

Narrative/Ranking Criteria – Community-Wide Proposal

1. Project Area Description and Plans for Revitalization

a. Target Area and Brownfields

i. Background and Description of Target Area

As an early-era manufacturing center in Western Massachusetts, the City of Chicopee has reflected many of the historic development trends of other similar communities. However in the post-industrial age the City manages its own unique array of assets and challenges. The built and economic environments of modern Chicopee depict a geographically and socioeconomically segregated population, fractured by highways, commercial corridors, urban blight, and Brownfields. The divided nature of Chicopee's neighborhoods has roots in the City's urbanization process, as it developed around five distinct population centers, including the three Industrial Villages: Chicopee Center, Chicopee Falls and Willimansett. The Target Area for Chicopee's 2019 Community-Wide Assessment grant proposal is the Industrial Villages ("the Villages").

The Industrial Villages were the engines that drove the economic growth of Chicopee for much of the 19th and 20th centuries. Chicopee Center was a planned community that developed around two major factories, one producing textiles and the other producing prefabricated metals, including military ordinances. The manufacturing capacity of Chicopee Falls eventually evolved to contribute to the transportation revolution of the late 1800s and early 1900s. On the northern end of the City, Willimansett developed in relation to the industrial activities of the City of Holyoke on the Connecticut River.

Beginning in the mid-1900s, however, the Villages were subjected to mass deindustrialization and suburban flight. Attempts at renewal in the mid-20th century left some of the City's once vibrant urban cores devoid of their original character, marred by surface parking lots and Brownfields. Today, the Industrial Villages are identifiable as areas exhibiting more concentrated development as compared to the surrounding suburban sprawl. The development of Westover Air Force Base continued to alter the City's economy and land use from the 1930s onward, accelerating disinvestment in the Villages and advancing the trend of suburban sprawl. Development of the City's major commercial and industrial corridors and three major highways isolated the Industrial Villages from the rest of the City. Development spread across most of the City's land, leaving little open space. The City's future growth is dependent on promoting infill development in its urban cores, which requires the assessment and cleanup of Brownfield sites.

ii. Description of the Priority Brownfield Site(s)

Chicopee is home to a diverse array of Brownfield sites, a vast majority of which are located in the Industrial Villages. The scale and characteristics of Brownfields in the Villages range from former industrial buildings occupying 30-acre parcels to small lots formerly used as workshops or dump sites. In most cases, the largest Brownfields in Chicopee have already benefitted from assessment and cleanup work, including some sites which are in various stages of redevelopment. This Community-Wide Assessment grant proposal focuses on assessing the stock of small to medium sized Brownfields in the Industrial Villages that have yet to benefit from assessment under the City's Brownfields program.

Brownfields degrade the quality of life in the Industrial Villages. Many of the City's remaining Brownfield sites are small lots which exist in close proximity to where people live, work and shop. These smaller sites are woven into the fabric of dense residential neighborhoods in the Industrial Villages, depressing property values of abutting lots and casting doubt on the soils and groundwater conditions throughout the neighborhood.

An example of Brownfields which are the subject of this Assessment grant proposal are two City-owned parcels separated by one block in one of the most disinvested corners of Chicopee Center. One of the parcels, located on Leonard Street, is a quarter acre vacant lot. The other lot, located on Emerald Street, is about a tenth of an acre. Both parcels are suspected dump sites. They also both abut an interstate highway, and are potentially contaminated with runoff of petroleum and other hazardous materials. Sites such as these will be prioritized as the primary targets of assessment work and cleanup planning.

b. Revitalization of the Target Area

i. Redevelopment Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans

The City of Chicopee's Community-Wide Assessment will build upon the City's ongoing revitalization efforts in the Industrial Villages. These neighborhoods hold tremendous redevelopment potential and could become vibrant, walkable neighborhoods with a variety of housing options, commercial uses, and public amenities. However, the Villages' industrial history has left a legacy of blight and pollution. Recognizing both the benefits and challenges of revitalizing its Industrial Villages, the City has planned extensively for these neighborhoods' redevelopment. Plans have consistently cited Brownfields remediation as a critical component of revitalization efforts.

In **Chicopee Center**, the West End Brownfields Area-Wide Plan (AWP) set forth a vision for revitalizing a historic section of the City's downtown. The AWP charts a path toward improved economic and environmental health, identifying 15 Brownfields properties with high reuse potential. Targeted Brownfields include: the 12.29 acre Cabotville Mill Complex, a languishing mill property with 750,000 SF of building space; the 17.08 acre Delta Park, which, with assessment and remediation, could offer valuable riverfront greenspace, and; several properties that line the Dwight Manufacturing Company Canal that could be redeveloped to extend the City's Canal and Riverwalk and connect to the regional bike path network.

In **Chicopee Falls**, revitalization planning has focused on redeveloping the 65-acre former Facemate/Uniroyal complex, an abandoned manufacturing facility contaminated with hazardous materials. The RiverMills Vision, a joint project of the City of Chicopee and MassDevelopment, proposed redevelopment scenarios for the riverfront property. Vision goals included creating riverfront recreational opportunities and galvanizing mixed use development. Part of the site has been successfully remediated and now hosts the City's Senior Center. An assisted living facility is also planned for construction onsite. The City continues to rehabilitate the remainder of the complex, with EPA Brownfields site-cleanup funding. The Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC), in its 2014 Pioneer Valley Regional Brownfield Plan, identified Chicopee Falls as part of the Chicopee Center-Chicopee Falls Area of Brownfields Interest (ABI).⁷ When realized, the RiverMills Vision will benefit an underserved community by providing opportunities for active recreation, improved environmental health, and local job growth. Environmental assessments on

other Chicopee Falls Brownfields will establish a broader understanding of Brownfield contamination, setting the stage for neighborhood-wide revitalization.⁸

In **Willimansett** the Environmental Justice Initiative, Chicopee (EJIC) inventoried Brownfields, with the goal of improving safety and quality of life within the high minority, low-income, and non-English speaking neighborhood. The EJIC was a joint effort between the City and Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). The EJIC included site visits to 89 potential Brownfields properties. Potential Brownfields were identified by referencing state databases of known contaminant releases, through conversation with City staff, and through community outreach to Willimansett residents and leaders. The EJIC demonstrated that community engagement is critical to gain a comprehensive picture of Brownfields properties. The EJIC identified many Brownfields eligible for Phase I and Phase II assessments.

Activities for which this proposal requests funding will build upon neighborhood and site-scale Brownfields projects and stitch them into a cohesive strategy. The City's Community-Wide Assessment will:

1. Design and implement a community engagement plan, to inform site prioritization;
2. Conduct Phase I Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs) on high-priority hazardous material and petroleum Brownfields sites;
3. Conduct Phase II ESAs on the highest priority Brownfields sites, identified through Phase I assessment work; and
4. Develop clean-up plans for eligible sites.

These activities, their outputs, and outcomes will be described in detail below, under section **3.a.**, "**Description of Tasks and Activities**"

ii. **Outcomes and Benefits of Redevelopment Strategy**

The City will leverage past planning work and ongoing revitalization initiatives when formulating redevelopment plans for properties assessed under the Community-Wide Assessment. While the individual circumstances of sites selected for assessment will drive particular redevelopment scenarios, a rich body of planning work will support decisions regarding Brownfields reuse. The following plans represent some of the City's key Brownfields redevelopment goals and strategies, especially as those goals and strategies relate to leveraging existing infrastructure.

- **The West End Brownfields AWP:** This EPA-funded plan developed reuse scenarios for a range of brownfields in Chicopee Center. The AWP establishes several redevelopment goals, emphasizing the reuse of historic mill structures to provide a variety of downtown housing options. The AWP also proposes the extension of the Chicopee Canal and RiverWalk, a scenic pedestrian pathway that runs along a portion of the Dwight Manufacturing Company Canal.
- **The West End MassWorks Infrastructure Project:** In support of planned West End redevelopment, the City applied for MassWorks Infrastructure funds for a comprehensive restructuring of utility lines and associated connections to the historic mill buildings within the West End corridor. The City's intent in pursuing this project is to advance site

predevelopment work in anticipation of the Lyman Mills (Dwight Manufacturing) the Cabotville mill building conversion into housing. Environmental assessments along the project route would capitalize on these infrastructure improvements, helping prepare adjacent Brownfields for redevelopment.

- **A Vision for Lower Front Street:** The City aims to integrate redeveloped Chicopee Center Brownfields into a vibrant neighborhood with an inviting streetscape and accessible infrastructure. In support of that objective, the City commissioned the Conway School of Landscape Design to create a design concept for Lower Front Street, a corridor in the West End of Chicopee Center. The Vision proposes the development of green infrastructure. Green infrastructure would include expanded tree plantings and bioretention basins, which would reduce storm water runoff and combined sewer overflow discharge events.

c. Strategy for Leveraging Resources

i. Resources Needed for Site Reuse

..1.. Sentence about eligibility for monetary funding from other resources

..2.. Sentence about how the grant will stimulate the availability of additional funds for environmental assessment or remediation and subsequent reuse

..3.. The City, through its Department of Planning & Development, actively seeks grant resources that may apply to the advancement of this project and reduce the overall resources needed from the EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant program.

UPDATE:

Figure VIII: Leveraged Resources

Source	Purpose/Role	Amount	Status
Department of Planning & Development	In-Kind Services for Developing Community-Wide Brownfields Inventory	\$3,000	Secured Resource
Pioneer Valley Planning Commission	Supplemental Assessment Funds from Regional Brownfields Program	various	Pending Resource
MassDevelopment	Supplemental Assessment Funds from MassDevelopment Brownfields Fund	various	Pending Resource

ii. Use of Existing Infrastructure

REVIEW AND UPDATE:

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2. Community Need and Community Engagement

a. Community Need

i. The Community’s Need for Funding

Brownfields in the Industrial Villages compound the negative impacts of prolonged, concentrated disinvestment in the Villages’ urban cores. Brownfield sites interrupt pedestrian navigability, contribute to a climate of decay and disinvestment, preclude use as productive land, and pose health hazards to neighboring residents. The Industrial Villages are densely populated neighborhoods, with higher concentrations of vulnerable residents than the City, State and National averages.

The risk posed by Brownfields to the Villages is of primary concern due to the economic and social conditions of the neighborhoods. U.S. Census data depicts a population at risk living in the Industrial Villages. Figure III shows a proportion of veterans and disabled people approximating local averages. However, Figure III displays a higher than average minority population. Additionally in Figure III, the rate of single female householders with children under 18 is nearly twice the State and National rate.

According to Census data, the Industrial Villages have higher rates of residents without a high school diploma or college degree (Figure IV). Further, the unemployment rate in the Villages exceeds local and National averages. The Industrial Villages’ median household income is about \$25,000 lower than that of the State. The combined per capita income of the Industrial Villages is under two-thirds that that of the State (see Figure IV).

The majority of Village residential building stock is renter-occupied. Over 50% of Village housing was built before 1939, more than four times the National rate (Figure V). The costs associated with an aging building stock are often passed to tenants and homeowners.

ii. Threats to Sensitive Populations

(1) Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations

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

(3) Economically Impoverished/Disproportionately Impacted Populations

b. Community Engagement

i. Community Involvement

The City's Community Involvement Plan will consist of collaboration with the community partners and business owners who will consult with the Assessment Stakeholders Committee. This group will pursue community engagement tactics through the City's Brownfields website (H.E.A.L. Chicopee) and dissemination of informational materials across the city. The City has an interest in using modern technology to communicate with the public. The City's Brownfields website will include a feedback mechanism for visitors to ask questions and submit ideas or concerns.

ii. Incorporating Community Input

In alignment with the City's goals for transparency, the Department of Planning & Development consistently performs its due diligence in regards to acceptance of public comment and public notification of U.S. EPA Grant submissions, awards and subsequent Brownfields-related activities. Planning Department staff has addressed language barriers by preparing planning materials in English and Spanish while also offering to translate to Portuguese and Polish. The City is able to accommodate those with special needs such as visual and hearing impairment.

3. Task Descriptions, Cost Estimates, and Measuring Progress

a. Description of Tasks and Activities

Task I: Cooperative Agreement Oversight

Task I includes the cost of two City Officials travelling to the National Brownfields Conference in 2019. Those officials will also participate in regional Brownfields related trainings. The City will commit CDBG and local funds to cover staff time to fulfill the necessary reporting requirements to the U.S. EPA, allowing more grant funds to be applied to site assessments. The City of Chicopee will not use any funds for administrative purposes as prohibited by U.S. EPA. Outputs and Outcomes: A compilation of materials from the National Brownfields Conference or Brownfields-related trainings to share with City Officials and Staff, creation of a project information repository, all required reports for submittal to the U.S. EPA including a final Analysis of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA), Community Relations Plan (CRP), quarterly reports, ACRES reporting and funding drawdown requests.

TASK II: Community Engagement Plan and Site Prioritization

The Department of Planning and Development is operating a Brownfields website (H.E.A.L. Chicopee) which requires regular updating regarding the status of assessment projects. This task will also include developing materials to disseminate information to community partners, property and business owners. Holding public meetings and Stakeholder Committee Meetings will also be a component of engagement and outreach.

Outputs and Outcomes: A responsive H.E.A.L. Chicopee website with regular updates on assessment activities will be the City's primary channel of communication. Pamphlets and informational materials for public distribution will be additional outputs from this task.

TASK III: Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs)

The City will work with its Licensed Site Professional (LSP) to conduct Hazardous Materials Phase I ESAs and Petroleum Phase I ESAs. The proportion of funds allocated to the assessment of Hazardous Materials will be roughly twice as much as per Petroleum assessment, reflecting the ratio of funds requested per category in the Assessment grant proposal. ESAs will be

completed in accordance with the current American Society of Testing Materials (ASTM) standards and the EPA’s “All Appropriate Inquiry” Rule. Results from Phase I ESAs will inform site selection for Phase II assessments. A Site-Specific Quality Assurance Project Plan (SSQAPP) will also be prepared for each of the sites selected for Phase II Assessment.

Outputs and Outcomes: The Phase I & II Assessments will confirm or negate the presence of hazardous materials and petroleum and will determine the extent of all identifies contaminants on each property. This will then assist in the preparation of cleanup plans and possible Brownfields Cleanup Grant proposals.

TASK IV: Cleanup and Reuse Planning

The City and selected LSP will conduct cleanup planning at each of the Phase II assessment sites. All cleanup planning work will be directly informed by Phase II assessment findings. Planning Department staff will work closely with the LSP to develop cleanup plans that will outline a cleanup strategy targeted toward conceptual reuse and redevelopment scenarios.

Outputs and Outcomes: Cleanup planning will result in an Analysis of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA) and conceptual Remediation Action Plans (RAP). The RAPs will be completed following all of MassDEP’s guidelines as defined in Chapter 21e of the Massachusetts Contingency Plan. Plans will take into account reuse and redevelopment strategies as proposed during past City revitalization plans.

b. Cost Estimates and Outputs

** NEED TO MOVE FROM ABOVE TASKS **

c. Measuring Environmental Results

Outputs: The City will take a proactive approach to the management of its Assessment program. Utilizing the LSP as a resource for tracking progress in a responsive manner, the City will also utilize the Work Plan as a scheduling tool to advance the stages of the project. The ultimate output from the assessment process will be the reports from Phase I and Phase II which will delineate the nature and extent of contamination if any is discovered, which will then allow the City to prioritize cleanup planning or assist property owners with redevelopment.

Outcomes: The Brownfields targeted for assessment will be prioritized according to potential for reuse. The ultimate outcome from assessment activities in the City will be the immediate redevelopment of the property by the City or current owner or the transfer of property to a private interest for redevelopment. Often assessment work leads directly to transfer of property to a private developer for redevelopment.

4. Programmatic Capability and Past Performance

a. Programmatic Capability

- i. Organizational Structure
- ii. Acquiring Additional Resources

b. Past Performances and Accomplishments

- i. Currently Has or Previously Received an EPA Brownfield Grant
 - (1) Accomplishments

The City was a successful grantee during the U.S. EPA Brownfields Pilot assessment program, receiving a total of \$200,000 beginning in 1996. The City successfully pursued assessment activities in compliance with all grant requirements and completed all necessary reporting obligations. The grant was closed on January 19, 2001. The projects listed below received funding and are listed as “Success Stories” on U.S. EPA’s website.

Former Bay State Wire Company (1996) – An initial Brownfields Pilot Assessment grant of \$59,000. Assessment work confirmed the presence of trichloroethylene (TCE), oil, grease and cadmium in the site’s soil and groundwater. These activities led to a \$310,000 cleanup effort, funded with CDBG resources. The property was then sold to a private developer for redevelopment as office space.

Former Conway Bedding/Hallahan Lumber (1997) – Additional \$30,000 in Assessment funds. Completed assessments led to cleanup and demolition activities supported with CDBG resources. The site was sold to an affiliate of CNBC who constructed an \$8 million digital broadcasting station for Channel 22 News.

Former J.G. Roy Lumber (1998) – \$111,000 in Assessment funds. This site received \$41,600 for assessment activities. The property was then sold to J. Polep Distribution, who completed remediation activities and demolished existing structures for expansion. The City assisted with cleanup by providing a CDBG loan.

Former Tri-City Cleaners (2000) – Additional \$35,000 for Assessment activities. A tax foreclosure, this site had a documented 67 year history of contamination. Assessments were completed by 2000 and with the support of CDBG & other City/State funds the property was redeveloped as a local Department of Motor Vehicle (DMV) branch.

(2) Compliance with Grant Requirements

The City of Chicopee more recently was successful in securing the following U.S. EPA Brownfields Grants:

- FY2012 – Three Cleanup Grants, 10/1/2012 – 09/30/2015; (final closeout documents submitted to U.S. EPA in December 2015). The grants supported the abatement of three Uniroyal buildings that were then demolished.
- FY2012 – One Community-Wide Assessment Grant, 10/01/2012 – 06/30/2017; Over seven properties were assessed under this grant.
- FY2013 – One Cleanup Grant, 10/01/2013 – 09/30/2016; Work was completed ahead of schedule and close out documents submitted to U.S. EPA in December 2016.
- FY2014 – Two Cleanup Grants, 10/01/2014 – 09/30/2017; Projects were completed during the project period. Grants addressed cleanup of contaminated rail bed soils and contaminated, buried demolition debris.
- FY2015 – One Cleanup Grant (Petroleum Only), 10/01/2015 – 09/30/2018; Project completed cleanup in summer 2017. The grant addressed the cleanup of petroleum contaminated soil and groundwater at a former auto-service station.
- FY2016 – Three Cleanup Grants, 10/01/2016 – 9/30/2019; Project is in beginning stage of implementation. These grants will address the remediation of hazardous materials in three buildings on the Uniroyal site and prepare for their ultimate demolition.
- FY 2017 – Three Cleanup Grants, 10/01/2017 – 9/30/2020; Project is in preliminary stage of implementation. These grants will address the remediation of hazardous materials in three buildings on the Uniroyal site and prepare for their ultimate demolition.

