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# CITY OF OTTAWA

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301 W. MADISON STREET, OTTAWA, ILLINOIS 61350



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October 12, 2007

Mr. Don West  
Environmental Management Support, Inc.  
8601 Georgia Avenue, Suite 500  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Ms. Deborah Orr  
EPA Region V  
77 West Jackson Boulevard  
Chicago, IL 60604-3507

Dear Mr. West and Ms. Orr:

On behalf of the City of Ottawa, I am pleased to submit this application for a \$200,000 Community-wide Brownfields Grant for Petroleum Assessment. This grant proposal—one of two grant proposals being submitted by Ottawa this year—is a resubmission of an application that was not funded last year. Our priority brownfield sites are ready for redevelopment, yet we greatly need financial assistance to overcome the environmental obstacles to attract private investment. We ask for your earnest consideration of this proposal.

As a small community, we recognize the obstacle that brownfields create in our work to promote economic growth, environmental restoration, and social equity. We also realize that federal resources to invest in brownfields assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment initiatives are highly limited. These resources must be targeted to communities that are most committed to addressing brownfields and can demonstrate the greatest capacity for doing so.

To position ourselves as one of these communities, we commissioned the *Ottawa Brownfields Redevelopment Prioritization Strategy*, adopted by City Council in October 2006, to focus our brownfield redevelopment efforts on sites with the greatest potential to be redeveloped and achieve our community's goals. Most of the highest priority sites identified in this *Strategy* are concentrated in our Downtown and along our riverfront. Specifically, we identified several sites within and adjacent to the "Jordan Block" which is a key redevelopment priority for our community located in the heart of our Downtown. The buildings in this block were destroyed by a fire in 1998, and the block has been vacant ever since. Consequently, we view redevelopment of this block and adjacent sites as an important catalyst for breathing new life into our Downtown.

Other priority brownfield sites are located along Marquette Street—a historically industrial corridor of the community that runs parallel to the I&M Canal State Trail. This corridor demonstrates a clearly visible need for reinvestment, and has great potential for redevelopment due to its central location and its proximity to the canal.

Applicant Identification: City of Ottawa, 301 W. Madison St., Ottawa, IL 61350

Funding Request: \$200,000 Community-wide Petroleum Assessment Grant

Location: City of Ottawa, LaSalle County, Illinois

Chief Executive: Robert Eschbach, Mayor, 301 W. Madison St., Ottawa, IL 61350, Phone: (815) 433-0161, Fax (815) 433-2270, mayor@il-ottawa.com

Project Contact: David Noble, Director of Community Development, 301 W. Madison St., Ottawa, IL 61350, Phone: (815) 433-0161, Fax (815) 433-2270, cityengineer@il-ottawa.com

Submittal Date: October 12, 2007

Project Period: October 1, 2008 – September 30, 2011

Population: 18,307 (U.S. Census 2000)

Other: The City of Ottawa is not a federally recognized tribe, recognized Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Community, or federally recognized Renewal Community.

Cooperative Partners: The following partners will play the most direct role in helping us advance our Brownfields Redevelopment Initiative. Additional government agencies, officials, organizations, and individuals who support our efforts are described in Section G.

*City of Ottawa Brownfields Redevelopment Advisory Committee:* Nancy Stisser (815) 433-0161

*Illinois Environmental Protection Agency Bureau of Land:* Gary King (217) 785-9407

[Add others once support letters received]

We hope that this application demonstrates the evident community need for brownfields assessment funding in Ottawa and the corresponding clear redevelopment potential offered by our highest priority sites.

Please do not hesitate to contact me to learn more about Ottawa’s Brownfields Redevelopment Initiative. I greatly appreciate your support and consideration for this 2007 USEPA Community-wide Petroleum Assessment Grant proposal.

Sincerely,

Robert M. Eschbach, Mayor  
City of Ottawa, Illinois

## **THRESHOLD CRITERIA FOR ASSESSMENT GRANTS**

### **A. Applicant Eligibility**

The City of Ottawa is an incorporated municipality of Illinois and has the authority to enter into a cooperative agreement with U.S. EPA.

### **B. Letter from the State or Tribal Environmental Authority**

Please see Appendix 2 for a Letter of Acknowledgement from Gary King, Manager, Division of Remediation Management, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency Bureau of Land.

### **C. Site Eligibility and Property Ownership Eligibility**

Not applicable. Eligibility Determination Forms will be submitted for each of the priority sites in Ottawa's Brownfields Redevelopment Initiative upon award of a Community-wide Petroleum Assessment Grant.

## **RANKING CRITERIA FOR ASSESSMENT GRANTS**

### **A Assessment Grant Proposal Budget**

<b>BUDGET CATEGORIES (Programmatic costs only)</b>	<b>Task 1: QAPP and HASP</b>	<b>Task 1: Phase I ESAs</b>	<b>Task 2: Phase II ESAs</b>	<b>Task 3: Remedial Planning</b>	<b>Task 4: Health Study</b>	<b>Task 5: Community Involvement</b>	<b>Task 6: Eligible Programmatic Activities</b>	<b>Total Costs</b>
<b>Personnel</b>								
<b>Travel</b>							\$3,000	\$3,000
<b>Equipment</b>								
<b>Contractual<sup>1</sup></b>	\$3,000	\$18,000	\$101,000	\$40,000	\$10,000	\$5,000		\$177,000
<b>Other: IEPA SRP<sup>2</sup></b>			\$10,000	\$10,000				\$20,000
<b>USEPA Grant Total</b>	<b>\$3,000</b>	<b>\$18,000</b>	<b>\$111,000</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>	<b>\$3,000</b>	<b>\$200,000</b>
<b>City In-kind Match Total</b>					\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$15,000
<b>Project Total</b>	<b>\$3,000</b>	<b>\$18,000</b>	<b>\$111,000</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>	<b>\$15,000</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>	<b>\$8,000</b>	<b>\$215,000</b>

1 Ottawa will follow all federal procurement procedures when hiring project consultants.

2 Illinois EPA's Site Remediation Program operates as a fee-based system whereby SRP Project Managers provide review, oversight, and approval of environmental assessment and cleanup projects and reports. There is a \$500 enrollment fee per site.

*Task 1:* For \$3,000, we will develop and seek approval by EPA of two multi-site plans: a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) and a Health and Safety Plan.

*Task 2:* Based on the *Ottawa Brownfields Redevelopment Prioritization Strategy*, we have identified seven top priority parcels for assessment of petroleum. Subject to USEPA's approval of Eligibility Determination forms and also IEPA's approval, since these are petroleum sites, we anticipate funding Phase I ESAs at seven sites, for \$2,000 - \$3,000 per Phase I ESA, which satisfy the requirements of EPA's All Appropriate Inquiry. Six of the priority sites are within our Downtown, within and proximate to the "Jordan Block" (a priority redevelopment area in the 500 block of LaSalle Street). The seventh site is located in the Marquette Street Corridor, a historically industrial area that runs through the center of our community.

*Task 3:* We will conduct Phase II ESAs at sites with Recognized Environmental Conditions (estimated for purposes of budgeting as 3 to 7 sites for \$15,000 to \$40,000 per Phase II ESA). All properties evaluated

using these USEPA grant funds will be enrolled in Illinois EPA's Voluntary Site Remediation Program (SRP). Up to \$10,000 of these funds will be used to pay SRP fees for review of Phase II ESAs.

*Task 4:* Upon completion of Phase II ESAs, we will conduct remedial planning through the development of Remedial Objectives Reports/Remedial Action Plans (ROR/RAPs) at sites with identified remediation needs (estimated for purposes of budgeting as 3 to 7 sites, for \$12,000 - \$15,000 per ROR/RAP). Up to \$10,000 of these funds will be used to pay SRP fees for review and approval of ROR/RAPs.

*Task 5:* Up to \$10,000 of grant funding will be used to monitor the impact of brownfields on the health of local residents. These funds will be matched by a contribution of \$5,000 of City staff time as well as the efforts of our local health partners. Details of the proposed health study are included in Section H2.

*Task 6:* Funds for this task will be used to facilitate community involvement in our Brownfields Redevelopment Initiative. Specifically, this task will fund: (1) facilitation of quarterly BRAC meetings (twelve meetings over the three-year period) by project consultants; (2) production of six semi-annual project fact sheets; (3) facilitation of at least three community-wide meetings to update residents on project progress; and (4) participation by project consultants in negotiations with property owners regarding site access and reuse plans. Although not required, we will provide a minimum of \$5,000 worth of in-kind staff time by organizing and facilitating the above-referenced meetings.

*Task 7:* To ensure that our City staff is armed with information on the most up-to-date approaches to brownfields assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment, this budget category will fund attendance of the City's Community Development Director at state and federal brownfields conferences. Other eligible programmatic activities including coordination with USEPA, preparation of quarterly reports, and preparation of annual financial status reports, will be done by City staff as an in-kind contribution to our Brownfields Redevelopment Initiative.

## **B. Community Need**

**B1.** The City of Ottawa is a small municipality of 18,307 (U.S. Census 2000), located approximately 80 miles southwest of the metropolitan Chicago area. As a small city, our municipal budget is quite limited and we are ineligible for some funding sources available to larger communities such as HUD CDBG formula grants. Consequently, funding from USEPA for brownfields assessment is critical in our work to spark investment in our community.

Not only is Ottawa a small community, but our economic well-being is largely tied to the industrial sector which makes us vulnerable in today's "new economy" of knowledge jobs. We are taking forward strides to diversify our economy, but have been greatly impacted by events such as the downturn of manufacturing jobs which has resulted in the loss of over 50,000 manufacturing jobs in Illinois in the last three years. Our economic development efforts are then further hindered by the expansive presence of brownfields in Ottawa.

Because this is a community-wide application, the broad target community for this grant is the City as a whole. However, we recognize that the brownfields in our community are concentrated in certain areas, and consequently addressing these sites will have a stronger impact on residents within and adjacent to these areas.

We examined the demographic characteristics of the area of our community where the majority of the City's brownfields are concentrated—in Downtown and along the Marquette Street Industrial Corridor—and compared these characteristics to the City, County and State. As illustrated in Table 1, the target area demonstrates a higher poverty level, higher minority population, higher proportion of female-headed households with children, higher unemployment rate, lower household income, and lower home value than the City, County, or even the State of Illinois. These characteristics are magnified in the core of our Downtown, where the majority of our priority brownfields are located.

The target area for this grant—our historic urban core—is also not experiencing the same level of investment as our urban fringe. Consequently, our Brownfields Redevelopment Initiative aims to proactively target reinvestment in our Downtown and historic industrial core so that investment in our community is more equitably distributed.

**Table 1. Demographic Profile**

Demographic Characteristics <sup>1</sup>	Target Area <sup>2</sup>	Downtown Core <sup>3</sup>	City of Ottawa	LaSalle County	State of Illinois
<b>Population</b>	5,186	642	18,353	111,509	12,419,293
<b>% Population living below poverty level</b>	12.1%	26.9%	11.3%	9.1%	10.7%
<b>% Minority</b>	9.9%	23.4%	7.7%	8.2%	32.2%
<b>% Female-headed household with children</b>	10.1%	25.9%	11.5%	7.9%	9.8%
<b>% Unemployed</b>	8.2%	10.6%	6.6%	5.4%	6.0%
<b>Median household income</b>	\$33,639	\$22,096	\$36,513	\$40,308	\$46,590
<b>Median home value</b>	\$79,035	\$59,500	\$87,500	\$87,000	\$130,800

1 Source: US Census 2000

2 Target Area defined by the following Census Block Groups: Tract 9626 Block 3, Tract 9626 Block 4, Tract 9627 Block 2, Tract 9627 Block 3, Tract 9628 Block 1.

3 Downtown Core defined as Block 2 of Census Tract 9627

**B2.** Cleaning up and redeveloping brownfields in our Target Area will result in considerable benefits to our community’s economic, social, and environmental well-being. The expected benefits of assessing brownfields in Ottawa include:

- Spurring economic growth by increasing property values and creating new businesses and jobs;
- Reducing risks to human health and the environment by identifying and cleaning up contamination that is potentially impacting our soil, groundwater, and the invaluable Fox and Illinois Rivers;
- Bringing new life to our Downtown and riverfront by expanding entertainment, shopping, housing, and gathering spaces;
- Promoting reinvestment in the areas of our community that are characterized by lower home values and higher concentrations of low-income and minority residents than the City as a whole;
- Encouraging expanded recreational use and ecological restoration of the Fox and Illinois Rivers;
- Promoting use of the I&M Canal State Trail and completing the Ottawa Riverwalk; and
- In the long term, re-watering segments of the I&M Canal as a major tourism and economic driver.

**B3.** As part of the *Ottawa Brownfields Redevelopment Prioritization Strategy*, we identified over 300 brownfields totaling over [need to determine] acres located throughout the community, concentrated in our Downtown and industrial Marquette Street Corridor. This amounts to [determine]% of the total land area of Ottawa. This is an overwhelming extent of brownfields for a community of our size. We have witnessed or suspect the following impacts of these sites on our small community:

Economic impacts: The property values in our Target Area are lower than other areas of the City. This is evidenced for residential properties in Table 1 as median housing values are 10% lower than the City as a whole in the Target Area, and 32% lower in our Downtown Core. Brownfields have also been obstacles in our work to spur reinvestment in Ottawa, particularly in Downtown and along the Riverfront, as developers have foregone investment at sites with clear redevelopment opportunity due to concerns of environmental contamination.

Health impacts: Ottawa residents have witnessed firsthand the impacts to human health that can result from exposure to hazardous substances. Ottawa is nationally known as “Radium City” following the 1987

documentary by the same name that unveiled the tragic deaths resulting from radium poisoning in female employees of the Radium Dial Company and Luminous Process Incorporated in the 1920's and 30's. These employees, who painted watch dials and other luminous equipment with radium-containing paint, often moistened the tip of their brushes with their mouths, resulting in prolonged, direct exposure and potential ingestion. The radium problem in Ottawa impacted our soil at the sites of these operations and at sites where these buildings, when demolished, were disposed of, resulting in sixteen sites listed on the USEPA National Priorities List. Although nine of the sixteen sites have been cleaned up by USEPA, the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry indicated in the last public health assessment of the sites that exposure to soil in these remaining sites poses a public health hazard. The impact of these Superfund sites has greatly heightened Ottawa residents' awareness of human and environmental health concerns associated with environmental contamination. Consequently, as we work to assess environmental conditions at our priority brownfield sites, it will be critically important to identify potential impacts to human health and to communicate these impacts and plans to address them to the community.

Environmental impacts: While impacts to human health have historically been at the forefront of the City's and citizens' concerns with brownfield and Superfund site impacts, we recognize the far-reaching and long-term impacts that brownfields can have on the health of our ecosystem. Many of the sites identified as brownfields in Ottawa are located along our riverfront where two major Illinois rivers meet—the Illinois and the Fox—reflecting the historic use of rivers as discharge areas for industrial waste. Additionally, these intensive riverfront uses have contributed to shoreline and habitat degradation. Brownfields in our community especially impact the environmental quality of communities downstream from us and the precious natural features that we share with our regional neighbors—including a wildlife refuge, Starved Rock State Park (the most-visited State park in Illinois), as well as several other State parks.

### **C. Site Selection Process**

**C1.** We recognize that addressing all of potential brownfield sites in our community is not possible; consequently, we prioritized them based on redevelopment feasibility, environmental concern, and community goals. This prioritization process is described in further detail in Section C2. Our priority sites are concentrated in Downtown and along the Marquette Street Corridor—the aging industrial corridor that extends through the core of our City.

We believe that all of our priority sites are eligible for assessment funding per USEPA regulations and are not categorized within the classes of sites requiring a Property-Specific Determination. However, to ensure that sites selected for environmental assessment activities meet the statutory requirements associated with these funds, our environmental consultant will evaluate each site based on all of USEPA's eligibility determination criteria, and will then seek approval of this eligibility determination from our USEPA Project Manager prior to conducting assessment, as well as from IEPA, since these are petroleum sites. If any of our sites are deemed ineligible for funding, we will conduct eligibility determinations at our next-highest priority sites identified in the *Brownfields Redevelopment Prioritization Strategy*.

**C2.** The site identification and prioritization process included several steps. First, potential brownfield sites were identified with the assistance of life-long City residents and environmental consultants based on knowledge of historic use and observations from Sanborn fire insurance maps. Each of these potential brownfield sites was then evaluated based on three separate analyses: redevelopment feasibility, community goals for brownfields redevelopment, and potential for environmental concern. These tiers of analysis were then used to produce the final list of priority sites.

The Redevelopment Feasibility Analysis entailed scoring each site based on twelve factors that impact a site's feasibility for redevelopment. This analysis included such factors as the site's current use, its potential cost of redevelopment, and its location within an economic development district. The analysis was

conducted by brownfield redevelopment experts that originally developed this prioritization process that has been recognized as a national model.

The Community Goals analysis involved scoring each site based on its potential to achieve fifteen community goals for redevelopment. An exercise was facilitated with residents to identify community goal priorities so that the highest priority goals were weighted more heavily in the analysis. The top five priority goals held by Ottawa residents are: business expansion/recruitment/retention, job creation, blight elimination, historic preservation, and creation of entertainment venues.

Lastly, each site was evaluated based on its potential for environmental concern coupled with a preliminary analysis of potential eligibility for brownfields funding. The analysis was conducted by an environmental consultant who drew from detailed observations of each site and analysis of historic Sanborn fire insurance maps.

The final ranking of sites was based on a combined Redevelopment Feasibility and Community Goals Score, with ownership status and environmental status evaluated to determine if these factors necessitated raising or lowering a site's final ranking. Community residents and our Brownfields Redevelopment Advisory Committee (BRAC) were asked to comment on the draft list of sites which resulted in adjustments to produce the final list of sites. The prioritization was then documented in the *Ottawa Brownfields Redevelopment Prioritization Strategy* adopted by City Council on October 30, 2006.

**C3.** The priority sites targeted for environmental assessment funding include a combination of municipally-owned and privately-owned sites. We made a concerted effort to involve the public in every stage of our prioritization process to ensure transparency and community buy-in. Our top fifteen priority sites were published in the daily newspaper after the presentation of the final *Strategy* prior to its adoption. We have not received any negative feedback from property owners or residents as of the submission of this application. Now that we have completed the *Ottawa Brownfields Redevelopment Prioritization Strategy*, we will be moving forward with its recommendations which include establishing on-going dialogue with property owners of priority sites (which we have begun at several sites). We will be engaging in more detailed site concept planning for priority sites and identifying property owners' interests in participating in redevelopment and their relocation needs so that we can ensure property access if funds are awarded.

#### **D. Sustainable Reuse of Brownfields**

**D1.** Brownfields assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment will help us advance our goal of promoting sustainable development in Ottawa which we have been progressively implementing since the adoption of our Comprehensive and Downtown Plans in 2002. Our sustainable development initiative ensures that we make the most of limited resources and create a sustainable urban fabric for generations to come. These initiatives include the following:

**Brownfield Prevention:** As we recruit new industrial developments and respond to industrial development proposals, the City and Chamber of Commerce evaluates any anticipated industrial byproducts to predict environmental impacts. This evaluation process helps us select only those industrial development proposals that will not threaten to degrade our environment. We also prevent future brownfields by educating our staff involved in reviewing development proposals about brownfield attributes. In particular, our Community Development Director and Mayor participate on the BRAC and through this exposure are able to apply their knowledge to reviewing development proposals. Ottawa is particularly aware of the negative impact of resource-intensive industries as mining has been an integral part of our economy, and consequently as we diversify our economy we also seek to avoid undue harms to our environment. We also work to prevent brownfields through land conservation techniques described in Section E.

**Infrastructure Reuse:** In addition to discouraging wasteful development of our rich agricultural edge, we pair this strategy with promotion of infill development and building rehabilitation in order to maximize use of several forms of infrastructure including transportation, utilities, open space, and building stock. We

have actively promoted building rehabilitation through a preferred-rate loan program administered by a partnership of our banking community, through our Comprehensive and Downtown Plans, and through our zoning ordinance which promotes rehabilitation of downtown buildings and supports mixed uses. We actively promote historic preservation and have achieved National Register recognition of several of our landmarks. Additionally, we are designated a Certified Local Government enabling us to further promote historic preservation by designating local landmarks.

Site and Building Design: Our Design Guidelines and Design Review Committees promote design, orientation, and character of new developments and landscapes that encourage environmental restoration and reduce environmental harm. This design review process includes evaluation of: (1) character of development and its relationship to the street and neighborhood, (2) respect for architectural heritage, (3) use of native, drought tolerant landscaping and a plan for sustainable long-term maintenance, (4) site plan designs that work with, not against, natural features, (5) establishment of buffers between developments and waterways to protect habitat and water quality, and (6) minimization of impervious paved surfaces. In addition to these provisions in our Design Guidelines, we have also created a Planned Unit Development (PUD) zoning designation that promotes innovative site and building designs and sustainable land development patterns. Lastly, we strongly promote energy efficiency and “green” building design and have recently demonstrated our commitment to being a leader for our community in implementing green building methods by procuring a highly competitive \$250,000 grant to fully retrofit one of our municipal facilities with energy efficient systems.

**D2.** Our brownfield redevelopment priorities were identified based on their potential for near-term redevelopment feasibility and ability to achieve the community’s goals for redevelopment. Consequently, we expect the redevelopment of these sites to stimulate substantial economic activity in our community. Ottawa’s unique regional location—proximate to Chicagoland and amidst abundant recreation and tourism resources—has clearly positioned our community for residential and resort growth. However—the ultimate success of these projects will greatly hinge on our ability to further enliven activity in our Downtown and along the riverfront where a majority of our brownfield sites are located.

The developers who are advancing these residential and resort projects have strongly emphasized the importance of our downtown and riverfront revitalization efforts, as evidenced by a support letter included in Appendix 2 from a developer of a planned riverfront resort on Ottawa’s eastern edge. This developer even went as far as assembling the Jordan Block site from multiple owners to help the City better facilitate its redevelopment. However, we have reached a road block in this project and cannot move forward with making the Jordan Block redevelopment project happen until the environmental issues at the site are addressed. When brownfield redevelopment does happen, we are well equipped to re-invest further in our downtown through our downtown tax increment finance (TIF) district.

New uses targeted for our priority brownfield sites will not only ensure the success of other catalytic developments, but will stimulate economic growth at the sites themselves. Many of the sites targeted for brownfield redevelopment are well positioned to generate tourism-based economic activity including retail sales, accommodations, and restaurants. Reinvestment at these sites will also raise property values at the sites and in the community of the whole. Additionally, improving quality of life in Ottawa through a revived downtown riverfront will greatly improve our ability to attract new professional jobs and residents to Ottawa.

In the past, we have been approached by developers interested in our downtown brownfield sites, so we can estimate the type of private sector investment we can expect at these sites once they are assessed and cleaned up. One of these sites is the 10-acre riverfront Central School site (a former coal gasification plant), for which we have seen development proposals of up to \$10 million. After ten years of environmental investigation, cleanup was completed by the property owner in 2006 and no further remediation is required by the state. This success provides even greater momentum for the City to advance



our riverfront redevelopment in conjunction with the Jordan Block. This site also demonstrates that the time that brownfields redevelopment can take, giving even greater reason to proactively forge forward with assessment at our priority sites.

Our highest priority site, the Jordan Block, has also been the subject of developer interest with proposals ranging from \$5 to \$50 million in private investment, illustrating a compelling case for addressing its environmental issues. By facilitating the redevelopment of this brownfield, we are confident that we can attract new development proposals that will catalyze further investment in our downtown riverfront.

**D3.** Our strategy for sustainable development includes initiatives that not only benefit our environment and our economy, but also our residents and social fabric. Redeveloping brownfields will help us to advance these initiatives, which include:

Enlivening our Downtown and Riverfront with Shopping, Entertainment, and Gathering Spaces:

Brownfields redevelopment will help us to maximize our Downtown assets, strengthening the central core of our community. We are investigating participation in the National Trust for Historic Preservation Main Street program as a tool to invest in our Downtown.

Promoting Multi-Modal Transportation Connections. A key part of working toward a sustainable urban environment involves investments in a well-connected, multi-modal transportation system. Our priority brownfield redevelopment sites are located in areas that are well served by multiple modes, and we are working to enhance this system. Our diverse current and planned transportation network includes: (1) a focus on strengthening pedestrian linkages between neighborhood and commercial areas and pedestrian-scale development patterns, codified in our zoning ordinance; (2) plans to complete a bicycle loop within the next five years that connects the I&M Canal State Trail, the Ottawa Riverwalk, and Downtown Ottawa; and (3) plans for extension of Chicago's Metra commuter rail service from the Chicago suburbs to LaSalle, stopping in Ottawa (for which we have helped secure \$500,000 in state and federal grant funding to conduct the next stages of feasibility analysis). Our efforts are guided by our Comprehensive Plan which includes a goal for increasing opportunities for non-vehicular modes of transportation.

Promoting Diverse Housing Choices: We understand that the health of our community hinges on diversity in our economy, our residents, and also in our housing options. We are promoting diverse housing options (both housing types and costs) in a number of ways. As we redevelop brownfield sites, it will be important that residents impacted by rising property values (and the associated rising taxes) can still access affordable housing options. We have promoted affordable housing by supporting developments in Ottawa that have been financed by the Illinois Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program. Additionally, we are providing housing alternatives to increase the number of residents in Downtown by promoting rehabilitation of Downtown buildings' upper stories. Expanding our Downtown residential base is critical to building a 24-hour activity center. Property owners seeking to rehabilitate multi-floor buildings into residences can access preferred-rate loans from our local banks. We are witnessing this trend in the core of our Downtown near many of our priority brownfield sites. As our Downtown property values rise, we are committed to maintaining an appropriate balance of affordable units to serve our community.

We are also promoting "traditional neighborhood development" patterns through our Comprehensive Plan and zoning ordinance. The zoning designations in the core of our downtown and the periphery of downtown promote mixed uses. Additionally, our PUD zoning works to promote a variety of housing types, within compatible neighborhood arrangements, to provide a greater choice of types of environment and living units.

**E. Creation and/or Preservation of Greenspace/Open Space or other Nonprofit Purpose**

Redevelopment of our priority brownfields will help create and preserve open space in a number of ways. First, by focusing on infill redevelopment of brownfields in the core of our City we are reducing pressure on the "greenfield" land surrounding our City for development. This works in tandem with our other

efforts to discourage development of our precious agricultural resources. Our Comprehensive Plan designates areas for Agricultural Preservation along the edges of our community. Additionally, LaSalle County's zoning ordinance includes an Agricultural Conservation District designation intended to protect our County's natural resources by using land in the most efficient means possible and discouraging sprawl. Our Comprehensive Plan also guides our implementation efforts, recommending tools such as purchase or transfer development rights and use of conservation easements. These tools all ensure long-term preservation of open space for our community.

Second, redevelopment of our priority sites will enable us to expand limited public access to our rivers through riverfront development that incorporates public gathering spaces and marinas. Our initiative to complete the bicycle trail connecting the I&M Canal State Trail with the Ottawa Riverwalk and Downtown will also be supported by our brownfield redevelopment efforts. The development of new public gathering spaces along our riverfront would be funded in part by funds from our Downtown TIF district generated with new private investment along our riverfront. Additionally, to ensure proper long-term maintenance, we would create maintenance agreements with developers of key riverfront sites whose projects would directly benefit from these public open space amenities

Lastly, one of the key opportunities for economic development in our community based on tourism, recreation, and quality of life, is the potential to rewater a segment of the I&M Canal that extends through Ottawa and the lateral canal that connects the I&M with the Illinois River. We envision Ottawa someday as the "Venice of the Midwest." While this is a long-term vision, we believe it is possible and financially feasible. Since a considerable number of our community's brownfield sites are located on Marquette Street along the Canal, redevelopment of these sites would work hand-in-hand with our rewatering initiative.

#### **F. Pre-Award Community Notification**

**F1.** One of the original goals of commissioning the *Ottawa Brownfields Redevelopment Prioritization Strategy* was to position our community for competitive State and Federal funding for brownfields assessment and cleanup. Consequently, during the many stages of community involvement in the *Strategy* we were continually alerting residents of our brownfield redevelopment priorities and our intentions to apply for these grant funds. We also formally notified the public of our intent to pursue these funds in several ways in the month prior to submittal of this application. Below is a summary of past and future means of public notification:

Notification via the development of the *Strategy*: We held several meetings as part of this *Strategy* at which members of the public were invited (described further in Section G). These meetings were held between June and October 2006 and included (1) focus groups of key local and regional stakeholders; (2) two Community Goals meetings; (3) a City Council meeting; and (4) four Brownfields Redevelopment Advisory Committee meetings. The City Council meeting at which the draft list of priority sites were presented and discussed was reported on in *The Times* on October 18, 2006.

City Council Adoption of *Strategy* and Decision to Pursue Grant Funding: The City Council adopted the *Strategy* and cemented its intent to pursue USEPA grant funds for the FY07 cycle at an open public meeting on October 30, 2006, which was reported on in *The Times* and on Ottawa's WCMY Radio station on October 31. For the current FY08 cycle the City Council resolved to pursue these grants at a publicly open City Council meeting on September 18, 2007 which was reported on in the *Times* on September 22.

Notification of Grant Availability for Public Comment: We notified Ottawa residents of the availability of this application for public review and comment in the following ways: (1) posting of a press release on our website between September 27 – October 10 and (2) distributing a press release to *The Times*, the LaSalle News Tribune, the Peoria Journal Star, Ottawa's WCMY Radio station, and LaSalle's WLPO radio station. The press releases were announced on WCMY radio news on [date] and copies of the printed articles are included in Appendix 1.

Future Notification Program: If these grant funds are awarded, we will continue to use these diverse methods of notification in order to ensure the broadest dissemination of information. We will also expand our efforts by developing fact sheets on the status of brownfields assessment activities at important project junctures, but semiannually at a minimum. We will post these fact sheets on our webpage, distribute them in City Hall and the library, and mail them directly to our project partners and directly affected residents.

Evidence of Community Notification: See Appendix 1: Community Notification for documentation of the above outreach activities.

**F2.** Because this is a community-wide grant proposal, our community notification program was appropriately aimed at the community as a whole through newspaper articles, radio advertisements, web publishing, public meetings, and direct notification of property owners of priority sites. We did not translate our press releases into other languages since Ottawa's largest population of linguistically isolated households (Spanish-speaking) only makes up 0.7% of households in Ottawa (U.S. Census 2000). If awarded this grant, we will continue to utilize a variety notification media to reach a broad audience and will describe our activities in layman's terms for those not familiar with environmental terminology. We will also seek out translation services for any households directly impacted by our assessment work.

**F3.** Our grant proposals were available for public review and comment for two weeks, from November 23 to December 6, on the City's website. Additionally, the applications were available in hard copy at City Hall and the Public Library from September 27 – October 10. We encouraged public comment in several ways: (1) requesting public comments in our press release described in F2; (2) requesting comments from our Brownfields Redevelopment Initiative partners by directly contacting each partner; and (3) providing multiple mechanisms for comments—in writing, via email, via phone, and in person with our Community Development Director. If grant funds are awarded, we will use similar methods to seek public comment on the draft grant work plan.

**F4.** We held a meeting with our BRAC on October 4 to discuss the draft application, in which attendees provided several useful comments which we were able to integrate into the final application. We then sent a revised draft to the BRAC on [date], to which we received some final minor edits. We will follow a similar procedure for integrating comments on the work plan for this grant, if funded.

## **G. Ongoing Community Involvement**

**G1.** Community involvement has been an important part of our Brownfields Redevelopment Initiative to date and will continue to be in the future. Our residents are highly attuned to issues of environmental contamination due to our history of radium contamination throughout the City. Consequently it is of utmost importance that our work on brownfields sites is transparent and clearly communicated to residents. Prior to commissioning the *Ottawa Brownfields Redevelopment Prioritization Strategy*, our residents participated in several activities as part of the Comprehensive and Downtown planning processes conducted in 2002 that informed our reuse planning of brownfield sites. These activities included a design charrette and a visual preference survey that helped our residents define the preferred scale, character, and orientation of development in our community.

We then directly involved our community in the process of identifying and prioritizing brownfields for the *Ottawa Brownfields Redevelopment Prioritization Strategy* from May to October, 2006. The stakeholder interviews involved local and regional representatives of various interests including economic development, tourism, environmental protection, and open space preservation. We invited the local resident participants to a subsequent meeting to prioritize community goals for redevelopment. Then, we presented our draft prioritization at a third focus group meeting to seek their input. In addition to these stakeholders, we established a Brownfields Redevelopment Advisory Committee (BRAC) to oversee the process of developing this *Strategy*. The BRAC also represents a variety of interests and experiences, including current and retired professionals from industry, real estate, construction, engineering, and planning.

As we engage in environmental assessment and cleanup planning funded by this grant as well as other activities including reuse planning and developer recruitment, we will continue to rely on the BRAC to guide our efforts. We will also seek on-going input and support from our partners, described in Section G2. We will also hold a minimum of three community-wide meetings during the course of this grant and will specifically seek attendance of the most impacted residents and businesses through direct mailings.

**G2.** Brownfields redevelopment is inherently challenging; consequently, we recognize that we can bolster our success rate in facilitating redevelopment by drawing on the different areas of expertise of our local, regional, state, and federal partners. This partnership approach will help to ensure that brownfield redevelopment in Ottawa is undertaken in an economically, environmentally, and socially sustainable manner, producing projects with the greatest possible impact and catalyzing effects.

We have some successful partnerships already in place and seek to develop others as we advance our Brownfields Redevelopment Initiative. Partnerships established to date include:

Illinois EPA and U.S. EPA have been critical partners in addressing the Ottawa Radiation Areas NPL Sites and in overseeing assessment and cleanup of sites in our community through IEPA's Site Remediation Program

Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity is a strong supporter of Ottawa's Brownfields Redevelopment Initiative and supports the identified priority areas for brownfields assessment as key economic development opportunities for the community. DCEO will particularly help efforts to promote job creation as a result of brownfields redevelopment.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has provided health assessments analyses of human health impacts from Ottawa Radiation Areas NPL Sites.

Illinois Department of Employment Security supports Ottawa's efforts to reduce unemployment in the community by facilitating redevelopment that can attract business growth.

Illinois Emergency Management Agency monitors cleanup activities at sites with radioactive contamination to protect the public from excessive exposure to radiation. IEMA has been a partner in the Ottawa Radiation Areas NPL Sites cleanups, and we will continue to seek their assistance if we identify radioactive threats at brownfields undergoing assessment.

Local Partners have been involved in brownfields through our Brownfields Redevelopment Advisory Committee. We can also look to groups such as Residents Against A Polluted Environment, which has a nearly 30-year history of promoting environmental justice in the County to actively participate in our brownfields initiative. All of our community-based partner organizations are listed in Section G4.

As we expand our involvement in brownfields assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment, we will establish additional long-term partnerships. Specifically, we will expand our partnerships with organizations focused on human health. We will partner with the LaSalle County Public Health, Ottawa Community Hospital, and Department and Illinois Department of Public Health to gather data on health indicators related to brownfields. We will also expand our partnerships with organizations focused on environmental health in addition to IEPA and USEPA. We will seek out organizations that work to restore ecosystem health, particularly that of our two rivers, including non-profit groups and the Illinois DNR, to ensure that we are benefiting ecosystem health as part of our brownfields initiative.

**G3.** As our Brownfields Redevelopment Initiative continues we will ensure clear and regular communication of the progress of our project. We will communicate in a diversity of formats—web, print, radio, and direct mailings—to achieve maximum community involvement. We do not intend to regularly translate project information because Spanish-speaking households only makes up 0.7% of households in Ottawa (U.S. Census 2000). However, whenever we send direct mailings to directly impacted residents we

will seek to identify linguistically isolated families and translate materials for them. Additionally, our community involvement program will entail the following activities:

Fact Sheets. We will produce fact sheets on the progress of our Brownfields Redevelopment Initiative after milestones have been achieved in our progress, but at a minimum on a semi-annual basis. These fact sheets will be posted on the City's website and will be available in visible locations of City Hall and the Public Library. We will also directly mail these fact sheets to local media and our partnering organizations and ask that they summarize our activities in communication to their constituents.

BRAC Meetings We will host quarterly Brownfields Redevelopment Advisory Committee (BRAC) meetings and post the agendas and minutes for these meetings on our webpage.

Community-wide Meetings: We will hold Brownfields Redevelopment Initiative meetings to present on the progress and results of environmental assessment and cleanup planning conducted under USEPA grant funding. Project consultants will present at these meetings along with City staff to ensure that technical environmental information is relayed accurately.

**G4.** Ottawa is fortunate in the resources that we can draw from in local and regional community-based organizations whose missions align with our goal of assessing, cleaning up, and redeveloping brownfield sites. The following organizations and citizens groups have agreed to partner with us to advance our Brownfields Redevelopment Initiative. Some of these groups have been closely involved in our work to date, and other partnerships will be further defined as we move forward in the next steps of our initiative, but all of these groups have expressed their interest in contributing to brownfields redevelopment in Ottawa. Refer to Appendix 2 for support letters from these organizations.

**City of Ottawa Brownfields Redevelopment Advisory Committee (BRAC): Nancy Stisser (815) 433-0161** The BRAC was formed in May 2006 to guide the development of the *Brownfields Redevelopment Prioritization Strategy* and its implementation. This group will meet quarterly at a minimum to oversee the City's brownfield redevelopment efforts. The BRAC's members represent a variety of interests and experiences, including industry, real estate, construction, engineering, and planning.

**Residents Against a Polluted Environment (RAPE): Katie Troccoli 815-434-3630** RAPE was formed in 1979 as a citizens group to combat the siting of a hazardous landfill just outside of Ottawa. The group has been mobilized on several occasions over the past three decades around other environmental justice issues in the City and County. Although the group is not currently active, its former President, Ms. Troccoli, indicated that the group (which Mayor Eschbach was also a founding member of) could easily be mobilized again to help participate in and support the City's Brownfields Redevelopment Initiative.

**LaSalle County Health Department: Julie Kerestes (217) 433-3366** The LCHD provides health services for County residents, including environmental health services. LCHD has successfully worked in partnership with the City, the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), and EPA to reduce threats from environmental contamination in the past. LCHD also supports the City's goal of using funds from this grant to gather baseline health indicator data in order to evaluate impacts of brownfields redevelopment on health.

**Community Hospital of Ottawa (CHO): Bob Chaffin (217) 431-5456** CHO is a non-profit general hospital and supports the City's efforts to evaluate the health impacts of brownfields in Ottawa. CHO also supports assessment and redevelopment of priority brownfield sites across from its campus along the Fox River into complementary health-related uses.

**Ottawa Economic Development Task Force: Boyd Palmer 815-433-0084** This 18-member Task Force promotes economic development in Ottawa and implements a business recruitment and retention plan. The Task Force supports revitalization of brownfields as a means of promoting business growth and economic development in the community.

**Ottawa Area Chamber of Commerce and Industry: Boyd Palmer (815) 433-0084** The Chamber is a voluntary business organization working to advance the economic and civic interests in the Ottawa Area. The Chamber supports the City's Brownfield Initiative to provide opportunities to establish new and boost existing businesses in Ottawa, and

actively participated in the community meetings as part of the preparation of the *Brownfields Redevelopment Prioritization Strategy*.

**Ottawa Visitors Center: Bridget O'Brien (888) 688-2924** The Visitors Center helps build the economy and quality of life in Ottawa by marketing the City as a tourism destination and has actively participated in the community meetings as part of the *Brownfields Redevelopment Prioritization Strategy* preparation process.

**North Central Illinois Council of Governments (NCICG): Kevin Lindeman (815) 875-3396** NCICG is a regional government-supported agency that provides planning, technical assistance, and grant writing services in the region. NCICG supports the City's Brownfields Initiative and will continue to be a partner in helping Ottawa leverage funding to advance this work.

**Canal Corridor Association (CCA): Ana Koval (815) 588-1100** CCA is a non-profit dedicated to preserving and promoting the I&M Canal National Heritage Corridor and supports Ottawa's efforts to bolster the use of the I&M Canal through brownfield redevelopment.

**Fox River Ecosystem Partnership (FREP): Ksenia Rudensiuk (630) 482-9157** The Partnership is a diverse group of stakeholders within the Fox River Watershed region which has produced an Integrated Management Plan for the Fox River Watershed. FREP supports the City's focus on redevelopment in order to preserve important open space habitat and ecosystems in the watershed.

**Friends of the Fox River (FFR): Chuck Roberts (815) 356-6605** FFR is a non-profit organization made up of citizens and organizations taking action to protect and maintain the quality of the Fox River and its tributaries. FFR supports Ottawa's Brownfields Initiative as a means of restoring properties along the river and promoting increased recreational use and care for the river.

**Ottawa Savings Bank: Gary Ocepeck (815) 433-2525** OSB is a locally-owned bank located in Downtown that supports the City's brownfield redevelopment efforts. OSB has previously overseen a preferred-rate loan program that helped promote downtown reinvestment.

**City of Ottawa Riverfront Development Committee (RDC): Tim McTaggart (815) 224-6270** The RDC works in cooperation with City staff and elected officials to further enhance Ottawa's scenic Riverwalk along the Fox River and supports these brownfield redevelopment efforts.

**City of Ottawa Historic Preservation Commission (HPC): Patty Godfrey (815) 433-1234** The HPC works to designate local landmarks and preserve historic structures and supports the City's efforts to redevelop brownfields and reinvest in the City's historic Downtown.

**Illinois Valley Community College (IVCC): Jamie Gahm (815) 224-0428** IVCC's Continuing Education and Business Services Division provides education and training services through its Business Training Center and Small Business Development Center, and support's the City's efforts to redevelop brownfields, creating opportunities for business growth.

## **H. Reduction of Threat to Human Health and the Environment**

**H1.** One of our primary objectives in procuring USEPA grant funding is to identify and reduce threats to human and environmental health posed by brownfield sites. We have already taken an important step in identifying threats by identifying potential brownfields with the help of life-long City residents which included current and retired City and consulting engineers. We then expanded our list of identified sites by commissioning an environmental consulting firm to identify sites based on historical information from Sanborn Fire Insurance maps.

Now that we have identified sites with potential concerns and prioritized them for use of grant funding, we will identify threats to human and environmental health by first commissioning Phase I ESAs and then conducting Phase II ESAs at sites with recognized environmental conditions identified in the Phase Is.

We will begin the work of reducing the threats to health and the environment by developing cleanup plans for priority sites in need of remediation. Cleanup plans will be developed in accordance with Illinois' Tiered Approach to Corrective Action Objectives (TACO) and will seek the optimal combination of active remediation, engineered barriers, and institutional controls based on potential contamination exposure at a site and the proposed end use of the site. We have already identified optimal end uses for our priority sites

in the *Ottawa Brownfields Redevelopment Prioritization Strategy*, and will move forward with more detailed concept site plans for these sites in the upcoming year. These uses include a range of residential, commercial, and open space uses. By the time we are at the stage of developing remedial plans for sites we will be able to identify remedial alternatives that best suit the proposed end use of a site.

As we evaluate alternative remedial solutions and site designs we will seek those that help to restore our ecosystem which is a major goal of our community as articulated in our Comprehensive Plan and zoning ordinance. For example, we will promote remedial solutions such as phytoremediation and bioremediation, wherever feasible, as natural means of eliminating contamination that are sustainable in the long term.

Upon then achieving a No Further Remediation (NFR) letter for a site, we will ensure long-term compliance with the stipulations of the NFR. Any engineered barriers or institutional controls stipulated in the NFR will be recorded as a permanent part of the property chain-of-title and will run with the property. Any future developer or any subsequent owner(s) to whom the NFR letters are transferred will be required to maintain any deed restrictions, ensuring the protection of human health and the environment.

We are specifically interested in using brownfields redevelopment as a springboard for greater involvement by the City in promotion of the long-term health and restoration of the Fox and Illinois Rivers. The entire length of the Fox River is listed on IEPA's 2002 303(d) listing of impaired waters, due to flow and habitat alteration, low dissolved oxygen, nutrients, organic enrichment, PCBs, siltation, and suspended solids. The river has also previously been cited by the American Rivers non-profit organization as one of the ten most endangered rivers in America in 1999 due to the threat of rapid urbanization in the upper part of the Fox River watershed.<sup>1</sup> Located at the confluence of the Fox and the Illinois rivers, Ottawa is located at the centerpoint of where these issues then impact the health of the Illinois River. As we work to redevelop brownfield sites along and near our riverfronts, we will work to fully characterize impacts of brownfields on our rivers and seek remedial approaches that restore and enhance these precious resources.

We are also specifically developing long-term solutions for former mining areas in our community, many of which are brownfields identified in our *Strategy*. We have excellent examples of successful mine area remediation in and near Ottawa to draw from. For example, a former clay mine was remediated by the property owner and redeveloped into the East Gate medical campus adjacent to the Ottawa Community Hospital in the late 1960s. Innovative mine restoration projects have also occurred in the nearby Buffalo Rock State Park. Additionally, a former sand mining area immediately west of the City limits was recently remediated to remove the threat of arsenic to groundwater.

**H2.** Illinois EPA has been and will continue to be an important partner in overseeing environmental assessment (and ultimately cleanup) of brownfield sites in our community, helping property owners to achieve environmental closure in order to eliminate environmental concerns and facilitate redevelopment. All sites undergoing environmental assessment under this grant will be enrolled in IEPA's Site Remediation Program (SRP) which will ensure that environmental reporting developed under this grant meets state standards. As our initiative advances beyond this grant into cleanup, we will continue to work with the SRP to acquire No Further Remediation letters for sites.

We also have a working relationship with health agencies which we will expand upon as part of the work program under these grants. Specifically, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) has conducted Public Health Assessments as part of the Superfund site clean-ups throughout the community. The most recent Assessment evaluated cancer

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<sup>1</sup> Since 1986, American Rivers has annually released the America's Most Endangered Rivers report to spotlight rivers facing critical and near-term threats. Criteria used to evaluate rivers for the list include: (1) magnitude of the threat, (2) the existence of a major decision impacting the fate of the river in the coming year, and (3) the regional and national significance of the river. The report is available online: [www.americanrivers.org](http://www.americanrivers.org).

incidences in Ottawa in order to identify potential risks to human health from these Superfund sites. Although the Assessment did identify a disproportionately high rate of thyroid cancer in the community, it could not establish a connection between this and environmental contamination. This type of assessment is an important step in the direction of characterizing the impact of soil and groundwater contamination on the health of our citizens. There are still many unknowns; consequently we seek to use \$10,000 in funding under this grant to evaluate impacts on human health from brownfields.

This analysis will contribute to the work that we are already doing to better characterize risks to human health from environmental conditions. For example, IEPA is currently assisting the City by delineating the 5-year recharge area for our municipal wells in order to identify any threats to the water supply. Additionally, an example of our commitment to addressing environmental risks once they are identified is our installation of a Reverse Osmosis Membrane Filtration Treatment system which removes naturally-occurring levels of radium from the City's drinking water. Our municipal wells are all located between 100 and 1,000 feet of potential brownfield sites identified in our *Strategy*, and consequently Phase II ESAs will require modeling potential impacts to these drinking water sources.

We will approach the brownfield health impact study with the goal of identifying measurable baseline health indicators tailored to the community's health concerns associated with brownfields. Potential baseline health indicators may include: increased physical safety due to brownfields physical hazards removal; increased sense of personal safety due to green space improvements and removal of vacant lots and blighted properties; and increased general health due to increased living and working in our pedestrian-oriented Downtown. Our local and state health partners have demonstrated their interest in assisting with the development of this study, including the LaSalle County Health Department, the Community Hospital of Ottawa, and the Illinois Department of Public Health.

## **I. Leveraging of Additional Resources**

**11.** If USEPA Brownfields Assessment Grant funds are procured, the City will put these funds to best use at our highest priority brownfield sites, resulting in the greatest possible return on this investment of public funds. While USEPA Grants provide generous funding to facilitate brownfields assessment, these grants will not address all of our funding needs. As such, we will draw from the following resources to bridge funding gaps for assessment of our highest priority sites:

Tax Increment Financing: All of our priority brownfield sites are located within TIF districts; incremental property tax revenue generated in these districts can be used to fund environmental assessment.

In-kind Services: City staff will continue to devote time to our Brownfields Redevelopment Initiative, including the time of our Mayor, Community Development Director, City Planner, and Administrative Assistant. The budget provided in this proposal maximizes our use of City in-kind time so that grant resources can fund project consultants' technical analysis that we cannot provide in-kind.

Illinois EPA's Municipal Brownfields Redevelopment Grant Program (MBRG): We have submitted an application to IEPA for \$120,000 in MBRG funds which, if awarded, can be used to address any assessment funding gaps but can also be used to fund cleanup of priority sites that undergo assessment via U.S. EPA funding.

Illinois EPA's Office of Site Evaluation: If we identify a critical assessment need at a site that could potentially be threatening human and/or environmental health and are challenged in funding this work through other sources, we will seek the technical assistance of Illinois EPA's Office of Site Evaluation.

**12.** Ottawa recognizes that USEPA funding will serve as important seed money in our effort to cleanup and redevelop brownfields, but a successful brownfield redevelopment strategy hinges on pooling a number of available resources to make projects happen. We used funding from our Tax Increment Finance district to commission the *Ottawa Brownfields Redevelopment Prioritization Strategy* to get our initiative



started and also contributed considerable in-kind staff time to oversee this *Strategy* and participate in Brownfields Redevelopment Advisory Committee (BRAC) meetings. As we move forward with implementation, we will look to the following resources to leverage USEPA funding:

Capital Improvements Program (CIP): We will allocate resources to invest in areas where we are promoting brownfields redevelopment through our CIP.

Ottawa/LaSalle County Enterprise Zone: All of our priority sites are located within the Ottawa/ LaSalle County Enterprise Zone, which offers benefits including sales tax exemption on building materials, utility tax exemption, loan interest deduction, and tax credits based on job creation.

Private Investment: We have prioritized our brownfield sites for assessment based largely on redevelopment feasibility so that we can leverage considerable private investment in redeveloping brownfields. Our ability to leverage considerable private investment at planned riverfront resort developments hinges greatly on our ability to reinvigorate our Downtown and riverfront through brownfield redevelopment.

State and Federal Grants: We will seek out additional funding to leverage USEPA funds including, but not limited to, Illinois EPA Municipal Brownfields Redevelopment Grant; Illinois Department of Natural Resources grant funds including from the Open Space Land Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) Program and others; Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) funding; Illinois Department of Transportation's Transportation Enhancement Program; and Economic Development Administration grants. We have demonstrated success to date in acquiring grant funding from many of these programs and others and are therefore optimistic about our ability to leverage further funds to promote brownfields redevelopment in our community.

Downtown District Funding: We are currently in discussions with Downtown business owners to evaluate the benefits of establishing a Downtown organization and district that could be a Business Improvement District or Special Assessment Area. These finance mechanisms would enable us to levy special taxes against downtown properties for the purposes of reinvesting in the Downtown.

## **J. Programmatic Capability**

**J1.** If this grant is awarded, it would be the City's first cooperative agreement with U.S. EPA. We have, however, successfully managed several federally-funded grants (most administered through the State). To manage this grant, our Community Development Director will be the City's grant project manager, overseeing the work plan, timeline, and community involvement activities. In his twenty-year career as both a consulting and staff municipal engineer, he has managed a number of state and federal grants. He will also rely on the City's finance staff to maintain detailed records of grant expenditures and in-kind contributions to ensure complete reporting to U.S. EPA. Additionally, our Mayor participates in our Brownfields Initiative, lending not only his leadership but also his expertise as a professional attorney with experience in environmental law as a former Assistant LaSalle County States Attorney. Our City Planner will help tie our brownfields work into our broader community planning goals and development efforts.

We will ensure that we are meeting the work plan tasks, timeframes, and deliverables in our grant work plan. The City will submit all quarterly reports and annual financial status reports on time and will maintain communication with our EPA project manager to ensure that we are meeting all of the grant requirements.

We will hire qualified environmental consultants to perform all environmental site assessment and remedial planning activities and we will work with the Illinois EPA SRP to oversee and approve the consultants' work. We will secure consultants following federal guidelines, seeking out professionals with demonstrated experience in bringing sites to environmental closure through IEPA's TACO regulations. Lastly, we will draw upon the expertise of our partners at the LaSalle Public Health Department, Ottawa Community Hospital, and Illinois Department of Public Health to assist in developing the Health Study.

**J2.** The City of Ottawa has a long history of successfully managing federal funds, the majority of which have been administered by the State, but also include funds directly from federal sources including the Department of Justice COPS grants to our Police Department and a Farmer's Home Administration grant for stormwater utility construction. State-administered federal funding sources include FEMA funds for flood mitigation (administered by IEMA), USEPA funds for storm sewer updating (administered by IEPA) Federal-Aid Urban System funds for arterial road improvements (administered by IDOT), and others. We have successfully submitted regular reports on the use of these funds and achieved the identified work program established when funds were awarded. We have never received an adverse audit or been required to comply with special "high risk" terms and conditions under agency regulations implementing OMB Circular A-102.

**J3.** We have not previously been awarded a USEPA Cooperative Agreement. Grant funding procured by the City has historically been awarded by the State, but we have received some direct Federal assistance. We have received several recent Department of Justice grants through the Community Oriented Policing (COPS) program: (1) a \$21,000 COPS in Schools grant, (2) a \$148,000 Methamphetamine Initiative Grant, and (3) a \$95,000 Universal Hiring Program Grant, and (4) a \$51,000 Equipment Grant. We have successfully met the reporting requirements of these grants, including submitting (1) periodic programmatic progress reports (2) quarterly Financial Status Reports and (3) an annual survey of our hiring status. Additionally, we keep detailed accounting records for purposes of future audits demonstrating that incurred costs are allowable under the grant guidelines. If awarded this USEPA grant, we will adopt the same successful grant tracking and reporting strategies used by our Police department for these grants. Prior to these grants, the last federal assistance agreement that we have on record is a \$90,000 grant directly from the federal Farmer's Home Administration for a utility improvement project which we successfully completed and consistently complied with reporting requirements.

While the majority of our grants have been awarded by the State, these funds often originate from the federal government, so we will illustrate our successes in managing and reporting on the use of these funds. One example is our FEMA-funded home buyout program (administered by Illinois EMA). We were awarded this grant in the mid-1900s after a major Fox River flood qualified us for disaster mitigation assistance. For over five years, we managed a program of buying out homes located in the "Flats" along the Fox River. This funding, which we met with a 20% local match—enabled us to secure the future safety of these residents and also helped us to create a park amenity along our Riverwalk. This project has since been touted as a success story by the agency. We attribute our success in this project to our ability to effectively allocate personnel time toward grant management and reporting. Additionally, our experience in managing a variety of grants arms us with the skills to establish realistic work plans and time frames. We also consistently communicate with our grant project managers and seek their guidance in amending work plan tasks and schedules, as needed to best accomplish the project.

**J4.** The City understands the importance of identifying outputs and outcomes from federal grant funding in order to help secure the future of this critically important grant program. Consequently, we will create and periodically update (at junctures of project progress) the Property Profile Form for each site undergoing assessment, which will identify the following Outputs and Outcomes. (1) a HASP and QAPP; (2) Phase I ESAs at 7 sites; (3) Phase II ESAs at 3 to 7 sites; (4) ROR/RAPs at 3 to 7 sites; (5) a Brownfields Health Impact Study; and (6) agendas and minutes from quarterly BRAC meetings and semi-annual community-wide meetings; and (7) six project fact sheets. These outputs will help us to measure the following outcomes (some of which will be achieved after the end of the grant period): (1) acreage of land assessed; (2) acreage of land positioned for clean-up and reuse; (3) acreage of greenspace created or preserved; (4) jobs created (short-term from cleanup and long-term from redevelopment); (5) public and private leveraged funding; and (6) increased property values.