and job creation within redevelopment areas will measure economic progress. Community health and safety will be evaluated through reductions in contamination levels, improved air and water quality, and relevant health indicators such as asthma rates. Environmental resilience will be monitored by tracking the effectiveness of flood resilience and climate adaptation measures, including enhancements to stormwater management systems.
- **Feedback and Adjustments:** Regular community feedback and periodic evaluation meetings with project stakeholders will provide opportunities to refine approaches as necessary. The city will conduct annual public forums to review project outcomes, gather community insights, and adjust strategies to effectively address emerging needs or environmental challenges. This adaptive management approach will ensure the project aligns with community and environmental goals.

By employing this comprehensive evaluation system, the project will maintain accountability, demonstrate measurable progress, and ensure that environmental and community goals are successfully achieved.

4. Programmatic Capability and Past Performance

4.a. Programmatic Capacity

4.a.i. Organizational Capacity

The City of Rensselaer has the organizational capacity to successfully manage and implement this EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant's programmatic, administrative, and financial requirements. With a proven track record in managing federally funded projects, the City has consistently adhered to compliance standards and regulations. The City successfully managed and completed three previous EPA brownfield grants. Past experience also includes overseeing grants such as the NYS Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Grant (\$1.2M) for a waterfront multi-use trail and the NYSDOT Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Grant (\$2.4M) for Safe Surface Transportation. These projects involved collaboration with the Capital Region Transportation Council and required familiarity with Federal Regulations, such as Buy America, ADA, and the Davis Bacon Act.

4.a.ii and 4.a.iii. Organizational Structure & Key Staff

The City's organizational structure is designed to ensure effective fund management and project execution. The Planning Department, under the leadership of Planning Director Thomas Hulihan, works in coordination with the City Engineer and Commissioner of Public Works on technical aspects, while the City Comptroller and Treasurer oversee financial compliance. The Director of Planning and

Development, Mr. Hulihan, brings 40 years of expertise in community development and housing management, including extensive experience with federally regulated programs. Supporting him, Assistant Director Amy Lolik, with dual M.A. degrees in Urban Planning and Geography, specializes in community planning, grant administration, and economic development, bringing valuable expertise to ensure the project’s compliance with programmatic funding regulations.

4.a.iv. Acquiring Additional Resources

The City has established processes for contracting additional expertise and resources, including using contractors and subrecipients as necessary, per EPA’s guidelines. The City actively promotes local hiring and procurement practices, fostering strong labor practices and providing community members with potential employment opportunities in the redevelopment of brownfields. This includes partnerships with local workforce development programs to connect residents with training and employment related to assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment activities.

4.b. Past Performance and Accomplishments

4.b.i. Currently Has or Previously Received an EPA Brownfields Grant

The City of Rensselaer has received two previous EPA Brownfields Assessment grants totaling \$400,000 and one \$200,000 EPA Brownfield Cleanup grant. These grants have been closed out, and the City does not currently have an active EPA brownfield grant.

| Category/Site | EPA Funding & Type | Use of Funds | Balance Remaining | Closeout Date |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Community-Wide Assessment | \$200,000 Hazardous Substance | Phase I and Phase II ESAs | \$0 | 9/30/2014 |
| Community-Wide Assessment | \$200,000 Petroleum | Phase I and Phase II ESAs | \$0 | 9/30/2014 |
| Cleanup | \$200,000 Hazardous Substance | The Hollow Site, Third Street | \$0 | 6/1/2016 |

4.b.i.1. Accomplishments

The City of Rensselaer has successfully completed one EPA grant funded cleanup project for the “Hollow Site” on Third Street. The undeveloped, underused parcel, which was contaminated with metals from its history as a firing range from 1894 to 1938 has since been converted to a public recreational space, as a result of the EPA investment. The project leveraged over \$2 million in funding, including FEMA and State funds to complete flood control and create public access to the facility, creating significant recreational and environmental benefits for local residents and the broader region. Previous EPA assessment grant funding used to assist businesses and developers resulted in the investigation of multiple sites through both Phase I ESAs and Phase II ESAs. The project was completed underbudget and has helped advance the investment and revitalization that has been occurring in the City over the past few years. As one example, the grant resulted in the owner of own of the property owners (800 Broadway) being entered in the Brownfield Cleanup Program, using the information from the Phase I ESA prepared as part of the EPA Assessment grant. All output and outcome data have been regularly and accurately reported to EPA and are up to date in ACRES.

4.b.i.2. Compliance with Grant Requirements

Rensselaer has consistently met its work plan and cooperative agreement requirements, as well as ensured timely achievement of results through effective management of project assessment consultants, budgets, and schedules. The City’s Assistant Planning Director monitors compliance with cooperative agreement and work plan financial, budget, environmental outputs and deliverables, and helps assemble data. Site approval requests under community-wide assessments grants were submitted on a timely basis. The City of Rensselaer complies with competitive procurement standards in 40 CFR Part 31.36 and all subaward/subgrant requirements. Work plan outputs, schedules, and key results are compared against

work plan estimates and reported on a timely basis. Quarterly progress reporting, reporting measures, ACRES, and annual financial reports for the previous EPA assessment and cleanup grants were made in a timely and acceptable manner. Annual financial reporting has been performed. The City's quarterly reporting routinely linked progress toward achieving grant output goals, for example, numbers of site assessments completed, to actual performance. The City also communicated progress and accomplishments directly to its EPA Region 2 project manager. Rensselaer's performance, including the completion of EPA-funded assessment and cleanup projects, demonstrates that it is achieving the results expected.

The City of Rensselaer's consistent and successful grant management underscores its capability to effectively administer the EPA Brownfields Grant and support the revitalization of the target area, ensuring compliance and community-centered project outcomes.



CITY OF RENSSELAER

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

CITY HALL, 62 WASHINGTON STREET

Planning (518) 462-4839

Building (518) 465-1693



FY2025 City of Rensselaer EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant Application

III.B.1. Applicant Eligibility: The City of Rensselaer, as a city entity, affirms that it is eligible for funding.

III.B.2. Community Involvement: The City of Rensselaer believes community engagement is imperative to the success of this project and understands the importance of effective communication strategies including breaking barriers with unique engagement to meet people where they are. As outlined in Section 2.b.iii of the Narrative, the project team, consisting of City staff and the QEP will lead a Community Outreach Program that will inform, update and solicit community input. A Community Engagement Plan will be prepared at the start of the project. Community outreach and education measures to inform and solicit input from stakeholders, citizens, and private investment entities to achieve redevelopment plans with community buy-in and based on common community goals. Outreach and education will occur for both priority and additional sites as part of Task 2. The project builds on several past and ongoing planning efforts and an engaged network of communication to promote, inform, and solicit feedback. The involved entities – noted in Section 2.b.i-ii will be critical to the continued dissemination of information. The City will include regular project updates on the City website and circulate press releases to local media and organizations.

III.B.3. Expenditure of Existing Grant Funds: Not applicable. The City affirms that it does not have an active EPA Brownfields Assessment grant or Multipurpose grant.

III.B.4. Contractors and Named Subrecipients: Not applicable. The City has not identified a procurement contractor nor subrecipient to conduct work proposed in this application.

III.B.5. Cost Sharing and Matching Requirements: Not applicable.