

1. Applicant Identification
City of Red Oak, Iowa
601 N. 6th Street
Red Oak, Iowa 51566
2. Website URL: <https://city.redoakiowa.com/>
3. Funding Requested
 - a. Assessment Grant Type: Community-wide
 - b. Federal Funds Requested: \$500,000
4. Location
a) City of Red Oak, b) Montgomery County, c) Iowa
5. Target Area and Priority Site Information
Target area: Broadway Corridor (located in census tracts 19137960200 and 19137960300)
Both census tracts are Justice40 disadvantaged communities according to CEJST

Priority sites:
 - Priority Site 1: No Frills Building, 205 E. Oak Street, Red Oak, Iowa 51566
 - Priority Site 2: Former Service Station, 1001 Broadway Street, Red Oak, Iowa 51566
6. Contacts
 - a. Project Director
Ms. Lisa Kotter, City Administrator
712-623-6510
redoakadmin@redoakia.city
601 N. 6th Street
Red Oak, IA 51566
 - b. Chief Executive/Highest Ranking Elected Official
Mayor Shawwna Silvius
712-623-6510
Mayor@redoakia.city
601 N. 6th Street
Red Oak, IA 51566
7. Population
City of Red Oak, IA: 5,563 residents
(US Census: 2018–2022 American Community Survey)

8. Other Factors

Other Factors	Page #
Community population is 15,000 or less.	4
The applicant is, or will assist, a federally recognized Indian Tribe or United States Territory.	N/A
The priority site(s) is impacted by mine-scarred land.	N/A
The priority site(s) is adjacent to a body of water (i.e., the border of the priority site(s) is contiguous or partially contiguous to the body of water, or would be contiguous or partially contiguous with a body of water but for a street, road, or other public thoroughfare separating them).	N/A
The priority site(s) is in a federally designated flood plain.	2
The reuse of the priority site(s) will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy.	3
The reuse of the priority site(s) will incorporate energy efficiency measures.	3
The proposed project will improve local climate adaptation/mitigation capacity and resilience to protect residents and community investments.	3
At least 30% 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(s).	8, 9
The target area(s) is impacted by a coal-fired power plant that has recently closed (2014 or later) or is closing	N/A

9. Letter from the State or Tribal Environmental Authority

See attached.

10. Releasing Copies of Applications

Not Applicable.

October 22, 2024

Tarah Vaughn
Regional Brownfield Program
EPA Region VII
1201 Renner Road
Lenexa, KS 66219

RE: FY25 Brownfield Community-Wide Assessment Grant Application
Broadway St. Commercial Corridor, City of Red Oak, Iowa

Dear Tarah:

This letter is submitted as a statement of acknowledgement, review and support from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for the brownfield community-wide assessment grant being submitted by the City of Red Oak, Iowa, to conduct environmental assessments within the city, and targeting the commercial corridor of Broadway St.

This highway-oriented commercial corridor has lacked redevelopment interest, due to environmental concerns from many current and past businesses, including a number of former gas station sites that had confirmed petroleum releases, along with a number of other former industrial, manufacturing, and commercial businesses that closed and remain vacant. There has been a 20-year decline in reinvestment in properties in this area, and questions about past uses of these properties and potential environmental impacts, as well as issues with hazardous building materials in these old structures, has resulted in a lack of reinvestment interest in this corridor.

This grant will provide the City of Red Oak with the financial resources necessary to address their priority brownfield properties, where other entities have been hindered by environmental questions, liability concerns and costs, and overall brownfield stigma. The DNR fully supports this grant request, and we are pleased to be a partner for brownfield redevelopment success in Red Oak, Iowa!

Sincerely,



Mr. Mel Pins
Executive Officer
Iowa Brownfield Redevelopment Program

Cc: Lisa A. Kotter, City Administrator, City of Red Oak



**City of Red Oak, IA
FY25 Brownfields Assessment Grant
Narrative**

1. PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION AND PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION

a. **Target Area and Brownfields** i. Overview of Brownfield Challenges and Description of

Target Area: The City of Red Oak (City) has a rich history dating back thousands of years with its Native American settlers. White settlers arrived in the 1850s, and soon after, formed the railroad in 1869. The railroad brought prosperity through new industry such as meatpacking factories, a cannery, flour mills, and brick and tile works.¹ In 1888, Edmond Osborne and Thomas D. Murphy purchased a woodcut of the Montgomery County Courthouse. To offset the expense of the woodcut, they decided to sell advertising around the picture and add a calendar pad. Because of their venture, Red Oak became known as the birthplace of the art calendar industry. The Thos. D. Murphy Company operated for over 100 years making calendars before closing in 2002. Today, the footprint of the abandoned calendar industry remains visible within the southern portion of the city. The Thos. D. Murphy Company is just one example of many businesses in Red Oak that had to close due to globalization and outsourcing, leaving lasting **brownfield challenges** within this small town. Over the last several decades, the closing of these once-thriving businesses left behind environmentally impacted brownfield properties and second- and third-generation tradesmen and women without quality jobs. The skilled labor force that had the means to relocate did so, but those who could not afford relocation were stranded in the city with its declining job market. **Red Oak's brownfield challenges are substantial**, but grant funding, assessment, and planning activities can pave a road to recovery.

The **geographic boundary** of this Assessment Grant is the **city limits**. Economic and environmental impacts have stifled the City's ability to beautify the **Broadway Corridor** (target area) and revitalize vacant properties. The target area is situated in **two Justice40 disadvantaged communities (as identified by the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool [CEJST])**. The City will focus on developing the Broadway Corridor into a more aesthetically appealing and safe area for the community. Target-area residents suffer from high unemployment (8%), low income (per capita \$31,651), and high poverty (17% of all families).² The City intends to use this grant to address the abandoned and derelict properties and allow for better connectivity, more greenspace, and increased job opportunities. The City's goal is to reestablish a thriving community and promote sustainable economic growth for the City's sensitive populations.

ii. Description of the Priority Brownfield Site(s): A windshield survey identified approximately **16 potential hazardous sites** throughout the target area that would benefit from brownfield assessment. Based on a preliminary review of regulatory files of the target area, there are concerns due to 14 leaking underground storage tank (UST) incidents, seven emergency responses from spills of hazardous chemicals, and five hazardous waste-generating facilities. Hazardous substances and petroleum products associated with former filling stations, dry cleaners, and aging structures that have historically occupied the target area are a cause for concern. Contaminants associated with the current and historic uses of these sites include **volatile organic compounds (VOCs), semivolatile organic compounds (SVOCs), petroleum contaminants, and metals**. Additional concerns associated with aging structures throughout the target area include **lead-based paint (LBP), asbestos-containing materials (ACMs)** from various building materials, and **polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs)**. The City has identified **two priority sites** within the Broadway Corridor for assessment and redevelopment due to their location, proximity to residents, and current needs as voiced by citizens.

¹ Red Oak History: <https://city.redoakiowa.com/>.

² US Census 2018–2022 American Community Survey.

Priority Site 1: The **No Frills Property** (1.16 acres) hosts a vacant 20,508-square-foot former commercial building and paved parking lot. Because it is unfenced and open to the public, unsuspecting people cut across this contaminated property to reach their homes to the south and north and churches (300 feet) to the east and southeast. The property has had numerous uses over the years but has primarily been used as a grocery store since it was first developed in 1949. Most recently it was the No Frills grocery store and then a Dollar General. The property has been vacant since 2017. An incinerator was observed at the site during a preliminary review, and it is suspected that a pad-mounted diesel generator was formerly used around the incinerator. Contaminants of concern at the site include **ACM and LBP** from building materials, **refrigerants** from former coolers/freezers, **PCBs, heavy metals, and dioxins** from the incinerator, and **total petroleum hydrocarbons, benzene, and toluene** from the diesel generator. Reuse plans include a humane society to address the City's stray pet problem. The closest animal shelter/humane society is 25 miles from the City. **The City has site access from the property owner for site assessment.**

Priority Site 2: The **Former Service Station** (0.23 acres) is developed with a 2,800-square-foot parking lot currently used for equipment staging. The property operated as a service station beginning in 1960. Numerous USTs at the site have contaminated the soil and groundwater with **benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, and xylene (BTEX)**. Several remediation activities took place at the site from the late 1980s through the 2010s, but the site has existed as an unfenced and vacant lot since the early 2010s due to perceived contamination. The site sits on the northwest corner of N. Broadway Street and S. Valley Street, with houses immediately to the west. Reuse plans include a park with greenspace, butterfly garden with benches, and ceremonial crosswalk. The **Former Service Station** is in a **FEMA-designated flood plain**. The proposed redevelopment of the site into greenspace will minimize the damaging effects of potential flooding. **The City has site access from the owner for site assessment.**

iii. **Identifying Additional Sites:** The City will focus on identifying sites for assessment throughout the target area. Sites that most benefit **underserved, sensitive populations** in the target area will receive priority. In preparation for this Brownfield Grant application, the City conducted a windshield survey of the target area and identified at least 16 potential brownfield sites. During this grant project, a more in-depth site inventory and evaluation ranking criteria process will be established as the City works diligently with target-area residents to identify and prioritize sites within this **CEJST Justice40 disadvantaged community**. Identified sites will be researched further by City staff using the property appraiser's website. The evaluation ranking criteria used to determine which sites are added to the inventory will be based on community need, project partner and resident input, and **CEJST and US Census** data to ensure priority is given to the communities in most need. In the event all target-area sites have been addressed with grant funding, the City will work with project partners and residents throughout the geographic boundary of the city limits to identify abandoned and underused properties. Once identified, the City will apply the already established evaluation ranking criteria (based on need of the underserved) to determine the order in which sites will be addressed.

b. Revitalization of the Target Area i. **Reuse Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans:** The **2024 Red Oak Comprehensive Plan (Plan)** outlines the goals for the City, including enhancing recreational opportunities, improving housing stock, and improving the visual appearance of Red Oak. The Plan specifically lists the need to "create an inventory of brownfield sites for future development," which highlights the City's understanding of its current brownfield challenges. **No Frills Property (priority site 1)** will be redeveloped with an animal shelter, a

resource desperately needed in Red Oak.³ This redevelopment plan aligns with the Plan’s Goal 1 to “*Improve existing infrastructure to support the current population and expand infrastructure where needed to support a growing population.*” Currently, the City has a desperate need to manage the stray pet population. This priority site will be converted to an animal shelter, complete with a grassed, fenced play area for dogs, a low-cost, spay–neuter facility, and adoption center. This reuse will ensure residents and animals remain safe and cared for while forwarding the City’s land use plans.

The **Former Service Station (priority site 2)** will be redeveloped as a small park with a memorial crosswalk connecting it to nearby residences, which will support the City’s plans of improving the appearance of the city, providing park access to neighborhoods that presently have no access, and improving safe **walkability**. The park will have American Disability Act–friendly walkways that will make the area more accessible for individuals with disabilities. This reuse aligns with Goal 2 to “*enhance recreational opportunities in Red Oak for all ages.*” Red Oak aims to have parks within 0.25 miles of residences for accessibility, but there are currently no parks accessible to residents on the west side of town. The redevelopment of a park will serve a portion of the community who currently do not have access to outdoor recreation facilities while honoring the memory of one of their own children. The crosswalk will be in honor of Vana Marie Redd, a 12-year-old who was struck and killed by a police car while crossing Broadway Street.

ii. Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategy: The City is working to encourage economic development by creating new job opportunities that will increase the tax base and improve aesthetics by creating greenspace and parks with better connectivity for all residents to enjoy. The area to the west of Broadway is currently developed with a bicycle/walking path. Redeveloping **priority site 2** into a park (**noneconomic**) would make it a destination for those using the bicycle/walking path (**noneconomic**). The City plans to install a butterfly garden, which would increase pollinators and assist with climate adaptation and sustainability (**noneconomic**). **Priority site 1’s** redevelopment into an animal shelter will provide both economic and noneconomic benefits by generating **additional revenue** for the community, **adding new job opportunities (construction and full-time 10+)**, while also providing protection for stray animals and residents.

The City will encourage and use **renewable energy (RE)** and **energy-efficient (EE)** products including Energy Star appliances, air conditioners, water heaters, light bulbs, and solar panels in all redevelopments, especially at the animal shelter. Redevelopment of the target area will also consider the risks that **climate change** poses to Red Oak. Red Oak currently has a **low adaptive capacity** to handle the inevitable threats the area faces and is vulnerable to the **disproportionate and cumulative impacts of climate change**. CEJST shows the target area is strongly affected by the climate change burden threshold in the following categories: **wildfire risk, population loss due to natural hazards, agriculture loss, building loss rate, and flood risk**. The City will prepare an EPA-approved Climate Smart Brownfield Plan as a part of this grant-funded project to mitigate climate change risks to protect residents and community investments.

c. **Strategy for Leveraging Resources** i. Resources Needed for Site Reuse: As a local municipality, the City has access to several different federal and state funding resources to ensure redevelopment continues throughout the target area. Below are funding vehicles that will be used.

³ April 2024, https://www.kmaland.com/news/red-oak-council-reviews-agreement-with-animal-alliance-rescue/article_3c4a60e2-fe56-11ee-9943-93f88bd433ed.html

Agency	Funding Purpose
EPA Region 7 Targeted Brownfield Assessment	Funding assistance to research historic property uses, conduct environmental sampling, identify cleanup options, and estimate associated cleanup costs at brownfield properties. Eligible applicants can access up to \$100,000 in technical assistance for eligible properties.
State of Iowa Economic Development	Tax credits of up to 24% for qualifying costs of a brownfield project and 30% if the project meets green building requirements.
Iowa Department of Natural Resource (IDNR)	IDNR Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) Grants are available to cover the cost of conducting a Phase I ESA or asbestos inspection. IDNR may also conduct a Phase II ESA on behalf of an eligible applicant.
Cleanup Cost-Share Grants	Cost-matching grants of up to 50% of the cost to clean up environmental contaminants including but not limited to, asbestos, petroleum, heavy metals, and solvents are available from the IDNR. Maximum cost share is \$25,000.

ii. Use of Existing Infrastructure: The City intends to use existing infrastructure at the priority sites and throughout the target area including water/sewer, transportation, and power. As a part of this grant project, an infrastructure evaluation will be budgeted for the purposes of a crosswalk at the memorial park (priority site 2). If additional infrastructure improvements are needed, the City and partners will pursue state and federal funding opportunities.

2. **COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

a. **Community Need** i. The Community's Need for Funding: Red Oak is a community with a **small population of 5,563 residents**.⁴ The community experiences low income as shown through their **low per capita income of \$31,896 and low median household income of \$50,984**, drastically lower than the US (\$41,261/\$75,149).⁴ Compounding this low income is a high unemployment rate of 8% (US 5%) and a dependence on government assistance food stamps at 21% (US 12%), showing that revitalization is needed to help raise the standard of living.⁴

The impoverished members of this community suffer from low income, and the taxes they pay provide necessary services for the community (police, fire, public works). In addition to basic services for the community, the City spends an additional \$100,000 annually due to the stray animal problem. There is no excess money to assess and clean up blighted properties throughout the target area. This grant will serve as a catalyst for Red Oak by addressing the blight, increasing the tax base through improved industry, and stimulating the economy for the long term. The City searched out the best option to address their brownfield challenges with funding options available through the state; however, the state programs are cost-matching programs. The City currently has no funding available to handle a cost share of a grant nor can it commit to environmental studies and remediation at contaminated facilities. The redevelopment and beautification of the Broadway Corridor will be possible with EPA Assessment funding because there is no cost share necessary. Revitalization of the target area will invite business and investment opportunities that will positively impact this underserved area and keep pace with the growth of similar commuter towns surrounding the Omaha metropolitan area that have the advantage of a higher tax base.

ii. Threats to Sensitive Populations (1) Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations: The sensitive populations in the target area include the **elderly, females, and the impoverished**. The target area has a large aging population, with **25% being 62 years of age and older and 7% being older than 80 years old** (US 20%/4%).⁴ Poverty runs rampant, with **19% of all people living below the poverty level** (US 13%).⁴ **Thirty-three percent (33%) of families with kids under the age of 18 live below the poverty level** (US 13%).⁴ **Women** make up 54% of the target-area population

⁴ US Census 2018–2022 American Community Survey.

(US 51%) with **66% of female head of household families with kids under 18** living below the poverty level (US 33%).⁵

These sensitive populations suffer from welfare issues such as high unemployment, lack of greenspace, and a stray animal problem. The target area suffers from a higher unemployment rate (8%) than the national average (5%) and is in the 68th percentile for those with less than a high school education.^{5,6} Redeveloping the priority sites into a park and animal shelter will create construction jobs and many full-time job opportunities tailored for different education levels, from vet techs and veterinarians to dog walkers. These new employment opportunities will increase the low incomes in the community, thereby increasing the tax base. The lack of greenspace on the west side of town will be addressed with the redevelopment of the priority site into a local park. Outdoor recreational activities will help to mitigate health issues such as **heart disease** (target area: **91st percentile for heart disease in the state**).⁶ The stray animal problem poses a serious health and welfare risk to all who live in the target area. Currently the City receives approximately 250 calls annually regarding this safety concern with each encounter costing between \$350 to \$400 dollars, totaling approximately \$100,000 on stray animal calls per year. Since this issue is on the rise, the City realizes the importance of protecting citizens from potentially diseased animals as well as reuniting lost pets with their families. To reduce the number of stray pets in the area, the reuse of the priority site into an animal shelter will also provide low-cost spay and neuter services and vaccinations. The socially vulnerable populace has difficulties making ends meet, so raising taxes to fund assessment and remediation in the Broadway Corridor is not an option. With the assistance of an EPA Brownfield Community-wide Assessment Grant, the planned redevelopment will alleviate these welfare issues.

(2) Greater Than Normal Incidence of Disease and Adverse Health Conditions: Within the target area, the **sensitive populations of the elderly (25%), females (54%), and people with disabilities (16%)** suffer disproportionately from disease and health conditions attributed to exposure to environmental concerns such as air emissions, hazardous substances, petroleum products, and chlorinated solvents.^{5,6} The elderly in Red Oak have had increased exposure to elevated air emissions and hazardous substances, which leads to them leaving the work force and relying on assistance programs. The target area is in the **77th percentile for asthma**.⁶ Iowa was ranked second highest of **cancer** rates in the country as the state exceeds the national average for lung cancer rates. These cancer rates are higher in areas downwind from coal plants.⁷ The target area is in the **91st percentile for cancer risk**.⁶ The compounding risks associated with living in the target area are evident as the **low life expectancy** rate puts the target area in the **78th percentile**.⁶ Hazardous substances and petroleum products associated with the priority sites in the target area are a cause for concern, especially when City residents have an elevated probability of contracting asthma (9.8%) and a highly elevated probability of contracting cancer (8.2%).⁶ EPA funding that will bring about assessment and if needed future remediation of target-area brownfield sites will help to lessen these negative health consequences affecting the sensitive populations.

(3) Environmental Justice (a) Identification of Environmental Justice Issues: **The target area and priority sites are in two Justice40 disadvantaged communities according to CEJST**. The many vacant target-area properties and their potential environmental concerns pose a serious threat to community health. It is essential for the City to advocate for these **disadvantaged community** residents. Climate and environmental factors affecting the target area perpetuate serious environmental justice (EJ) issues. These factors include **76th percentile for lead paint (US), 93rd**

⁵ US Census 2018–2022 American Community Survey.

⁶ EPA EJ Screen Report.

⁷ <https://iowaipr.org/2024/05/07/iowa-ipr-calls-on-midamerican-energy-to-shut-down-sioux-city-coal-plants-given-new-health-impact-study/>.

percentile for RMP facility proximity (US), 73rd percentile for hazardous waste proximity (state), and 66th percentile for proximity to USTs (state).⁶ As for the climate change burden, CEJST shows the target area is in the 95th percentile for population loss rate (due to natural hazards each year), 88th for projected wildfire risk, and 86th percentile for expected agriculture loss rate. Vacant and abandoned properties decrease taxable revenue and property values while increasing EJ issues such as **low income and distressed neighborhoods**, which can turn into larger environmental issues when climate change influences come into play. Obtaining the Assessment Grant will help reduce the EJ issues facing this underserved community.

(b) Advancing Environmental Justice: Industrial buyouts, takeovers, and shifts of the economy have led to numerous abandoned target-area properties, ongoing exposure to contaminants, and persistent poverty. Focusing on President Biden's Justice40 Initiatives, EPA Brownfield funding will address several EJ issues plaguing this community by **reducing the EJ burden, decreasing the number of abandoned and blighted properties, and creating new job opportunities** for the community. The redevelopment of the two priority sites into greenspace and an animal shelter with a low-cost spay–neuter clinic will begin to address the EJ issues and set the stage for revitalization, which will create an **improved standard of living**. The proposed reuse of the priority sites will improve the health and well-being of sensitive populations by providing residents the opportunity to work with and own pets, which has been shown to reduce loneliness and anxiety. The redevelopment will remedy health risks, the current limited access to greenspace, and transportation barriers by improving walkability at priority site 2 (park) affecting this underserved community. **None of the planned redevelopment discussed in this grant application will displace residents or businesses as both priority sites are vacant.** The City will use redevelopment strategies to prevent or minimize the potential of future displacement by encouraging developers to utilize vacant sites.

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

Name of Organization & Mission	Point of Contact	Specific Involvement in the Project or Assistance Provided
Montgomery County Development Corp. – Nonprofit 501(c)(4): Promote the County, grow a skilled intentional workforce, and provide residences with a low cost of living	Steve Adams, director@growmocoia.org	Assistance/Decision-Making: They will help with community outreach and recruit businesses/partners to the community by finding funding.
Red Oak Chamber and Industry Association: Promote Red Oak's economy, improve the quality of life, and represent our business community	Elaine Carlson ecarlson@redoakia.com	Assistance/Decision-Making: As a hub for local businesses, they will provide meeting space and find funding and partners for the grant execution.
Community Heart and Soul: Help small towns and cities in the US become stronger, healthier, and more economically vibrant	Samantha Williams Coordinator@roheartsoul.org	Assistance/Decision-Making: They will serve in connecting different demographics in the City and uniting citizens with a common goal of identifying what they love about their community, what they want for the future, and how to achieve it through future reuse planning .
Wellmark Foundation: Fund initiatives that improve the health of Iowans and South Dakotans	James Cushing cushingjk@wellmark.com	Assistance/Decision-Making: Specializing in mental health initiatives throughout Red Oak, Wellmark will assist with community health education as it relates to brownfield sites .
Animal Alliance Rescue: Save adoptable animals from euthanasia by placing them in	Tracy Hill, founder;	Assistance/Decision-Making: They will utilize the former No Frills building as an animal shelter and provide the community with a place to rehabilitate

foster homes or shelters where they can be rehabilitated and prepared for adoption.		animals. They will assist with outreach and future site reuse planning.
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iii. **Incorporating Community Input:** The City informed the public of its intent to pursue an EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant at the City Council meeting held on **May 6, 2024**. The City recognizes that working closely with community members is the key to implementing a successful Brownfields Program. The City will cultivate productive and thought-provoking interactions between target-area residents and community organizations while ensuring that the needs of the underserved community are being heard, especially those most affected by the brownfield project. The City has developed a **Brownfields Project Team (BPT)**, consisting of City staff, community business partners, nonprofits, and residents, who are responsible for providing direction and promoting the City's Brownfields Program. The **BPT** will communicate with the community and implement outreach activities, because they know citizens are most informed of the specific needs that are paramount to the success of its community. When community and resident comments or concerns are received, the BPT will review and respond to individuals within one week of receipt and post responses on the City's brownfield webpage. A **Community Involvement Plan (CIP)** will lay the foundation for outreach efforts, establish a schedule for activities, provide project background, and detail the list of key project players.

In addition to the City's current community meetings (online and in-person), a community-wide brownfield project kick-off informational meeting will notify target-area residents of assessment project commencement, present an anticipated project schedule, discuss the City's expectation of success for the Brownfield Program, and solicit community input. The City and BPT will host regular outreach activities to keep the community updated on project progress and provide a platform for public input on site information, site prioritization, and cleanup planning, with a focus on the underserved parts of the community. Community charrettes and visioning sessions will be used to develop plans for cleanup, reuse, and redevelopment. The City will collaborate with local schools to provide educational opportunities and promote interest and career development in the environmental sciences. The City will continue to communicate with residents through various forms of media (printed and online) throughout the life of its Brownfield Program and beyond. For those residents who do not have access to the internet, a project brochure will be distributed throughout the community at local churches, grocery stores, and areas of congregation. The Brownfield Program webpage will provide project news and information, and social media will provide real-time project updates, photos, news, and opportunities for public input.

3. TASK DESCRIPTIONS, COST ESTIMATES, AND MEASURING PROGRESS

Description of Tasks/Activities and Outputs:

Task 1: Outreach & Inventory	
i.	<i>Project Implementation:</i> The City's Brownfield (BF) Project Director with the assistance from their procured environmental contractor (EC) will develop a Community Involvement Plan (CIP), outreach materials, BF project website, social media posts, and host community meetings to keep the public informed about the project. The City will work with target-area residents during community meetings to create a site inventory for assessment. Abandoned and underused properties identified by target-area residents will be researched further by City staff using the property appraiser's website. Once a list is compiled, the EC will work with City staff to create an evaluation ranking tool to determine, with the help of residents, the order in which the sites will be addressed. Supplies: printing of outreach materials (brochures) and office supplies to manage the grant.
ii.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> CIP created in 1 st quarter. Meetings held in the 1 st and 3 rd quarters of Year 1–3 and in the 1 st quarter of Year 4. Website/outreach materials created in the 1 st quarter and posted quarterly throughout the grant. Community meeting held in the 1 st quarter will continue the preliminary site inventory. The evaluation ranking process will take place in the 2 nd quarter and continue throughout the grant.

iii.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> City: Lisa Kotter, City Administrator, Brownfield Project Director.
iv.	<i>Outputs:</i> CIP, BF website, 7 community meetings, brochures/handouts, social media posts, summary of community meetings in EPA-required quarterly reports, evaluation ranking tool, site inventory list.
Task 2: Assessment	
i.	<i>Project Implementation:</i> The EC will conduct Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) activities starting first with the two priority sites listed in this application. ASTM-AAI compliant Phase Is; Generic Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP); Phase IIs that will include the Site-Specific QAPP (SS-QAPP). Prior to assessment, site access agreements and property eligibility determinations approval will be obtained. National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 consultation will be addressed when applicable.
ii.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> Assessments take place in the 2 nd quarter and continue throughout the grant.
iii.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> EC will implement the technical aspects of the project with oversight from the City: Mayor Shawwna Silvius, Brownfield Project Manager.
iv.	<i>Outputs:</i> 13 Phase I ESAs; 1 Generic QAPP; 6 Phase II ESAs including SS-QAPP, site access agreements, property eligibility determinations, and Section 106 determinations (as needed).
Task 3: Reuse Planning	
i.	<i>Project Implementation:</i> For projects identified for cleanup, the EC will prepare the Analysis for Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA). Cleanup planning will include evaluating cleanup alternatives, calculating cleanup costs, and determining site-appropriate remediation and/or reuse planning to reduce health/environmental risks. The EC will assist the City in hosting charrettes/visioning sessions. A planner will create the following EPA-approved planning documents: Site Reuse Assessments, Climate Smart BF Plan, BF Revitalization Plan, a market study, and infrastructure evaluation.
ii.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> Plans & charrettes begin in the 6 th quarter and continue throughout the grant.
iii.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> The EC will implement the technical aspects of the project with oversight from the City: Lisa Kotter, City Administrator, Brownfield Project Director.
iv.	<i>Outputs:</i> 3 ABCAs, 2 Vision sessions/charrettes, 2 Site Reuse Assessments, 1 Market Study, 1 BF Revitalization Plan, 1 Climate Smart BF Plan, 1 Infrastructure Evaluation
Task 4: Programmatic Support	
i.	<i>Project Implementation:</i> The City's BF Project Team will procure an EC to assist with the grant project. The City's BF Manager oversees grant administration to ensure compliance with the EPA Cooperative Agreement work plan, schedule, and terms and conditions. The EC 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 City staff travel budget allows for two staff to attend three brownfield training/conference events.
ii.	<i>Anticipated Project Schedule:</i> Procure EC by 10/2025. ACRES & quarterly reporting begins in the 1 st quarter and continues throughout the grant. Annual reporting and forms created in quarters 5, 9, 13 and final closeout.
iii.	<i>Task/Activity Lead:</i> City: Mayor Shawwna Silvius, Brownfield Project Manager
iv.	<i>Outputs:</i> 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 events/trainings.

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, personnel and contractual costs only. No administrative costs are included. The personnel rate is an average of \$50 per hour including fringe. **Forty-eight (48%) percent of the budget will be spent on site-specific work and 36% on area-wide planning activities.**

Task 1 Outreach & Inventory: Personnel (\$50/hr): CIP \$2,000 (40 hrs); BF webpage, outreach brochure/handouts, social media posts \$1,500 (30 hrs); 7 Community education meetings/events \$7,000 (\$1,000 per mtg.; 20 hrs per meeting to include preparation and execution). Site Inventory \$2,500 (50 hrs). Contractual: CIP \$2,700 (18 hrs × \$150); BF website, outreach brochure/handouts, social media posts \$1,500 (10 hrs × \$150); 7 Community education events/meetings \$10,500

(\$1,500/meeting 10 hrs per event). BF Site Inventory and Evaluation Ranking Tool \$9,000 (60 hrs × \$150); **Supplies:** \$300 (printed brochures \$200 [200 pages × \$1.00]; printed display boards \$100 [1 × \$100]). **Task 2 Assessment: Personnel (\$50/hr):** Report Review \$1,000 (1 hr per report × 20 reports). **Contractual:** 13 Phase I ESAs \$4,800 each for a total of \$62,400; 1 Generic QAPP \$6,000; 6 Phase II ESAs including SS-QAPP at \$25,000 each for a total of \$150,000. **Task 3 Reuse Planning: Personnel (\$50/hr):** Vision Session \$1,000 (10 hrs per session, 2 sessions), Report Review \$900 (2 hr per report × 9 reports); **Contractual:** 3 ABCAs \$7,500 each for a total of \$22,500; 2 Visioning Sessions \$6,000 (\$3,000/meeting); 2 Site Reuse Assessment Plans \$30,000 each for a total of \$60,000 (Planner: 40 hrs × \$200; Market Analysts: 100 hrs × \$175; Environmental Professional: 30 hrs × \$150, 2 plans); 1 Market Study \$11,500 (Planner: 15 hrs × \$200, Market Analyst: 40 hrs × \$175, Environmental Planner: 10 hrs × \$150); 1 Infrastructure Evaluation \$8,000 (Engineer: 40 hrs × \$200); 1 BF Revitalization Plan \$80,000 (Planner: 120 hrs × \$200; Market Analysts: 200 hrs × \$175; Environmental Professional: 140 hrs × \$150). 1 Climate Smart BF Plan \$16,600 (Principal Planner: 39 hrs × \$200; Senior Planner: 34 hrs × \$125; Environmental Professional: 35 hrs × \$130). **Task 4 Programmatic Support: Personnel (\$50/hr):** \$7,500 (150 hrs) **Contractual:** ACRES database reporting, yearly financial reporting, quarterly reporting, MBE/WBE forms, programmatic support for the four-year period \$17,600 (110 hrs × \$160). **Travel:** 2 staff to attend 3 events \$12,000 (flights at \$800, hotels at \$300 × 3 nights, per diem at \$75 per day × 4 days × 2 attendees × 3 events).

Category	Tasks				Totals
	Outreach & Site Inventory	Assessment	Reuse Planning	Programmatic Support	
Personnel	\$13,000	\$1,000	\$1,900	\$7,500	\$23,400
Travel				\$12,000	\$12,000
Supplies	\$300				\$300
Contractual	\$23,700	\$218,400	\$204,600	\$17,600	\$464,300
TOTAL	\$37,000	\$219,400	\$206,500	\$37,100	\$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 grant team, which will include the environmental contractor, 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 projects schedule to ensure the grant project will be completed within the four-year time frame. Site-specific information will be entered and tracked in the ACRES database. The outputs to be tracked 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. In the event the project is not being completed in an efficient manner, the City has countermeasures in place to address this problem. The City will make monthly calls to its EPA project officer and if needed will create a corrective action plan to help the project to get back on schedule.

4. PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE

a. Programmatic Capability i. Organizational Capacity, ii. Organizational Structure, & iii.

Description of Key Staff: The City government comprises an elected mayor and five city council members. Through years of experience, the City has demonstrated its capacity and competency to manage federal and state-funded grant opportunities awarded for the benefit of their community.

The City's **Grant Team**, described below, and their supporting staff are more than capable to successfully manage this Brownfields Assessment Grant. Ms. Lisa Kotter, City Administrator, will serve as the **Brownfield Project Director**. Ms. Kotter has served as a city administrator for over 30 years and manages the day-to-day responsibilities of the city, which include economic development, planning, and budgeting. She has previously overseen multiple construction projects and will serve as the liaison between the grant team and Broadway Corridor property owners. She will be responsible for the overall management of the grant. She will be assisted by Mayor Silvius. Mayor Shawna Silvius will serve as the **Brownfield Project Manager**. Mayor Silvius has held the office of Mayor for three years, but her career has been in community and economic development for the past 25 years. In this career, she honed her skills on coordinating community partners for a wide range of projects, including working at a council of governments and economic development districts where she administered federal EDA grants. As an elected official, she sets the vision for the city while listening to the concerns of citizens and council members, which shows her ability to multitask, perform efficient work, and move seamlessly from subject to subject. Ms. Silvius will assist Ms. Kotter in the day-to-day activities of the grant. Ms. Ashley Wilson is the City Clerk and will serve as **Brownfield Finance Director**. Her career experience in the healthcare and construction industry in analyzing and organizing data for Community Transformation Grants will be useful to this grant project. She will be responsible for managing the finances of this grant and will complete all drawdowns through ASAP.gov. The EC will handle the technical and reporting portions of this project.

iv. Acquiring Additional Resources: Using local contracting requirements and procurement process, the City will procure a qualified environmental contractor to assist with technical and reporting portions of the Brownfield Community-wide Assessment, in addition to any other contractors needed to complete the project. The City will ensure compliance with the EPA's "Professional Service" procurement process. The City will promote strong labor practices, local hiring and procurement, and will link members of the community to potential employment opportunities for all brownfield-related redevelopment via community outreach practices and project updates to project partners.

b. Past Performance and Accomplishments ii. Has Not Received an EPA Brownfields Grant but has Received Other Federal or Non-Federal Assistance Agreements: (1) Purpose and Accomplishments: In 2020, the City received a \$788,883 USDA Community Facilities Funding Grant through the American Rescue Plan Act. With the funds, the City was able to purchase ambulances, complete the Eastern Avenue Reconstruction Project, improve their GIS mapping capabilities, Stormlet Reconstruction, and Oakwood Project. The City was in compliance with the guidelines of the grant and expended all funds by April 2024. In 2023, the EPA awarded the City a Technical Assistance Grant for the construction of the 1917 Lofts. This \$41,500 award was used to support a \$9 million project. The 1917 Lofts is a low-income, 25-unit, multifamily apartment building that was converted from a former middle school, located in the heart of the city. The apartment building will open to residents in November 2024 with all funds expended.

(2) Compliance with Grant Requirements: The City has a history of compliance with grant work plans, schedules, and terms and conditions and has an excellent history of timely reporting with all award agencies. The City is on schedule for all active grants. Ms. Kotter and the City's Grant Team are skilled in project management and will monitor all grant activities to ensure compliance with all financial reporting requirements. Based on their past successful grant reporting, the Team will be able to manage the ACRES database.



**City of Red Oak, IA
FY25 Brownfields Assessment Grant
Threshold Criteria**

Threshold Criteria

1. Applicant Eligibility

- a. The City of Red Oak, Iowa is eligible to apply for the EPA Brownfields Community-wide Assessment Grant as a unit of local government as defined under 2 CFR § 200.64.
- b. The City of Red Oak, Iowa is not exempt from Federal taxation under section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code.

2. Community Involvement

The City informed the public of its intent to pursue an EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant at the City Council meeting held on **May 6, 2024**, and it was unanimously approved by Council. The City knows that working closely with community members is the key to implementing a successful Brownfields Program. The City will cultivate productive and thought-provoking interactions between target-area residents and community organizations while ensuring that the needs of the underserved community are being heard, especially those most affected by the brownfield project. The City has developed a **Brownfields Project Team (BPT)**, consisting of City staff, community business partners, nonprofits, and residents, that is responsible for providing direction and promoting the Brownfields Program. The **BPT** will be critical in communicating with the community and implementing outreach activities, as they know that its citizens are most informed of the specific needs that are paramount to the success of its community. When community and resident comments or concerns are received, the BPT will review and respond to individuals within one week of receipt and post responses on the City's brownfield webpage. A **Community Involvement Plan (CIP)** will be developed, laying the foundation for outreach efforts, establishing a schedule for activities, providing project background, and detailing the list of key project players. Monthly meetings with the **BPT**, which includes the City's Mayor and Administrator will provide updates.

In addition to the City's current community meetings (online and in-person), a community-wide brownfields kick-off informational meeting will notify the community of assessment project commencement, present an anticipated project schedule, discuss the City's expectation of success for the Brownfields Program, and solicit community input. The City and BPT will host regular outreach activities to keep the community updated on project progress and provide a platform for public input on site information, site prioritization, and clean-up planning, with a focus on the underserved parts of the community. Community charrettes and visioning sessions will be utilized for the development of cleanup, reuse, and redevelopment plans. Site visioning will be implemented by the Mayor's Youth Advisory Council, Montgomery County Development Corporation, and other community partners. The City will collaborate with local schools to provide educational opportunities and promote interest and career development in the environmental sciences. The City will continue to communicate with the community with various forms of media (printed and online) throughout the life of its Brownfields Program and beyond, including a project brochure to be distributed throughout the community at local churches, grocery stores, library, City Hall, and areas of congregation, a project website to provide project news and information, and social media to provide real-time project updates, photos, news, and opportunities for public input.

3. Expenditure of Existing Grant Funds

The City of Red Oak affirms it does not have an active EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant or Multipurpose Grant.

4. Contractors and Named Subrecipients

Not Applicable.