



R04-25-A-043

1. Applicant Identification

City of West Columbia 200 N. 12th Street
West Columbia, SC 29169

2. Funding Requested

a. Assessment Grant Type

Community-wide

b. Federal Funds Requested

\$500,000

3. Location

a) City of West Columbia b) Lexington County c) South Carolina

4. Target Area and Priority Site Information

Target Area:

US Census Tracts 45063020505, 45063020601, and 450630203

Priority Sites:

Brookland Lakeview Empowerment Center (BLEC)

1218 Batchelor Street, West Columbia, SC 29169

Colite

228-229 North Parson Road, West Columbia, SC 29169

Capital Square Shopping Center

438 Sunset Boulevard, West Columbia, SC 29169

5. Contacts

a. Project Director

Jamie Hook, Assistant City Administrator of Public Operations

(803) 791-1880 option 2

jhook@westcolumbiasc.gov

200 N. 12th Street

West Columbia, SC 29169

b. Chief Executive/Highest Ranking Elected Official

Mayor Temus C. Miles, Jr.

(803) 351-8754

tmiles@westcolumbiasc.gov 200 N. 12th Street

West Columbia, SC 29169

Mayor

Temus C. "Tem" Miles, Jr.

Mayor Pro-Tem

Mickey Pringle

Council Members

Trevor Bedell

Jimmy Brooks

George M. Crowe

Joseph D. Dickey, Jr.

Mike Green

Sarah Mattern

David B. Moye

City Administrator

Brian E. Carter,

CM-ICMA, AICP

Deputy

City Administrator

Michelle M. Dickerson,

Esquire

City Treasurer/

Senior Assistant

City Administrator

Justin R. Black, CPA

City Clerk

Crystal Bouknight

(803) 791-1880

FAX (803) 739-6231

200 N. 12th Street
West Columbia, SC 29169

PO Box 4044
West Columbia, SC 29171

www.westcolumbiasc.gov



6. Population

City of West Columbia, SC: 17,416 (US Census: 2016–2020 American Community Survey)

7. Other Factors

Other Factors	Page #
Community population is 15,000 or less.	NA
The applicant is, or will assist, a federally recognized Indian tribe or United States territory.	NA
The priority site(s) is impacted by mine-scarred land.	NA
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).	NA
The priority site(s) is in a federally designated flood plain.	NA
The reuse of the priority site(s) will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy.	NA
The reuse of the priority site(s) will incorporate energy efficiency measures.	Yes, Pg. 8
The reuse strategy or project reuse of the priority site(s) considers climate adaptation and/or mitigation measures.	NA
At least 30% or more of the overall project budget will be spent on eligible reuse/area-wide planning activities, as described in Section I.B., for priority site(s) within the target area.	Yes, Pg. 13
The target area(s) is located within a community in which a coal-fired power plant has recently closed (2014 or later) or is closing.	NA

8. Letter from the State or Tribal Environmental Authority

See attached.

9. Releasing Copies of Applications

Not Applicable.

Mayor
 Temus C. "Tem" Miles, Jr.

Mayor Pro-Tem
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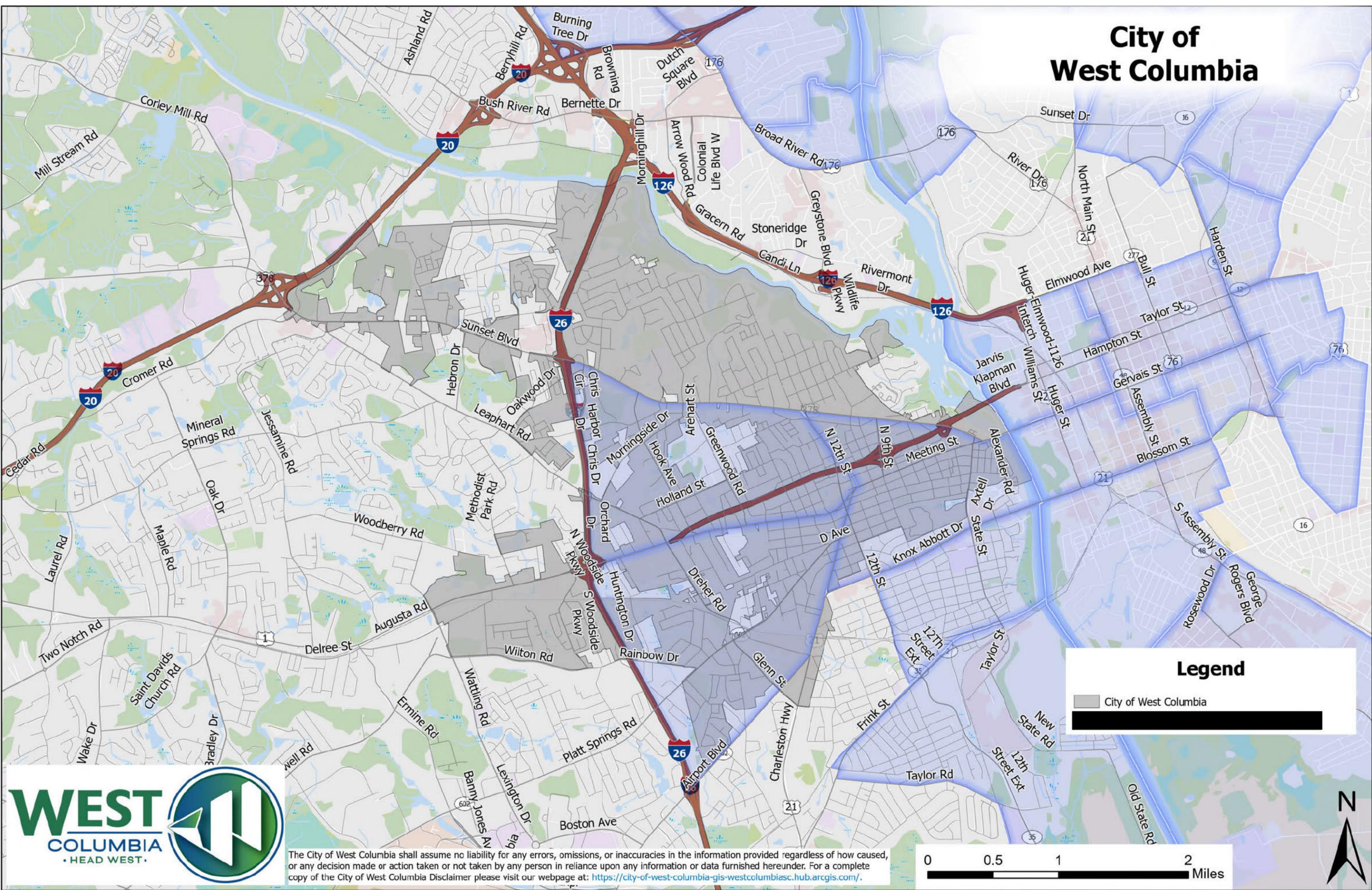
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City of West Columbia

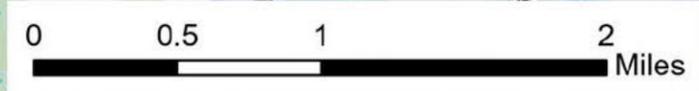


Legend

City of West Columbia



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SC DEPARTMENT of
**ENVIRONMENTAL
SERVICES**

Julie E. Blalock, Chief
Bureau of Land and Waste Management
2600 Bull Street
Columbia, SC 29201

November 1, 2024

Sara S. Janovitz, Manager
Brownfields and Land Revitalization
United States Environmental Protection Agency
61 Forsyth Street S.W. 10th Floor
Atlanta, Georgia 30303-8960

RE: EPA Brownfields Community-Wide Assessment Grant
City of West Columbia, South Carolina

Dear Ms. Janovitz:

The South Carolina Department of Environmental Services, the State's environmental authority, acknowledges and fully supports the City of West Columbia's application for a Brownfields Community-wide Assessment Grant. The funding will focus on redevelopment of Census tracts 450630205.05, 450630206.01, and 450630203.

The Department appreciates your consideration of the application and hopes for a favorable outcome. Your positive response will assist the City in its efforts to revitalize properties in the community. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Robert Hodges, member of my staff at (803) 898-0919 or Robert.Hodges@des.sc.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julie E. Blalock".

Julie E. Blalock, Chief
Bureau of Land and Waste Management

cc: Elizabeth Basil, BEHS
Robert Hodges, Manager, Brownfields Program

1. PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION AND PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION

a. Target Area and Brownfields

i. **Overview of Brownfield Challenges and Description of Target Area:** The **geographic boundary** for this grant application is the City of West Columbia (City), with **Census Tracts (CTs) 45063020300, 45063020505, and 45063020601s the target area.** The target area is home to 12,144 residents¹ and lies along a small section of the Congaree River in the midlands of South Carolina. The City was first chartered in 1894 as housing for Columbia Mill employees.² After two devastating fires and a major flood, the town was rebuilt in 1936. The whole of West Columbia remains primarily residential and commercial, with a few industrial properties along I-26. The target area was selected for this assessment project because, while the area is well trafficked, commercial developments have seen markedly less success than in the more affluent West Columbia Riverfront District. **The target area is situated between three major arteries (Highway 378, Highway 321, and Airport Boulevard/Charleston Highway) leading to Columbia, the Columbia Metropolitan Airport, and I-26. The three CTs became “drive-through” neighborhoods, with most travel going through these zones rather than to them.** As happened in many communities across the US, highways and major thoroughfares were put through African American Communities, disrupting their accessibility and commercial marketability. This happened in our target area and contributes to our brownfield challenges and our efforts to remedy through environmental justice efforts. With these main thoroughfares connecting Columbia to the airport and I-26, CT 45063020300 became saturated with filling stations, while CTs 45063020505 and 45063020601 were stunted commercially. Economic underperformance led to this area being perceived as less desirable. Businesses closed, and residents who could afford to relocate to a less noisy neighborhood moved, **transforming the target area into crime-ridden, low-income neighborhoods seemingly left behind by the rest of West Columbia.** These areas are the most impacted by the economic downturn and businesses moving out. Investing in this target area and the priority sites will help confront decades of underinvestment in disadvantaged communities and bring critical resources to communities overburdened by pollution and environmental hazards. CT 45063020300 adjoins the Congaree River with direct access to miles of Riverwalk along the West Columbia shoreline. The most significant issue facing the target area is that the Riverwalk is the only draw to these neighborhoods. Few established commercial sites keep people returning or convince visitors to move to this area. The target area consists primarily of low-income households surrounded by dilapidated and likely contaminant-impacted commercial properties that are often vandalized. These characteristics do not inspire confidence in developers and investors. The target area has been underserved for decades. Still, it holds expansive potential, and, **with support and funding, commercial and civic redevelopment would elevate the target area out of its current environmental and social justice issues.**

ii. **Description of the Priority Brownfield Site(s):** Within the target area (**Census Tracts (CTs) 45063020300, 45063020505, and 45063020601**), approximately 56 potential brownfield sites need assessment, including filling stations, office and retail spaces, mixed-use properties, and undeveloped land. Many of the identified sites were automotive filling stations or repair facilities. West Columbia will develop and prioritize a site inventory using public input as part of this project. **Brookland Lakeview Empowerment Center (BLEC)** is the first priority site. This 9.12-acre property is a former primary school built in 1949, with subsequent additions in the 1950s. **This property was originally constructed as the new location of an all-African American school which was founded in the early 1900s.**

This site is in a central location of a historically black neighborhood named “Happy Town.” It serves as a community service center to house several **social service programs such as senior services, youth educational and athletic programs, human services, wellness/health services, feeding programs, and workforce development and entrepreneurial programs.** This site also contains an athletics field that provides critically needed outdoor athletics space in the low-income neighborhood and creates a sense of community. The BLEC also houses the **Columbia Children’s Theater (CCT)**, which recently relocated to West Columbia to provide artistic programming and education to more children. Redevelopment goals are tied to the current social justice and community service objectives of the BLEC. There are hopes to revitalize the building to allow for the expansion of their **small business incubator program** that helps provide resources for small, minority-owned businesses that will serve the West Columbia Community. They also hope to expand their **medical and food provision services with USDA and the CDC.** Additionally, expansion and improvement of the athletics field are planned with the redevelopment of the site. While the 30,000+ square foot building is currently in use, a large majority of the building has never been updated and likely contains asbestos and lead. These parts of the building are currently unusable, limiting the BLEC’s ability to perform at total capacity. The primary contaminants of concern include semi-volatile organic compounds (SVOCs), lead paint, and asbestos. The current issues with the building are limiting its ability to house additional programming and reach more vulnerable community members. The City has not completed Phase I or Phase II at the site, but the site's owner has consented to assessments. The BLEC is a **part of the**

¹ <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/SC>

² <https://westcolumbiasc.gov/history/>

Brownfield Coalition that the City has formed to energize and foster Brownfield redevelopment. This site was chosen as a priority because of the immense value that the center currently provides to the community and the potential the space has for reuse. Our revitalization plan outlines numerous goals in community health, small business innovation, and community services, and the BLEC's goals align with the City in these areas. **Colite**, the second priority site, was a sign manufacturing plant totaling over nine acres, split between three adjacent parcels. The site is developed with two buildings – a manufacturing warehouse and a manufacturing plant, **totaling over 300,000**³ square feet. Situated between Sunset Boulevard and I-26, on N. Parson St and Parnell St, and directly across from a major residential corridor (TMS: [004640-17-001,004640-16-001, 004640-15-004](#)). The manufacturing plant was built in 1951 and was in operation manufacturing signs for customers like Walt Disney World, Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, and numerous other major retailers and companies until 2008 when operations were **moved elsewhere, costing West Columbia over 200 jobs**. The site has remained abandoned since then. Aerial images reveal multiple tractor-trailers on the site that aren't visible from the street, as a large brick wall surrounds much of the property. It is also clear that the buildings that remain are overgrown and neglected. Based on the site's history, the primary contaminants of concern for investigation include various petroleum products and by-products, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), SVOCs, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and various metals. Based on current zoning laws, the priority site may be used for heavy and light manufacturing and can be rezoned into the redevelopment overlay district. The City participated in a Brownfield Coalition grant in 2012, and this was a property that was partially assessed. The assessment needs to be updated to provide an adequate picture of the current site conditions. This site was identified as a priority site due to its redevelopment potential, as **specified in the 2024 Redevelopment Plan**,⁴ and potential for economic development in the area. We anticipate that this area could be developed into mixed use development with residential units and commercial retail sites with an emphasis on green space. The adjacent property has a pond that attracts various wildlife and would provide a great addition to the green space in this redevelopment, providing much needed green space and recreational opportunities. This site lies in one of our most disadvantaged neighborhoods and has the potential to provide incredible resources if redeveloped. **Capital Square Shopping Center** is the third priority site. It is an 8.57-acre, multi-suite shopping center totaling over 83,000 square feet, a large parking lot, and multiple empty stand-alone retail spaces surrounding the immediate parking area. **The site has visibility from three significant arteries for a combined 45,000 vehicles per day**⁵. All the suites in the shopping center are currently vacant except for one who does not plan to renew their lease. A dry cleaner was formerly located on the site. This site contains a large amount of impervious surface, and with the proximity to the river, it potentially impacts the water quality and perpetuates flooding during large precipitation events. Adjacent properties include the House of Raeford Chicken Plant and its laydown yard, which exacerbates the blight of the area. The redevelopment of the shopping center will lessen the impact of this blight. The shopping center is one of the first things you see when you cross the Gervais Street Bridge into West Columbia and the beautiful, historic River District. This property is a blight to the area that otherwise has produced broad economic benefits and redevelopment in the past five years. The vacant shopping center is a visual eyesore that attracts crime and vandalism. The redevelopment will transform the site into a productive and attractive gateway into our community. The site could be redeveloped into a mixed-use development with retail, office, and residential space. This would create new opportunities for local businesses and residents and create new job opportunities. The primary contaminants of concern to be investigated include perchloroethylene (PCE), petroleum solvents, lead, arsenic, and PCBs. This site could be the gateway to the River District, an anchor for further redevelopment and revitalization of an area that provides numerous job opportunities. It also has the chance to provide even more for the residents of the surrounding area, primarily low-income and minority families.

.iii. Identifying Additional Sites: To identify additional sites for eligible activities, the City of West Columbia will prioritize sites based on several key criteria. First, sites with known or suspected environmental contamination, especially those posing risks to public health, will be given high consideration. Second, sites with the potential to create jobs, stimulate economic growth, and revitalize the community will be prioritized. Third, sites that will improve the quality of life for residents, particularly those in underserved or disadvantaged communities, will be targeted. Fourth, sites with strong redevelopment potential, such as those with existing infrastructure or proximity to amenities, will be considered. Finally, sites that pose significant public health risks, such as those with hazardous waste or lead-based paint, will be prioritized for remediation. When prioritizing sites, the City will specifically consider factors related to underserved and disadvantaged communities, including socioeconomic factors like income levels and poverty rates, environmental justice concerns such as exposure to pollution, access to essential services like healthcare and education, and community input to ensure that local needs are addressed. In addition to the target area, the City will consider the House of Raeford Chicken Processing Plant and 421 Center Street as potential sites for redevelopment

³ <https://colite.com/about/>

⁴ <https://westcolumbiasc.gov/redevelopment-revitalization-plans/>

⁵ chrome-extension://efaidnbnmnbbpcjpcglclefindmkaj/https://images1.loopnet.com/d2/E3Q8q6_XaDgqx-xiXwINgPCPQreOK5ihzwp5xQOk4No/document.pdf

b. Revitalization of the Target Area

i. Reuse Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans: The City's 2024 Redevelopment Plan has several goals: (1) to **create viable commercial corridors by encouraging and facilitating sound real estate acquisition**; (2) to recruit targeted commercial businesses and industries; (3) to incorporate cultural arts and tourism as critical components of economic development; (4) to coordinate various funded public improvements within West Columbia; (5) to **support and establish neighborhood improvement programs for slum and blight conditions in residential neighborhoods**; (6) to create a healthy mix of affordable, workforce, market-rate, and luxury-housing options; (7) to provide safe and convenient mobility, transportation, and transit options; (8) to encourage and support redevelopment-friendly land use regulations; and (9) to use the powers of borrowing, land acquisition, and disposition to further West Columbia redevelopment goals.

Enhancement of parks/green spaces, aesthetics, and a sense of community pride would encourage economic development and investment and improve quality of life. Design standards and incorporating alternative energy methods could aid in the commercial rehabilitation of the city. West Columbia can include the following subgoals under the Grant: improve aesthetics, promote a sense of community pride, increase African American ownership, increase parks and greenspaces, and expand the business district. The City's Zoning Ordinance has implemented the **Redevelopment District Floating Zone (RDFZ) program that encourages context-sensitive design and (re)development**. A combination of two of the following redevelopments would be permissible in the RDFZ: retail establishments, art sales/studios, residences, antique shops, offices, restaurants, food truck courts, beer gardens, tap rooms, municipal water/sewer facilities, civic or fraternal organizations, and community service structures (libraries, fire stations, community center). Given these new zoning opportunities, the City intends to redevelop the **Brookland Lakeview Empowerment Center priority site to contain a small business incubator, community health center focusing on diabetes and preventive health initiatives, senior services, GED adult education, and youth athletics outreach for at-risk, minority children**. The City plans to use the **Colite and the Capital Square Shopping Center sites as a mixed-use creative and entrepreneurial complex** featuring retail, dining, green space, and entertainment along with residential living which is much needed within the City. By implementing these reuse strategies, the City of West Columbia aims to revitalize its urban core, create jobs, attract investment, and improve the overall quality of life for its residents.

ii. Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategy: Redevelopment of the blighted target-area properties will impart **economic benefits** by reversing the drive-through phenomenon and breathing life back into the forgotten neighborhoods of West Columbia. Creating viable commercial properties and public green spaces would improve the health and safety of the whole community. **Non-economic benefits** will be accomplished primarily with the priority sites. The **green space, potentially totaling over five acres planned** for the Colite site is expected to increase walkability and access to safe outdoor spaces, **decrease health hazards and the environmental burden of low-income communities** in the area, and improve the community's unity. Canopy cover and appropriate plantings will both address heat islands and clean air. The Capitol Square Shopping Center priority site would also accomplish these long-term goals for the City. Target-area assessment and redevelopment will ultimately create a destination for travelers and a safe, welcoming place to live. The **economic benefit** would be manifested in business licensing and an increase in tax revenue and job creation, directly addressing redevelopment goals. Long-term achievement of these goals means that the low-income target-area neighborhoods will now benefit from new **locally-and minority-owned businesses that increase property values and livability** while also increasing tourism dollars. Additional tourism experiences will alleviate the City's residential property tax dependency, offset growth demands on City services, and decrease the likelihood of property tax hikes **by distributing the tax burden more evenly** across all land uses. Additionally, with the City's encouragement, **incorporating green/energy-efficient measures** in the redevelopment will reduce the utility costs for owners and increase the City's livability. The City will leverage additional grant funding for green energy and EV charging at the redevelopment site to reduce the developers' burden and promote energy-efficiency.

c. Strategy for Leveraging Resources

i. Resources Needed for Site Reuse: The City can obtain additional funding as necessary to complete brownfield redevelopment projects from various sources, such as the South Carolina Department of Environmental Services (SCDES) Brownfield Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund (BCRLF) for site cleanup (\$900,000 for a Non- Responsible Party removal action), the EPA Cleanup Grant Program for remediation (\$500,000– 2,000,000 for one or more brownfield sites), United States Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to address blight removal, and the state's Clean Water Revolving Loan fund for infrastructure improvements. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, Lexington County "C" Funds, and South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) funding can be pursued for redevelopment of target-area street infrastructure and sidewalks. Private funding from the Central Carolina Community Foundation, with various grants, can also be pursued for community beautification.

ii. Existing Infrastructure: The priority sites and target area have existing infrastructure sufficient for redevelopment, as much of it has been updated in the past five years (streets, sewer, water, electricity). If existing infrastructure needs repair

or replacement, the City will look to state and federal funding sources to supplement the current budget allocation for repair, maintenance, and new infrastructure installation. The City has received federal funding from the US Department of Transportation for the Safe Streets for All program, aimed at increasing pedestrian and cyclist safety and allow for the design of complete streets. In addition to safety action planning, the city also has funding to complete demonstration projects to gather data on pedestrian and micro-transit travel to better improve the existing infrastructure and invest in roads, sidewalks and safety. This exemplifies our commitment to safer, walkable streets and reconnecting communities.

2. COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

a. Community Need

i. The Community's Need for Funding: The target area's average median household income is \$37,355, below state (\$54,864) and national (\$64,994) values.⁶ In the target area, the average population below the poverty level is 26%, compared to 13% nationally.⁷ The target area also experiences lower employment rates (53%) than Lexington County (60%). Increasing property taxes or business licensing fees (the two largest revenue sources for the city) to generate additional funding needed to redevelop these disinvested neighborhoods will cause only more financial strain for the target area residents and ultimately do more harm than good. The City's existing and projected fiscal year budgets prioritize basic needs for the community. The Police Department, Public Works Department, and City Administration receive approximately 77%⁸ of the yearly budget, with an estimated 0.97% of the annual expenditure allocated to Community and Economic Development. West Columbia is experiencing a steady growth rate, requiring the City to allocate most of the funding toward increasing funds for entities that maintain the health and safety of its community. Additional funding is needed for the City to address its secondary brownfield redevelopment needs while not placing that financial burden on its fiscally unstable constituents.

ii. Threats to Sensitive Populations (1) Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations: The target area is home to sensitive populations, including the **impoverished, minority families, and older adults**. An average of 26% of all people in the target area live under the poverty line compared to 13% nationally. The target area has a higher minority population percentage, with approximately 20% African American (13% nationally).⁹ The average population that is 65 years and older is 20%, compared to 17% nationally.¹⁰ The City's population is aging and impoverished, and a growing need for commercial expansion is needed to accommodate the communities' needs.

The target area is also food insecure, with limited food retailers providing fresh produce and groceries at affordable prices within accessible distances (within 0.5–1 mile).¹¹ From a public health standpoint, adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), including discrimination, neighborhood violence, incarceration, and mental illness, **were strongly connected to food-insecure households where one in four children were exposed to three or more ACEs**.¹² Furthermore, food insecurity is heavily associated with malnutrition and chronic health conditions. These health conditions can be exacerbated by environmental conditions such as the proximity to contaminants commonly found in brownfield properties. Access to safe public spaces, commercial redevelopment, and access to healthy, affordable food, equitably distributed across the city that serves the community's needs, especially the children, is vital to West Columbia's prosperity.¹³ All West Columbia criminal activity rates from 2020 (murder [2], aggravated assault [98], arson [2], breaking & entering [107], robbery [30], motor vehicle theft [129], larceny [1,238], and sexual battery [17]) exceed the averages of the surrounding jurisdictions in Lexington County (murder [1], aggravated assault [38], arson [1], breaking & entering [71], robbery [8], motor vehicle theft [62], larceny [347], and sexual battery [6]).¹⁴ It has become apparent through the EPA Brownfields Grant Program and others like it that community interventions in disinvested areas significantly dampen the violence and crime experienced in these neighborhoods. Blight removal and providing easy access to safe greenspaces will mitigate the target-area public safety and welfare issues. Additionally, these areas, like the identified target area, are often less politically active and typically cannot, or do not, participate in civic functions or advocate for their needs (i.e., community redevelopment forums). The Brookland Lakeview Empowerment Center priority site would bolster the communities' physical activities, positive relationships between youth and caring adults (after-school programs), and community engagement. With redevelopment, the BLEC will be able to expand access, and the existence of blighted and abandoned brownfields reinforces the drive-through phenomenon in this community, which produces catastrophic retail leakage, causing businesses to close. Vacant properties fall into disrepair and drive down property values. Owners lose

⁶ <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/SC>

⁷ <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/SC>

⁸ <https://westcolumbiasc.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/BUDGET-FLYER-2022-2023.pdf>

⁹ <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/SC>

¹⁰ <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/SC>

¹¹ <https://drexel.edu/~media/Files/hunger-free-center/research-briefs/acesfoodinsecurity2019.ashx>

¹² <https://drexel.edu/~media/Files/hunger-free-center/research-briefs/acesfoodinsecurity2019.ashx>

¹³ https://www.fs.usda.gov/nrs/pubs/jrnl/2018/nrs_2018_kondo_003.pdf

¹⁴ <https://www.sled.sc.gov/forms/statistics/2020%20Crime%20in%20South%20Carolina.pdf>

equity, and devalued assets disincentivize routine maintenance. As upkeep wains, the severe welfare issue of blight increases. For example, the adjacent and neighborhood residential developments near the Colite site have a high concentration of low-income and less desirable housing options. West Columbia intends to mitigate the blight across the city through alternative use and zoning strategies with the help of EPA funding.

(2) Greater Than Normal Incidence of Disease and Adverse Health Conditions: During the assessments of the priority sites and subsequent project sites within the target area, the City expects to find many contaminants associated with older structures (lead-based paints and asbestos) and certain historical property uses (petroleum-based products, VOCs, SVOCs, PCBs, and metals) that may increase the risks of health effects to sensitive and even healthy populations. Lead paint and asbestos in buildings pose an increased risk to sensitive populations, particularly in the neglected, impoverished, high-minority areas (47% of West Columbia's population are racialized minorities) and elderly populations with limited access to affordable healthcare. Asbestos can cause numerous forms of cancer and chronic lung diseases. Lead poisoning can negatively impact the brain and central nervous system. Recent studies have also linked long-term exposure to lead to increased blood pressure, potentially exacerbating chronic health conditions typically associated with the elderly and low-income populations.¹⁵ The target area ranks in the 77th percentile in the US for lead paint.¹⁶ **The target areas rank in the 59th percentile in the US for asthma and in the 73rd percentile in the US for low life expectancy.** In Lexington County (data from West Columbia/target area was not available), **lung cancer was the second most diagnosed cancer and the number one leading cause of cancer death from 2013–2017**, with an annual average of 211 new cases and 131 deaths each year.¹⁷ Moreover, Lexington County had an average infant mortality rate of 6.5 per 1,000 deaths in 2018 alone, more significant than the national rate of 5.67 deaths per 1,000. Various contaminants associated with commercial and industrial use (petroleum products, VOCs, SVOCs, metals) can lead to various short-term and chronic conditions. The target area's already poor population struggles to manage such health effects due to the inability to afford proper healthcare. As a result, in 2019, 16% of adults in Lexington County were in poor or fair general health compared to 12% in the US. An average of 17% of residents in the target area do not have health care coverage compared to the national rate of 9%.¹⁸ With increasing healthcare costs and compounding medical debt, these sensitive populations are often relegated to areas of the city containing contaminants likely associated with brownfield properties. Target-area statistics for all selected variables exceed those in South Carolina and the US. **Five pollutants/sources** (diesel particulate, air toxics cancer risk, air toxics respiratory hazard index, hazardous waste proximity, and underground storage tanks) were **reported between the 80 and 100th percentiles in the US**, and three socioeconomic indicators (low income, linguistically isolated, and education) were within the 70th percentile in the US. Health risks associated with many of these pollutants can range from headaches and dizziness to increased cardiovascular risk, respiratory diseases, and cancers.¹⁸ Additionally, the elderly population's long-term exposure to lead paints and asbestos increases risk factors for both chronic and acute health conditions. Identifying and assessing brownfield sites throughout the target area will aid in redeveloping and removing harmful contaminants causing health issues for sensitive and proximal populations.

(3) Promoting Environmental Justice: **a. Identification of Environmental Justice Issues:** Target-area residents experience conditions common to underserved communities of color, including lower incomes, high poverty, disproportionate impacts of pollution, and limited access to safe, public green spaces and affordable, fresh food. Green spaces at all the priority sites are intended and can assist in increasing physical activity and promoting clean air through appropriate plantings and reducing heat islands by increasing the tree canopy coverage within these areas. Highway placement has isolated these low-income communities, exacerbating existing disparities. Two of West Columbia's census tracts are identified as disadvantaged in the CEJST, highlighting the presence of underserved populations. By addressing environmental justice concerns and utilizing a brownfields assessment grant, West Columbia aims to revitalize these communities and improve access to fresh food, medical care, and recreational greenspaces for its residents. **b. Advancing Environmental Justice:** The Brownfield Assessment Grant will directly address environmental justice (EJ) issues within the target community, aligning with the Biden Administration's Justice40 Initiative. By identifying and addressing environmental hazards, the grant will reduce exposure to toxins and enhance air and water quality. Additionally, the grant will prioritize the creation of green spaces and other amenities, **increasing access to environmental benefits for historically underserved communities.** To mitigate displacement risks associated with the project, a comprehensive community engagement strategy will be implemented. This includes collaborating with residents, businesses, and community organizations to ensure their voices are heard and their needs are met. Potential anti-displacement strategies, such as tenant protection measures, small business assistance, and affordable housing development, will be explored and implemented to safeguard the community's well-being. By prioritizing EJ and actively addressing displacement concerns,

¹⁵ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4454972/>

¹⁶ <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/22383587/>

¹⁷ <https://scdhec.gov/sites/default/files/media/document/Lexington%20County%20Cancer%20Profile%202020.pdf>

¹⁸ <https://scdhec.gov/sites/default/files/Library/CR-012142-2018.pdf>

this grant will contribute to a more equitable and sustainable future for the target area. **Health and include disparities will likely diminish with stable/livable incomes and the City’s target area reinvestment.**

Condition	Target area	National Average
Lower incomes	71st percentile	-
High poverty	26% of residents live below the poverty line	13%
Disproportionate impacts of pollution	95th percentile for leaking underground storage tanks (LUSTs) and underground storage tanks (USTs)	-
Higher minority population	20% African American	13%
Low life expectancy	73rd percentile	-
Adults in poor or fair general health	16%	12%
Lack of health care coverage	17% of residents	9%

Community Engagement i. Project Involvement & ii. Project Roles:

West Columbia Brownfield Coalition

Name of Org	Point of Contact	Specific involvement in the project or assistance provided
Greater Cayce-West Columbia Chamber of Commerce	Tim James, President and CEO tim@cwchamber.com (803) 794-6504	The Greater CWC promotes and meets business and tourism needs and creates the best community to live, work, connect, and explore. The CWC will share information with businesses in the area and help plan future site reuse.
Habitat for Humanity	Emily Fernald emily@habitatcsc.org	Habitat for Humanity is a nonprofit organization that works to provide affordable housing to low-income families. They can help us to identify critical needs in the affordable housing space and planning.
Brookland Lakeview Empowerment Center	Dr. Cindye Richburg-Cotton, Executive Director crichburgcotton@brookland.cc (803) 747-3519	BLEC engages and serves people of all ages and backgrounds while promoting advancements in health, education, and economic empowerment and improving the lives of residents in Lexington and Richland counties. Located in the target area and priority site- BLEC can get input from the community, offer space for meetings, and help with site inventory prioritization.
Brookland Lakeview Empowerment Center	Bennie Sulton Board Member [REDACTED]	
Turner AME Church	Rev. Kenneth Taylor [REDACTED]	Turner AME Church is a trusted community institution with deep knowledge of the target area and sensitive populations (African Americans) that they serve. The church can help the city identify brownfield sites that need redevelopment and provide community outreach and engagement through channels the City usually can’t access.

iii. Incorporating Community Input: West Columbia has developed a community engagement program that has remained active through the COVID-19 pandemic. **The Mayor hosts a monthly council meeting for elected city council members from each of the eight districts.** Supplemental Council Work Sessions, a Planning Commission, and the Zoning Board of Appeals meet monthly. Public meetings are held a few times yearly to encourage direct engagement with constituents about affairs/grievances across the districts. As such, **West Columbia does not have to build community outreach from the “ground up.”** During the pandemic, virtual meetings were held via commonly used online video conferencing software and streaming on YouTube, which is still active to encourage more citizen engagement. West Columbia introduced its intent to apply to the Brownfield Program at the October 10, 2023, council meeting and will continue to engage with the West Columbia Brownfield Coalition frequently as a means of established community engagement. Additionally, a **monthly public newsletter** with community updates, local business highlights, and free city events will contain Brownfield Project updates.

West Columbia will update the eight district leaders throughout the grant cycle every other quarter. The updates will be disseminated to their respective groups, and feedback will be received and reported to the district leaders at the next brownfield update. **Feedback will be incorporated as action items for the Brownfield Project Director,** and progress will be noted at subsequent meetings. Project partners will be asked to attend the council meeting to provide input and updates. Community comments and feedback may be given at the public meetings held at City Hall. Public input will be discussed at the subsequent council meeting/brownfield meeting. The outcome of these discussions about the public comments will be posted on the City’s Brownfield Program webpage within two weeks of receiving the comments. The City will develop a Community Involvement Plan (CIP) to describe planned community engagement activities, scheduling, project background, and key players. The CIP will be available for review and comment at City Hall, the City website, and social media. **The City’s brownfield webpage will contain project progress and announcements,** and those announcements will appear on the City’s social media pages so residents outside of any neighborhood groups can access the information and provide input.

3. TASK DESCRIPTIONS, COST ESTIMATES, AND MEASURING PROGRESS

a. Description of Tasks/Activities and Outputs:

The City requests \$500,000 in funding to implement this Brownfield Project based on target-area brownfield sites (discussed in 1.a.ii.) and the anticipated additional sites found during the site inventory task.

Task 1: Outreach	
i.	<i>Project Implementation:</i> The City’s Brownfield Project Manager will develop a Community Involvement Plan (CIP), outreach materials, Brownfield Project website, and social media posts with the assistance of the environmental consultant. City staff will lead the community meetings (virtual, depending on COVID-19) to keep the public informed about project plans and updates. Supplies are budgeted to print outreach materials (brochures/handouts) and office supplies to manage the grant.
ii.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> CIP will be created within three months of award (upon completion, a more concrete schedule will follow). Seven Community Meetings will be held (Y1: Q2 & Q3; Y2: Q1 & Q3; Y3: Q1 & Q3; Y4: Q2). Website and Outreach Materials created in the 1 st quarter and posted monthly throughout the grant project.
iii.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> City: Katherine Call, MPA, Brownfield Project Manager.
iv.	<i>Outputs:</i> CIP, Brownfield Website, 7 Community Meetings, Brochures/Handouts, Social Media Posts, Summary of Community Meetings in EPA required Quarterly Reports.
Task 2: Site Inventory	
i.	<i>Project Implementation:</i> The City’s Brownfield Project Director will work with target-area residents during community meetings to create a thorough site inventory for assessment. Although several potential sites have been identified, additional abandoned and underused properties identified by the target-area residents will be researched further by City staff using the Lexington County GIS System. Once a list is compiled, the consultant will work with City staff will create an evaluation ranking tool with the help of residents to determine which sites will be addressed.
ii.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> Community meeting held in the 1 st quarter will continue the preliminary inventory process that began with this application, with the evaluation ranking process starting in the 3 rd quarter.
iii.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> Katherine Call, MPA, Brownfield Project Manager.
iv.	<i>Outputs:</i> Evaluation Ranking Tool, Site Inventory List.
v.	Identifying Additional Sites: The City plans to take community suggestions directly during public meetings from the target-area council representatives and through involved target-area community organizations. As new project sites are identified outside of the target area, the City will work with residents and project partners to evaluate those sites based on criteria such as investor interest, existing infrastructure reuse, and community need based on data provided by residents and the US Census.
Task 3: Assessment	
i.	<i>Project Implementation:</i> The consultant will conduct Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) activities at sites selected and ranked through the Site Inventory Task, starting with the three priority sites listed in this application. ASTM- AAI compliant Phase Is; Generic Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP); Phase IIs including the SS-QAPP. Site access agreements and property eligibility determinations approval will be obtained before assessment.
ii.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> Assessment activities will begin in the 2nd quarter and continue throughout the grant.
iii.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> The consultant will implement the technical aspects of the project with oversight from the City: Jamie Hook, Brownfield Project Director.
iv.	<i>Outputs:</i> 24 Phase I ESAs; 1 Generic QAPP; 10 Phase II ESAs, including SS-QAPP, Site Access Agreements, and Property Eligibility Determinations.
Task 4: Remediation/Reuse Planning	
i.	<i>Project Implementation:</i> The consultant will prepare the Analysis for Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA) and Cleanup Plans for projects identified for cleanup. Cleanup planning will include evaluating cleanup alternatives, calculating cleanup costs, and determining site-appropriate remediation and reuse planning to reduce health/environmental risks. The planning consultant will prepare a comprehensive Brownfield Revitalization Plan. The consultant will also assist the City in hosting charrettes/visioning sessions for critical properties.
ii.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> Plans & Charrettes to begin in the 6 th quarter and will continue throughout the grant project. Brownfields Revitalization Plan to begin in the 3 rd quarter.
iii.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> The consultant will implement the technical aspects of the project with oversight from the City: Katherine Call, MPA, Direction of Community Development/Brownfield Project Manager.
iv.	<i>Outputs:</i> 4 ABCAs, 2 Vision Sessions/Charrettes, 1 Brownfield Revitalization Plan.
Task 5: Programmatic Support	
i.	<i>Project Implementation:</i> The City will procure an environmental consultant to assist with the Brownfield Grant Project. The City’s Brownfield Project Manager will oversee grant implementation and administration to ensure compliance with the EPA Cooperative Agreement Work Plan, schedule, and terms and conditions. The consultant will assist the City in completing ACRES Database Reporting, Yearly Financial Reporting, Quarterly Reporting, MBE/WBE Forms, and all additional Programmatic Support for the four-year term of the grant. The travel budget allows two staff to

	<i>attend two national/regional/grantee brownfield training conferences/workshops.</i>
ii.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule: Consultant procured in 1st quarter. ACRES Reporting begins in the 1st quarter, and Quarterly Reporting begins in the 2nd quarter and continues throughout the grant project—annual Reporting and Forms created in the 5th, 9th, and 13th quarters and during final closeout.</i>
iii.	<i>Task/Activity Lead: City: Jamie Hook, Brownfield Project Director.</i>
iv.	<i>Outputs: Procured consultant, ACRES Database Reporting, 4 Annual Financial Reports, 16 Quarterly Reports, 4 MBE/WBE Forms, Programmatic Support for the four-year grant period. Two staff to attend three conferences.</i>

b. Cost Estimates:

Below are the anticipated cost estimates for this project based on past Brownfield Projects as determined by local market standards with contractual hourly rates based on the skills needed for the specific tasks. The budget for this project includes travel, supplies, and contractual costs only. **Seventy (70)% of the budget will be spent on site-specific activities through the Assessment Task.**

Task 1 Outreach: Contractual: Community Involvement Plan

\$4,000 (40hrs x \$100/hr); Brownfield Website, Outreach Handouts, Social Media Posts \$3,000 (30hrs x \$100/hr); 7 Community Education Meetings \$10,500 (105hrs x \$100/hr; \$1,500/meeting). Supplies: Outreach Supplies \$1,000 (Paper [\$15/pack], Ink [\$40/cartridge], Post-it Notes [\$5/pack], Color printouts [\$1each]).

Task 2 Site Inventory: Contractual: Brownfield Site Inventory and Evaluation Ranking Tool Creation \$10,000 (100hrs x \$100).

Task 3 Assessment: Contractual: 24 Phase I ESAs, \$3,500 each for a total of \$84,000; 1 Generic QAPP, \$5,500; 10 Phase II ESAs, including SS-QAPP, at \$26,000 each for a total of \$260,000.

Task 4 Remediation/Reuse Planning: Contractual: 4 ABCAs \$7,000 for a total of \$28,000; 2 Vision Sessions/Charrettes \$8,000 (\$4,000/meeting); 1 Brownfield Revitalization Plan \$50,000 (Planner: 150hrs x \$150/hr; Market analysis: 100hrs x \$125/hr; Environmental professional: 120hrs x \$125/hr).

Task 5 Programmatic Support: Contractual: ACRES Database Reporting, Yearly Financial Reporting, Quarterly Reporting, MBE/WBE Forms, Programmatic Support for the four-year grant period \$24,000 (240hrs x \$100/hr). Travel: Three staff attend two conferences for \$12,000 (flights at \$800, 3 nights in hotel at \$300/night, incidentals and per diem at \$75/day [4 days] x 3 attendees x 2 events).

Category	Task					Totals
	<i>Outreach</i>	<i>Site Inventory</i>	<i>Assessment</i>	<i>Remediation/Reuse Planning</i>	<i>Programmatic Support</i>	
Travel					\$12,000	\$12,000
Supplies	\$1,000					\$1,000
Contractual	\$17,500	\$10,000	\$349,500	\$86,000	\$24,000	\$487,000
Total Budget (All Direct)	\$18,500	\$10,000	\$349,500	\$86,000	\$36,000	\$500,000

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

To ensure this EPA Brownfield Project is on schedule, the City’s internal Brownfield Team, which will include the consultant, will meet quarterly to track all **outputs identified in 3.a.** using an Excel spreadsheet and will report all progress in fulfilling the scope of work, goals, and objectives to the EPA via quarterly reports. In addition, project expenditures and activities will be compared to the project schedule to ensure the grant project will be completed within four years. Site-specific information will be entered into and tracked in the ACRES database. The following outputs include the number of neighborhood meetings, public meetings, meetings with community groups and community partners, environmental assessments, ABCAs, and cleanup redevelopment plans. The outcomes to be tracked include community participation, acres assessed, acres ready for reuse, redevelopment dollars leveraged, and jobs created. If the project is not being completed efficiently, the City has countermeasures in place to address this problem. The City will make monthly calls to its EPA Project Officer and, if needed, create a Corrective Action Plan.

4. PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE

a. Programmatic Capability

i. Organizational Capacity, ii. Organizational Structure, & iii. Description of Key Staff:

The City’s grants administration team has years of experience managing local, state, and federally funded awards that address a wide range of services and the expertise to implement and monitor the Brownfields Grant Project. The city was part of a Brownfield Coalition Grant in 2012 with the City of Columbia. Within the past four years, the City’s grants administration team has successfully been awarded and is carrying out multiple state and federal infrastructure grants with a combined funding totaling over \$15,000,000. The City will appoint its Assistant Administrator of Public Operations,

Jamie Hook, as the Brownfield Project Director. In this role, he will manage the total grant and project team. His professional experience includes over thirteen years in public operations with the City. Mr. Hook will be supported by the City's Director of Community Development. Katherine Call, MPA, as the Brownfield Project Manager. In this role, she will execute day-to-day operations and serve as the City's primary contact for project site information. Her professional experience includes holding positions in the South Carolina Governor's Office and Executive Budget Office. Crystal Bouknight will serve as the team's Communication Liaison to coordinate between the City, the community, and the Brownfield coalition. She serves as the City's Clerk and executive assistant to the City Administrator. Justin Black will serve as the Financial Director. In this role, he will be highly involved in grant administration for timely drawdowns using the ASAP system, reporting, and financial management. Mr. Black is a member of West Columbia's award-winning financial department, known for having 30 years of excellence in financial reporting, and is the senior assistant city administrator and treasurer. A qualified environmental consultant will assist with the technical portions of the grant project.

iv. Acquiring Additional Resources: The City will procure a qualified environmental consultant and sub-consultants to assist with technical and reporting aspects of the Brownfield Community-wide Assessment. Procurement procedures will comply with both the local contracting and procurement process and with EPA requirements for "Professional Service," including 2 CFR §§ 200 and 1500. The City of West Columbia is committed to promoting strong labor practices, local hiring, and community engagement in its Brownfield assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment projects.

b. Performance and Accomplishments

ii. Has Received an EPA Brownfields Grant (1) **Purpose and Accomplishments: The City was part of a Brownfield Coalition Grant, awarded in 2012, and maintained federal compliance.** The City has acquired local, state, and federally funded awards that address West Columbia municipal infrastructure for citizens similar in size or scope to this award. The City has procured several federal grant awards. The City was awarded the Sewer Line Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) in 2020 and 2021, totaling \$483,960, to replace water mains and sewer lines to provide better services to users along 5,450 linear feet in Mill Village (approximately 380 households). It was completed in early 2022 with all funds expended. The Rural Infrastructure Authority (RIA) grant was awarded to the City in 2019 and completed in 2021 in conjunction with the Saluda River Trunk Rehabilitation; \$1,398,900 was allocated to update water mains and sewer lines that service approximately 70% of the City's population. All RIA grant funds were expended by the project completion date. RIA has also awarded \$10,000,000 to the City for water main replacements throughout the City, serving over 1000 households. Compliance with Grant Requirements: The City has a robust history and proven track record for successfully managing grant processes from the pre-award to the post-award life cycle. All past grant requirements were met with funds expended and all required paperwork, documentation and reporting completed on time. The City has identified a staff member with extensive experience as a Grant and Special Project Manager who will monitor and ensure compliance with programmatic and financial requirements. Mr. Hook and Ms. Call can use the EPA ACRES system as the City currently tracks all grant progress in-house.