



# TRIANGLE J COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

*World Class Region*

R04-22-A-085

1. Applicant Identification: Triangle J Council of Governments  
4307 Emperor Blvd., Suite 110  
Durham, North Carolina 27703-8080
  
2. Funding Requested:
  - a. Assessment Grant Type: Community-wide
  - b. Federal Funds Requested:
    - i. \$500,000
    - ii. N/A.
  
3. Location:
  - a. Fuquay-Varina and Wake Forest (Target Communities)
  - b. Chatham, Durham, Johnston, Lee, Moore, Orange, and Wake Counties
  - c. State of North Carolina
  
4. Target Area and Priority Site/Property Information:  
Community-wide Assessment Grant  
Target Area: Fuquay-Varina  
Census Block Group: 371830531072  
Target Sites:  
  
Former Tops Cleaners  
534 N Main St  
Fuquay-Varina, NC 27526  
  
Fuquay-Varina Dealership Site  
420 & 502 Main St.  
Fuquay-Varina, NC 27526  
  
Fuquay-Varina Main St. Gas Station Site  
322, 324, & 326 Main St.  
Fuquay-Varina, NC 27526  
  
Target Area: Wake Forest  
Census Block Group: 371830542051  
Target Sites:  
  
Wake Forest Auto Care Site  
303 E Roosevelt Ave.  
Wake Forest, NC 27587  
  
Wake Forest Welsh Warehouse  
535 S White St  
Wake Forest, NC 27587
  
5. Contacts:  
Project Director:  
Ms. Lindsay Whitson, Community and Economic Development Manager  
Address: 4307 Emperor Blvd., Suite 110, Durham, NC 27703-8080  
Phone: 919-558-9319  
Email: [lwhitson@tjcog.org](mailto:lwhitson@tjcog.org)



# TRIANGLE J COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

*World Class Region*

Chief Executive:

Mr. Lee Worsley, Executive Director

Address: 4307 Emperor Blvd., Suite 110, Durham, NC 27703-8080

Phone: 919-558-9395

Email: [lworsley@tjcog.org](mailto:lworsley@tjcog.org)

6. Population: (data from the 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate)

Fuquay-Varina: 22,281

Target Area (Census Block Group: 371830531072): 2,551

Wake Forest: 39,122

Target Area (Census Block Group: 371830542051): 2,421

TJCOG Region: 1,912,670

7. Other Factors Checklist:

<b>Other Factors</b>	<b>Page #</b>
Community population is 10,000 or less.	
The applicant is, or will assist, a federally recognized Indian tribe or United States territory.	
The priority brownfield site(s) is impacted by mine-scarred land.	
The priority site(s) is adjacent to a body of water (i.e., the border of the priority site(s) is contiguous or partially contiguous to the body of water, or would be contiguous or partially contiguous with a body of water but for a street, road, or other public thoroughfare separating them).	Pg. 2
The priority site(s) is in a federally designated flood plain.	
The reuse of the priority site(s) will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy.	
The reuse of the priority site(s) will incorporate energy efficiency measures.	Pg. 3
30% or more of the overall project budget will be spent on eligible reuse/area-wide planning activities for priority site(s) within the target area.	
The target area(s) is located within a community in which a coal-fired power plant has recently closed (2011 or later) or is closing.	

8. Letter from the State or Tribal Environmental Authority: Attached

9. N/A. This application does not have confidential, privileged, or sensitive information.



NORTH CAROLINA  
*Environmental Quality*

November 12, 2021

ROY COOPER  
*Governor*  
ELIZABETH S. BISER  
*Secretary*  
MICHAEL SCOTT  
*Director*

Lee Worsley, Executive Director  
Triangle J COG  
4307 Emperor Blvd, Suite 110  
Durham, NC 27703  
lworsley@tjcog.org

Re: U.S. EPA Brownfields Community-Wide Assessment Grant – Triangle J COG

Dear Mr. Worsley,

The North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Brownfields Program acknowledges and supports the Triangle J Council of Governments' (COG) application for a U.S. EPA Brownfields Community-Wide Assessment Grant. We are aware that your grant will focus on the Fuquay-Varina and Wake Forest areas of the COG's footprint. This grant would be a tremendous economic development achievement for the COG.

We hope that the COG is successfully awarded this grant, and we will continue to support you in your Brownfields redevelopment efforts. The Brownfields Program offers technical project guidance in accordance with our program, throughout the life of your project. This is a major key to ensuring grant applicants make efficient use of the federal funds awarded. The liability protection offered by the program is also a primary marketing tool for developers and instrumental in securing financing.

The Brownfields Program can also assist with outreach efforts to your local community regarding reuse for commercial purposes and the controls to be put in place to make the property suitable. The liability protection offered by a Brownfields Agreement is a benefit to the whole community and can often facilitate additional economic development in the area surrounding a Brownfields Property.

We look forward to working with you regardless of a grant award or not. We truly believe successful Brownfields projects can rejuvenate a community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Bruce Nicholson'.

Bruce Nicholson  
Brownfields Program Manager

cc: NCDEQ Brownfields Public Outreach Team



North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality | Division of Waste Management  
217 West Jones Street | 1646 Mail Service Center | Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1646  
919.707.8200

## 1. **PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION AND PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION**

### a. **Target Area and Brownfields**

i. **Background and Description of Target Area:** Once a major hub for tobacco and cotton agriculture, the Triangle J region of North Carolina encompasses seven counties: Chatham, Durham, Johnston, Lee, Moore, Orange, and Wake. Many of the small towns within these counties began as commerce and rail centers for tobacco and cotton farming, when tobacco farmers migrated east to escape the “Granville wilt” crop disease in the Piedmont region of the state during the early 1900s. Bustling downtowns grew in these communities to serve the surrounding farms and growing populations. Tobacco farm production peaked in the 1950s, as North Carolina farmers produced over 840 million pounds until health concerns in the 1980s and 90s led to declining demand of tobacco products. Then, in 1998, the four largest US tobacco companies entered into a master settlement agreement with the state Attorneys General, and demand for tobacco dropped tremendously in the following years. Most recently, North Carolina farmers produced only 184 million pounds of tobacco in 2020 (**78% less than peak production**)<sup>1</sup>. Textile mills in the region also experienced a similar boom and bust cycle. Mills opened in many of the small towns to take advantage of the nearby raw materials, labor supply, and rail access; but, as global competition increased in the late 1990s and early 2000s, the industry collapsed. In Wake County, employment in textile mills dropped from 1,222 in 1998 to only 136 in 2009 (an **89% decline**).<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile, the retail sector also experienced significant economic shifts, as shoppers moved from quaint downtown shops, first to big box stores and malls on the outskirts of towns in the 1980s, then to online retailers in the 2000s. These drastic economic shifts had a devastating effect on the core downtowns of our region’s small towns, particularly in the downtowns of Fuquay-Varina and Wake Forest. The towns continue to experience growth, but mostly on the outer edges. Consequently, the downtown cores are struggling to capitalize on the region’s growth and prosperity.

Fuquay-Varina’s story began in the 1850s after the discovery of a mineral spring became an attraction for people with all types of physical ailments. In the early 1900s, a large commercial tobacco market sprung up nearby the springs, where two rail lines crossed at Varina Station. Railroads flourished and traffic flowed along Main Street in Fuquay Springs and around nearby Varina Station. The tobacco industry continued to drive the area’s economy, supplemented by textile mills and the commercial and industrial developments that supported them. The shared emphasis on agricultural and industrial growth brought the towns to merge into **Fuquay-Varina** in 1963. The small stretch along Main Street between the two historic downtown areas was once filled by a large textile mill as well as retail shops, drycleaners, auto dealerships, service garages, and gas stations, but those are now gone, vacant, or underutilized.

Wake Forest’s story began in 1832 when the North Carolina Baptist Convention opened the Wake Forest Manual Labor Institute, later named Wake Forest College, on land purchased in the farm country of Wake County. Shortly thereafter, the Raleigh & Gaston Railroad established a depot close to the college in 1874. The depot spurred commercial development, and the college sold lots on the east side of the tracks for new stores and businesses on White Street (the main street of Wake Forest). While the college moved to Winston-Salem in 1956, the local tobacco industry and textile mills helped the downtown persevere. Once those industries disappeared, the downtown withered. Today, many of the former retail buildings, warehouses, industrial buildings, and service garages continue to hinder the revitalization of White Street and the downtown district as a whole.

Across the Triangle region and throughout Wake County, communities are rapidly increasing in population, but the smaller communities continue to work with less staff capacity, resources, and capital investment – as much of the economic development is centralized in and around the City of Raleigh. Disproportional investments continue to steer towards Raleigh, due to its population and land size, but outlying towns such as Fuquay-Varina and Wake Forest continue to grapple with overwhelming population increases, stagnant investment in their downtown cores, and increased costs of living. Although population growth is typically a successful economic metric, if the heart of these downtowns are not revitalized, communities such as Fuquay-Varina and Wake Forest are more susceptible to becoming bedroom communities, thus creating further barriers to employment, housing, education, medical facilities, and amenities.

Triangle J Council of Governments (TJCOG), serving the seven-county region, is working with

<sup>1</sup> USDA.gov. Accessed October 2021.

<sup>2</sup> US Census QWI Explorer <https://qwexplorer.ces.census.gov>. Accessed October 2021.

members to address the specific, yet similar challenges these communities face regarding underutilized areas within their downtowns. Due to limited staff resources, the towns of Fuquay-Varina and Wake Forest specifically requested assistance from TJCOG to address brownfields redevelopment in their historic, core downtown districts and neighborhoods that have been left behind by the prosperity, growth, and sprawl experienced by the rest of the towns in Wake County and Triangle J region. Therefore, the initial Target Areas of this project are focused on the historic downtown cores of Fuquay-Varina and Wake Forest. After the initial Target Areas' needs are met, we may focus on additional brownfield sites within our region, as funding and scope allows.

ii. Description of the Priority Brownfield Sites

As the first step in addressing regional brownfield challenges, TJCOG worked with target areas (including municipal officials, the public, and community partners) to develop a list of priority brownfield sites. We helped the Towns identify and validate their target areas, using data from the EJScreen mapper, census data, and other social vulnerability data tools. The following sites have been prioritized based on the needs of the surrounding neighborhood and the site's current impact on the community, ability to spur additional downtown revitalization efforts, and potential for reuse:

*Former Tops Cleaners* – On the northern end of Main Street at the gateway to Fuquay-Varina, a former dry-cleaner sits vacant and in disrepair. Built in 1956 but closed for several years, the 1,800-ft<sup>2</sup> building's bright blue roof awning now has a gaping hole and two letters missing from the white "Tops Cleaners" iconography. Overgrown vegetation seems to engulf the back half of the building. The blighted building detracts from the recent streetscaping upgrades along Main Street. Sitting on 0.22 acres, the property combined with the adjacent, vacant 0.52-acre property to the west have significant redevelopment potential on a highly visible location of the heavily traveled main street corridor. However, lingering concerns of potential contamination from dry-cleaning constituents, such as PCE or TCE, are inhibiting the site's redevelopment. The site is also located across the street from a childcare center (sensitive population) and shares a property boundary to the south with single-family homes (~150 feet to the nearest). Thus, the community is concerned about potential contaminants migrating through groundwater and creating possible vapor intrusion exposures.

*Fuquay-Varina Dealership Site* – Located in the heart of the Town's Main Street, the 3-acre site sits vacant, leaving a large gap in the downtown corridor and directly relating to years of missed economic opportunity and disinvestment. After the Bryant Car Dealership moved to a busier highway outside of town, the former showroom and service garage buildings were demolished around 2012. Due to the past automotive servicing and storage on site, lingering environmental concerns related to petroleum constituents, VOCs and SVOCs from solvents and degreasers, and heavy metals are hindering its redevelopment. The property is immediately surrounded by the First United Methodist Church, residential homes, and North Main Street. Potential contaminants could be migrating through groundwater or through contaminated soils carried by stormwater runoff to the on-site tributary to Kenneth Creek.

*Fuquay-Varina Main Street Gas Station Site* – On the southern end of Main Street, a 0.35-acre vacant gravel lot was once a gas station. While still vacant, the property is located immediately adjacent to properties that have undergone revitalization in recent years, spurring the development of small mixed-use projects with ground-floor retail and second-floor apartments. Community members have raised concerns of petroleum contamination impacting nearby properties or migrating through groundwater and impacting the historic springs in Mineral Springs Park, located a block to the south. Mineral Springs Park is a local tourist attraction for in-state and out of state visitors and continued petroleum contamination extending to the park could cause further economic injury to the distressed Target Area and whole Town.

*Wake Forest Auto Care Site* – On the north end of the downtown, the 14,500-ft<sup>2</sup> auto service garage sits on 2.5-acres. Due to a long history of auto repair and service, concerns of petroleum constituents, VOCs and SVOCs from solvents and degreasers, and heavy metals exist on site. Built in 1954, asbestos-containing materials (ACM) and Lead-based paint (LBP) may be present. The garage is located immediately adjacent to a well-established residential neighborhood and shares a property boundary with several single family homes.

*Wake Forest Welsh Warehouse* – On the south end of White Street, the 16,500-ft<sup>2</sup> former Welsh Paper Company warehouse sits on 1.5 acres in the downtown and has been vacant since 2013. Petroleum releases have been documented on this and nearby up-gradient properties. Built in 1962, ACM and LBP may be present. In addition, the adjacent property to the east has documented

groundwater contamination with TCE, and pesticides may have been used on site. A senior center is located just to the south, and residential properties are located to the east. Such contamination is detrimental to the health and safety of nearby vulnerable populations, such as seniors, and could result in deterring residents from wanting to rent and/or buy nearby property. Further disinvestment over time could result in greater disrepair of the Target Area.

Additional potential sites within the Target Areas and across the TJCOG region include former textile mills, tobacco warehouses, gas stations, auto repair facilities, car dealerships, dry-cleaners, and numerous other sites with former commercial and industrial uses. Additional sites will be prioritized based on community input, available funding, and compliance with the EPA-approved work plan.

**b. Revitalization of the Target Area**

**i. Redevelopment Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans**

The Triangle J region has become an economic hub for high-tech and research companies, a drastic change from the agricultural and tobacco farming economy a century earlier. While these economic shifts have benefited the region's metropolitan centers (e.g. Raleigh, Durham), smaller towns such as Fuquay-Varina and Wake Forest are struggling to move on from their agricultural past and attract businesses that would prefer to relocate in dense, walkable downtowns. Towns are now striving to shift their historic centers back to more urban living with high-density, mixed-use developments that will attract a mixture of retail, commercial, and residential reuse. TJCOG's *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy*, developed with and adopted by member communities, defines regional goals of leveraging the marketplace, establishing and maintaining robust infrastructure, creating revitalized communities, developing healthy people, and economic resiliency. Infill development is the best strategy to achieve these outcomes; and, through this brownfield proposal, the target communities are taking the first steps necessary to leverage funding opportunities that will encourage infill redevelopment in the downtown areas. In the Town of Fuquay-Varina, the *Town Economic Development Strategy 2015-2025*, is guiding efforts focused on downtown infill development, one of six outlined in the strategy. In the Town of Wake Forest, the *Downtown Renaissance Plan* (updated 2016), outlines goals associated with revitalizing the historic core and creating a destination downtown.

In Wake County, service providing jobs are projected to represent 90% of new employment opportunities by 2026 with the largest increases in the *Health Care and Social Assistance* and *Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services* industries.<sup>3</sup> Prioritizing properties within walkable downtowns will create potential office space for these growing sectors that will attract employees who are mostly looking to relocate to dense neighborhoods. Priority sites are zoned for mixed-use, allowing flexibility and opportunity for additional affordable housing, office space, or services investment. The redevelopment potential is one reason each of the priority sites were chosen. In Fuquay-Varina, the former *Dry Cleaner Site* is well-suited for a multi-story building with affordable residential apartments above retail stores or offices, while the *Dealership Site* offers ample space for a multi-story, mixed-use development. The *Main Street Gas Station Site* can be infilled to match the adjacent downtown buildings with a ground floor retail shop and apartments on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. In Wake Forest, the *Auto Care Site* building has an interesting mid-century design that could be repurposed, or the entire parcel could be transformed into a mixed-use redevelopment with retail, office space, and quality, affordable, and energy-efficient new housing. The *Welsh Warehouse* offers an opportunity to adaptively reuse the building for downtown office space or studio space. A new multifamily townhome development was recently constructed immediately behind the warehouse property, which is now prime for reuse as walkable office space.

For our target communities, these reuse strategies will help address four critical challenges: a lack of local jobs; underutilized downtowns and sprawl that burden government infrastructure; disproportionate burden on minority and lower income residents; and contamination within populated areas. With funding from this project, the TJCOG will address the environmental issues that are hindering the redevelopment of these sites and conduct planning activities to help identify viable development, housing, or business uses for the priority sites.

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

While the Triangle J region has seen population increases in recent years, less than 10% of

<sup>3</sup> NC Department of Commerce. <https://www.nccommerce.com/data-tools-reports/economic-development-reports>

residents living in Fuquay-Varina and Wake Forest work in their residential community.<sup>4</sup> With little available in both downtowns, new residential growth has largely been on the edges of town, contributing to the continuing sprawl in the region. As a result, the historic cores aesthetically and economically lag behind the Towns as a whole, the County, and the TJCOG region in terms of key demographic indicators (see sec. 2.a.i). The **Target Areas are disadvantaged communities** with a significantly higher percentage of lower income residents and residents that identify as a person of color. By building denser, walkable, and connected downtowns, our target communities will leverage the regional marketplace filled with higher-paying jobs to attract growing industries, such as professional, scientific, and technical services, and their employees to locate in these towns. The redevelopment of sites with energy-efficient, affordable housing will provide residents with newer, higher quality options rather than older homes with potential lead-based paint issues.

The target communities are already making progress on this goal, and the priority brownfield sites offer great potential for infill redevelopment. Funding from this project will enable the TJCOG to stimulate economic development in the Target Areas by clearing the environmental issues to attract capital, put underutilized or vacant sites back into productive reuse, and increase property values, employment, and tax revenues. For example, a multi-story, mixed-use development with 60 energy-efficient apartments, including a mixture of affordable and market-rate units, on the *Dealership Site* in Fuquay-Varina – would attract a \$12 million investment, create over 225 construction jobs, and generate significantly more tax revenue than the current assessed value of \$1 million. In Wake Forest, the sustainable, adaptive reuse of the *Welsh Warehouse* would require a \$1.5 million capital investment, create approximately 30 construction jobs, and at least double the current assessed value of \$786,000. More importantly, the projects would bring residents, office workers, and visitors to the downtown areas, which would generate an even greater economic impact by circulating spending at local businesses and further catalyzing capital investment.

**c. Strategy for Leveraging Resources**

**i. Resources Needed for Site Reuse**

TJCOG, as a regional governmental entity, and the towns of Fuquay-Varina and Wake Forest, as local governments, are eligible for a multitude of state and Federal grants. Completing environmental assessments, cleanup planning, and redevelopment planning with this brownfield funding will enable TJCOG to assist member communities with developing a strategy for cleanup and redevelopment. If cleanup is significant and requires public assistance, TJCOG and/or individual towns may take a direct role, acquire the site, and pursue an EPA Brownfields Cleanup Grant or Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund. For most sites, however, the cleanup will likely be integrated into the overall redevelopment plan and financial stack. Local funds will be foundational; developers can pursue Historic Tax Credits since all prioritized sites are eligible, leverage internal planning and staffing support, and utilize strategic support from Preservation NC and the NC Main Street Program. TJCOG will also encourage potential developers to enroll sites into the NC Brownfields Program to coordinate cleanup and redevelopment efforts, ensure the safe reuse of sites, secure liability protections, and take advantage of state tax incentives. Once assessments and planning activities are complete, funding through the US Economic Development Administration (EDA) and TJCOG's Economic Development District will be leveraged for infrastructure needs – EDA rarely funds assessment or planning activities. Wake County's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding is also available for projects that incorporate affordable housing. In addition, Wake County's Equitable Economic Development project offers additional incentives and funding to businesses that invest in highly vulnerable census tracts, in which all of Fuquay-Varina sites are designated. Additional funding may include GoldenLEAF Foundation Infrastructure Grants intended to assist with economic recovery for historic tobacco communities. TJCOG is committed to securing funding from these other sources to maximize the potential of the priority sites.

**ii. Use of Existing Infrastructure**

The priority sites have the needed infrastructure in place to serve the proposed redevelopments. Existing water, sewer, and electricity services are sufficient and have the necessary capacity to support planned mixed-use redevelopments. Additionally, high speed, fiber internet connections are available to help attract high-tech industries. Recent streetscape and road improvement projects have been completed in the Target Areas to improve connectivity and accessibility for downtown businesses. No additional infrastructure is anticipated to be needed.

<sup>4</sup> US Census. <https://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>. Accessed October 2021

**2. COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

**a. Community Need**

**i. The Community’s Need for Funding**

TJCOG provides project-specific assistance tied directly to grant-funded activities or contracts for our members. Our budget depends upon grants and contracts, as we do not have taxing authority. Therefore, we do not have funding available for environmental assessments of brownfields. In addition, our Target Areas are within Towns with **small populations** and limited resources and staff capacity. As the following table shows, while the towns metrics are mostly on par with Wake County and the region (only lagging in per capita income), the Target Areas are noticeably more disadvantaged and have a significantly higher percentage of low-income residents. The Fuquay-Varina Target Area has a per capita income **32% less than the Town and 42% less than Wake County**, while the Wake Forest Target Area has a per capita income **20% less than the Town and 26% less than Wake County**. Wake Forest, and Fuquay-Varina continue to experience population increases, but largely in the outlying residential neighborhoods, putting additional strain on the towns’ infrastructure and staffing. This growth has been uneven, with a much larger percentage of residential growth than non-residential growth, resulting in a much smaller amount of tax revenue to accommodate increased population. For example, Fuquay-Varina’s *2035 Community Vision Land Use Plan* highlighted an estimated \$140.87 million in residential investment compared to only \$60.8 million in non-residential investment during 2016. Due to these financial challenges and strain on resources, our target communities are also unable to directly fund brownfield assessments. Instead, TJCOG is working with these communities for external capacity to conduct brownfields education, secure funding resources, coordinate with potential developers, and eventually get these properties back on the Town’s tax revenues.

<b>Demographic Data<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>Fuquay-Varina Target Area<sup>6</sup></b>	<b>Fuquay-Varina</b>	<b>Wake Forest Target Area<sup>7</sup></b>	<b>Wake Forest</b>	<b>Wake County</b>	<b>TJCOG Region</b>	<b>North Carolina</b>
Total Population	2,551	22,281	2,421	39,122	1,046,558	1,912,670	10,155,624
% People of Color	<b>30</b>	29	<b>44</b>	28	40	40	37
% Low Income	<b>56</b>	22	<b>38</b>	18	23	28	36
% Less Than High School Education	<b>9</b>	7	<b>11</b>	4	7	9	13
% Over age 65	14	14	<b>23</b>	11	11	13	15
Per Capita Income	<b>\$22,859</b>	\$33,836	<b>\$29,091</b>	\$36,139	\$39,102	\$34,529	\$29,456
% Unemployed	<b>6</b>	3	<b>4</b>	4	3	3	4
% Renter Occupied Housing	<b>56</b>	28	<b>44</b>	31	36	36	35

**ii. Threats to Sensitive Populations**

**(1) Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations**

Sensitive populations are heavily concentrated within the Target Areas. As the EJSCREEN data shows (see table in 2.a.i), the Target Areas have higher percentages of elderly populations and higher levels of poverty than their surrounding towns, Wake County, and North Carolina. These sensitive populations are more susceptible to the risks of exposure to environmental contamination, including the heavy metals, PAHs, VOCs, SVOCs, solvents (PCE and TCE), and petroleum contaminants suspected on the priority sites. Nearby residents, trespassers, and those living down-gradient are at risk to exposure from contamination on site, plumes migrating offsite, or contaminated runoff washed from the sites. In addition, the Target Areas have a higher percentage of residents that identify as a person of color, a higher percentage of residents with less than a high school education, and higher percentage of unemployed. The Target Areas also have a higher percentage of renter-occupied homes and home built before 1950, where maintenance and lead-based paint are concerns.

Assessments under this project will allow TJCOG to identify the actual risks on the sites and take actions to mitigate any potential threats to the health of the sensitive populations in the Target Areas and the communities as a whole. By facilitating the reuse of the priority sites, the project will improve the welfare of the Target Areas by increasing the density of downtown development, attracting a diverse array of stores and services, and creating jobs and housing directly in the Target Areas – resulting in increased quality of life, and improved civic pride and downtown aesthetics. Since the region’s robust economy and economic growth seems to have bypassed the identified Target Areas, this investment in the Target Areas will lead to a safer environment for nearby residents and

<sup>5</sup> Data from the EPA’s EJSCREEN mapper, 2014—2018 ACS Data; accessed October 2021

<sup>6</sup> Data for Fuquay-Varina Target Area is from Census Blockgroup: 371830531072

<sup>7</sup> Data for Wake Forest Target Area is from Census Blockgroup: 371830542051



businesses, with the ability to amplify investment and catalyze future economic opportunity.

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

The 2020 Wake County Human Services Public Health Report for Chronic Disease (latest available) revealed that cancer ranks as the number one cause of death in Wake County, with tracheal/bronchial/lung cancers identified as the leading cause of cancer-related deaths. Heart disease ranks as the second cause of death, followed by cerebrovascular, Alzheimer's, and lower respiratory diseases. Exposures to heavy metals (suspected at *Dealership Site*), solvents (suspected at *Tops Cleaners*), and pesticides (suspected at *Welsh Warehouse*) have been linked to increased incidence of cardiovascular disease. Exposure to airborne particulates, such as wind-blown contaminated soils and asbestos from the deteriorating buildings on the priority sites, may contribute to and/or complicate asthma and other respiratory diseases, and PAHs, a constituent of petroleum (known or suspected at several of our priority sites), is also linked to lung cancers. Brief exposure to friable ACM (suspected at the *Welsh Warehouse* and *Auto Care*) can cause mesothelioma, a lung cancer. The North Carolina County Trends Report also tracks state and county-wide trends in key health indicators. Data from the most recent (February 2019) report indicate that Wake County has elevated levels compared to the State for multiple parameters including Age-adjusted Prostate Cancer Rates per 100,000 Residents (171.3 County vs. 161.8 State) and Age-adjusted Female Breast Cancer Incidence Rates per 100,000 Residents (199.8 County vs. 159.8 State). Exposures to pesticides (suspected at the *Welsh Warehouse*) and heavy metals, such as Cadmium (suspected at *Dealership Site*) have been linked to prostate cancers. The assessments will help identify the actual risks, so appropriate actions can be taken to prevent exposures and mitigate health concerns.

(3) Promoting Environmental Justice

In the Target Areas, the sensitive populations are disproportionately impacted by the economic shifts over the past few decades and the growth of brownfields in their wake. Income levels remain stagnantly low in the Target Areas, where a higher percentage are minority residents. The Census Bureau's Opportunity Atlas found that in Fuquay-Varina, Black residents born to high-income families make an average household income of \$37,000 while Caucasian residents of the same economic status make \$63,000. This trend extends to Wake Forest, where Black residents make \$28,000, while Caucasian residents make \$57,000.<sup>8</sup> The EPA's EJSCREEN further demonstrates that the Target Areas are also disproportionately impacted by negative environmental factors in addition to the numerous brownfield sites in their midst. In Fuquay-Varina, the Target Area is in the 70<sup>th</sup> percentiles of ozone, NATA diesel particulate matter, NATA cancer risk, the NATA respiratory hazard index, and proximity to superfund sites. Residents here are also living in the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile for lead based paint. In Wake Forest, the Target Area is in the 80<sup>th</sup> percentile for proximity to hazardous waste and superfund sites, lead paint, National Air Toxics Assessment (NATA) cancer risk, the NATA respiratory hazard index, and NATA diesel particulate matter.

This project will help address these environmental justice challenges, by encouraging proper and safe redevelopment of brownfield sites to mitigate health risks, restore economic vitality, increase social wellbeing, and facilitate wealth building in the Target Areas and beyond. Once the environmental uncertainties are quantified, the *Tops Cleaners* site can be developed into new retail, office space, and/or apartments; while the *Dealership Site* can become a larger mixed-use development to bring new economic opportunities and additional housing at the center of Main Street in the Fuquay-Varina Target Area. Similarly, in Wake Forest, the *Auto Care Site* can become a mixed-used development with new businesses (jobs) and housing, while the *Welsh Warehouse* can provide new office and studio space for the Target Area. Through this project, TJCOG can assist the Target Areas with overcoming such Environmental Justice barriers to transform their community – while keeping the historic character of these downtowns intact.

**b. Community Engagement**

i. Project Involvement and ii. Project Roles

TJCOG will work with the Target Area communities and other county and local government partners in the region to establish a Brownfields Task Force, composed of local staff, community representatives, and stakeholders from the development community. The following community-based partners, among others, will be actively involved in guiding implementation efforts, including participating in community workshops for their target area.

<sup>8</sup> US Census Opportunity Atlas. <https://www.opportunityatlas.org/>. Accessed October 2021.

FY2022 EPA Triangle J Council of Governments Community-wide Brownfields Assessment Grant

Partner Name	Point of contact (name, email & phone)	Specific role in the project
Pine Acres Community Center	Brian Haynes (919) 604-1122	Will help with public outreach to Fuquay-Varina Target Area, and will provide space to host public meetings.
Fuquay-Varina Downtown Association, Inc	Dawn Russell <a href="mailto:drussell@fuquay-varina.org">drussell@fuquay-varina.org</a> 919-753-1040	Will help with outreach to property owners, identify sites with redevelopment potential, encourage participation and redevelopment, assist with site selection and reuse planning.
Fuquay-Varina Chamber of Commerce	Kate Davis <a href="mailto:kdavis@fuquay-varina.com">kdavis@fuquay-varina.com</a> 919-552-4947	Will support outreach to the local business and development community, assist with business recruitment, and identify community and business needs for redevelopment planning.
Rotary Club of Fuquay-Varina	Melissa Rachels <a href="mailto:melissa@rachelsffh.com">melissa@rachelsffh.com</a> 919-552-2211	Will invite project team members to speak at regularly scheduled meetings, help disseminate project information, and encourage public participation.
Wake Forest Chamber of Commerce	Ann Welton, President <a href="mailto:Ann@wakeforestchamber.org">Ann@wakeforestchamber.org</a> 919-556-1519	Will support outreach to the local business and development community, assist with business recruitment, and identify community and business needs for redevelopment planning.
Wake Forest Downtown, Inc.	Dave Lucey, Chair <a href="mailto:Dave@page158books.com">Dave@page158books.com</a> 919-435-9415	Will help with outreach to property owners, identify sites with redevelopment potential, encourage participation and redevelopment, assist with site selection and reuse planning.
Wake Forest Business Association	Jason Cannon, President <a href="mailto:jcannon@wakeforestnc.gov">jcannon@wakeforestnc.gov</a> 919-435-9420	Will assist with outreach to the business community, share project information, encourage property owners to participate, identify sites and community needs, and participate in redevelopment planning.

Members of the Task Force will serve as brownfield ambassadors and advisors throughout the project and will meet at least quarterly, in a hybrid manner, to review the project’s progress, ensure project alignment with community interests and needs, promote the project, and communicate with project staff. A strong emphasis on developing a Task Force composed of diverse representation in age, gender, and expertise will be prioritized.

Individual representatives for Fuquay-Varina and Wake Forest will lead individual Community Workshops within their Target Areas. These Community Workshops will include representatives of each specific Target Area (residents, business leaders, stakeholders) and will review the site inventory, prioritize additional sites for assessment, discuss redevelopment plans, invite public comment, and solicit feedback for their target community. The Task Force will rely on the input from each Community Workshop to make project decisions and ensure community needs are met. Attendance at Community Workshops will be evaluated to identify the diversity of attendees and to ensure decisions are truly being formed and implemented on behalf of nearby community members.

iii. Incorporating Community Input

While the Community Workshops will serve as the main conduit for disseminating information and encouraging public participation, the project team will also hold regional workshops to educate other TJCOG member communities and developers on the benefits of brownfields redevelopment. A public outreach campaign and website page managed by TJCOG will be maintained and updated regularly with information about the grant award, project timelines, relevant education on the benefits of brownfields redevelopment, and opportunities to provide feedback and input.

Our target communities plan to capitalize on previous outreach successes in each individual town, learn from these methods, and employ similar sessions. In order to be equitable, hybrid open house meetings will be scheduled to occur at appropriate intervals throughout the 3-year project period. These advertised public meetings will be conducted within each Target Area during varying hours to accommodate the schedules of those who may have non-traditional work hours, childcare concerns, and to encourage participation by providing inclusive engagement forums. With focus on residents and business owners potentially affected by the project, these meetings will include project updates by project staff and consultants about program status and will provide an open forum for engagement and education. Accommodations will be made when non-English speaking communities are identified in the project area. The entire engagement process will be documented, so other TJCOG communities can use successes and lessons learned as they seek to build inclusive, community-rooted engagement processes for their own brownfield redevelopment projects.

At the beginning of each Community Workshop, the project team will provide an evaluation of progress that addresses previous public comment. The project team recognizes that solicitation of public comment is extremely important, but that moving response towards action is more important to effectively redevelop sites within affected communities. These public quarterly evaluations will promote transparency to the affected communities, make the process interactive and applicable, and

cultivate buy-in from nearby community members.

TJCOG will maintain sign-in sheets for follow-up communication (if applicable) related to input incorporated into the project. All public comments/inquiries will be addressed by the project team and/or Task Force and responded to by the project team in a timely manner.

**3. TASK DESCRIPTIONS, COST ESTIMATES, AND MEASURING PROGRESS**

**a. Description of Tasks and Activities**

The TJCOG is prepared to complete the following tasks within the three years:

<b>Task 1: Project Management &amp; Reporting</b>
i. The TJCOG Project Manager (Lindsay Whitson) will oversee the grant management and compliance with EPA grant terms and conditions. She will ensure tasks are completed efficiently and will be responsible for oversight of the Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP), which has already been procured. She will hold monthly project team meetings and lead quarterly Task Force meetings to review the project and make corrections as needed to stay on schedule and meet the project’s goals. With assistance from the QEP, she will complete EPA quarterly reports, Federal Financial Report (FFR) and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) utilization forms, and ACRES database entries/updates. TJCOG staff and representatives from the Target Areas will also attend national and regional training workshops relevant to brownfields redevelopment. At the end of the project, with assistance from the QEP, she will draft a Final Performance Report to document accomplishments and lessons learned.
ii. Schedule: October 1, 2022 – September 30, 2025
iii. Task/Activity Lead: TJCOG Project Manager
iv. Outputs: 36 Project Team Meetings; 12 Brownfield Task Force Meetings; 12 Quarterly Reports; 3 FFR and DBE forms; regular ACRES updates; 1 Final Performance Report
<b>Task 2: Community Outreach</b>
i. The TJCOG Project Manager will lead the community outreach efforts with support from the project team (QEP and TJCOG staff). Specific tasks include the establishment of a Brownfields Task Force, facilitating community workshops in the Target Areas and through virtual platforms, and preparation of outreach materials. Task Force meetings will occur quarterly and Community Workshops multiple times annually. TJCOG will also hold regional workshops to educate other TJCOG member communities and developers on the benefits of brownfields redevelopment. The project team will also conduct outreach to community groups, property owners, and developers quarterly. Documentation of outreach efforts and responses will be synthesized and catalogued to help steer desirable implementation projects that are reflective of the nearby community’s needs. The project team will create educational print media (infographic fact sheets, brochures, flyers, etc.) and create and maintain a dedicated website page and social media forum for program information and resources. TJCOG will evaluate and record traffic on the website and social media platform(s), as capabilities allow.
ii. Schedule: Oct 2022 – Sep 2025; Task Force meetings in 1 <sup>st</sup> month of each quarter; Community Workshops every 3 months; regional workshops each Spring; release of project outreach materials begins in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter and will continue through the end of the project; other meetings anticipated quarterly.
iii. Task/Activity Lead: TJCOG Project Manager with support from Project Team
iv. Outputs: 12 Task Force Meetings; 12 Community Workshops; 3 Regional Workshops, 6 print outreach materials; 1 webpage; 12 meetings with community groups, site owners, and/or developers
<b>Task 3: Site Assessments and Cleanup Planning</b>
i. The QEP will complete site assessments on sites identified as priorities for the community. Site Eligibility Forms will be completed for EPA approval, and petroleum determinations will be requested from NCDEQ UST Division. Phase I ESAs will be performed by the QEP in accordance with ASTM E1527-13 and the EPA All Appropriate Inquiry Final Rule. Phase II ESAs will be conducted by the consultant in accordance with ASTM E1903-19, after the approval of a Generic Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) and Site-specific QAPPs (SSQAPPs). The QEP will also develop Health and Safety Plans (HASPs) prior to field work. ACM and LBP surveys will be completed for many of the older buildings on priority sites. Health Monitoring activities will not be conducted under this project. For sites with contamination, Analysis of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives (ABCAs) will be developed to identify applicable remediation alternatives for the site based on potential reuse scenarios.
ii. Schedule: Generic QAPP in the 1 <sup>st</sup> quarter; Phase I ESAs start the 2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter and continue as funding allows until the 9 <sup>th</sup> . ACM&LBP Surveys and Phase II ESAs start in the 3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter after approval of QAPP and SSQAPPs and will continue as funding allows until the 10 <sup>th</sup> . ABCAs will be completed after

Phase IIs, anticipated to begin in the 5 <sup>th</sup> quarter and continue through the 11 <sup>th</sup> .
iii. Task/Activity Lead: QEP with oversight from TJCOG Project Manager
iv. Outputs: 10 Ph I ESAs; 1 QAPP; 8 SSQAPPs, HASPs, & Ph IIs; 4 ACM/LBP Surveys; 4 ABCAs
<b>Task 4: Redevelopment Planning</b>
i. TJCOG staff will work with community partners to develop a brownfields strategy for each community by identifying prioritized brownfield sites, opportunities for redevelopment, and resources needed to achieve specific community goals. With assistance from the QEP, TJCOG staff will also lead community visioning sessions for site-specific reuse plans for priority sites and will develop market studies to understand local market demands and trends to help facilitate redevelopment of priority sites. TJCOG will ensure that redevelopment visions and implementation efforts align with any other applicable local and regional plans already adopted.
ii. Schedule: Reuse plans and market studies start in 5 <sup>th</sup> quarter and continue through the 11 <sup>th</sup> quarter.
iii. Task/Activity Lead: QEP with oversight from TJCOG Project Director
iv. Outputs: 3 Site-specific Reuse Studies; 3 Market Studies

**b. Cost Estimates and Outputs**

The following costs and anticipated outputs were estimated based on information from other communities that have recently received EPA brownfield grants:

Categories	Task 1	Task 2	Task 3	Task 4	Total
Personnel	\$10,080	\$8,100		\$8,640	<b>\$26,820</b>
Fringe Benefits	\$4,739	\$3,808		\$4,062	<b>\$12,609</b>
Travel	\$10,000				<b>\$10,000</b>
Supplies		\$3,600			<b>\$3,600</b>
Contractual	\$21,000	\$25,200	\$341,112	\$48,000	<b>\$435,312</b>
Total Direct Costs	\$45,819	\$40,708	\$341,112	\$60,702	<b>\$488,341</b>
Total Indirect Costs	\$4,382	\$3,521	\$-	\$3,756	<b>\$11,659</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$50,201</b>	<b>\$44,229</b>	<b>\$341,112</b>	<b>\$64,458</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>

**TASK 1: PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING:**

- Personnel: TJCOG staff time for oversight and reporting \$36/hr x 280 hrs = \$10,080
- Fringe: 47.01% of Personnel Cost (47.01%x\$10,080) = \$4,739
- Indirect: 29.57% of Personnel Cost (29.57%x(\$10,080+\$4,739) = \$4,382
- Travel: 4 staff attend 3 regional workshops (4x3x\$500/person); 2 staff attend national conference (2x\$2,000/person) = \$10,000
- Contractual: 36 project team meetings (36x\$325); 12 Quarterly Reports (12x\$250); 1 final summary report (\$3,300); quarterly ACRES updates (12x\$250) = \$21,000

**TASK 2: COMMUNITY OUTREACH:**

- Personnel: TJCOG staff time \$36/hr x 225 hrs = \$8,100
- Fringe: 47.01% of Personnel Cost (47.01%x\$8,100) = \$3,808
- Indirect: 29.57% of Personnel Cost (29.57%x(\$8,100+\$3,808) = \$3,521
- Supplies: Presentation materials, printing costs (12x\$300) = \$3,600
- Contractual: Task Force meetings (12x\$1,250); Community Workshops (12x\$600); project outreach materials (6x\$500) = \$25,200

**TASK 3: SITE ASSESSMENTS AND CLEANUP PLANNING:**

- Contractual: Phase I ESAs (10x\$3,000); Generic QAPP (\$3,000); SSQAPPs (8x\$4,500); HSPs (8x\$500); Phase II ESAs (8x\$30,014 avg); ACM & LBP surveys (4x\$4,000); ABCAs or ACM Abatement Plans (4x\$3,000) = \$341,112

**TASK 4: REDEVELOPMENT PLANNING:**

- Personnel: TJCOG staff time \$36/hr x 240 hrs = \$8,640
- Fringe: 47.01% of Personnel Cost (47.01%x\$8,640) = \$4,062
- Indirect: 29.57% of Personnel Cost (29.57%x(\$8,650+\$4062) = \$3,756
- Contractual: Reuse plans (3x\$9,000); market study (3x\$7,000) = \$48,000

**c. Measuring Environmental Results**

TJCOG will hold monthly conference calls with the Project Team (including EPA’s Region 4 project officer and NCDEQ project manager) to review progress and take corrective actions, when necessary, to ensure the funds are expended in an efficient and timely manner. The Task Force will

meet quarterly to review community priorities, address any community concerns, and guide the project. TJCOG will submit Quarterly Reports, detailing the outputs and outcomes of the project, and enter and track site-specific information in the online ACRES database. At a minimum, outputs to be tracked include the number of and attendees present at Community Workshops and Task Force meetings, public meetings, environmental assessments, ABCAs, and redevelopment plans; and, the outcomes to be tracked include community participation, acres assessed, acres ready for reuse, redevelopment dollars leveraged, and jobs created.

**4. PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE**

**a. Programmatic Capability**

i. Organizational Capacity, ii. Organizational Structure, and iii. Key Staff: TJCOG provides planning, coordination, and technical assistance for member communities. As such, TJCOG has managed the programmatic and financial aspects of numerous federal and state grants from the Economic Development Administration, Department of Environmental Quality, Housing and Urban Development, and the State Historic Preservation Office to name a few. Lindsay Whitson, Community and Economic Development Manager, will serve as the Project Manager and will be responsible for overseeing all grant activities, consultants, and funds, submitting all required reports to EPA, and ensuring all project activities are in accordance with the work plan and the grant terms and conditions. Lindsay joined TJCOG in January 2020, spearheading all Economic Development Administration (EDA) projects and budgets, and oversees the Foreign Trade Zone #93 annual budget, and manages other locally funded contractual agreements. She has extensive grant management experience and will be supported by TJCOG Financial Services staff with the management of grant funds. She will be supported by Ms. Alana Keegan, Assistant to the Executive Director for TJCOG. Ms. Keegan works to build stronger connections with member governments, manages all internal marketing and engagement, and designs engagement and communication plans for the organizations’ programs, projects, and initiatives. Prior professional experience includes creating digital communication & outreach plans, leading strategic visioning workshops for public and private sector entities, and project management. She is a current MS in Communication candidate at NC State University and has a BA in Economics from Muhlenberg College. Both have extensive grant management experience and will be supported by TJCOG Financial Services staff with the management of grant funds.

iv. Acquiring Additional Resources: TJCOG followed the procedures detailed in 2 CFR 200 and EPA’s rule at 2 CFR 1500 to procure a QEP to provide support for grant activities. TJCOG released a competitive, public Request for Qualifications in August 2020 and selected the team deemed most qualified in September 2020. A contract was negotiated and specific task orders will be issued once TJCOG receives the grant award. The selected firm will provide technical and programmatic support for all aspects of the proposed project. TJCOG will follow a similar process if additional resources are needed.

**b. Past Performance and Accomplishments**

ii. TJCOG has not previously received an EPA Brownfields Grant.

(1) Purpose and Accomplishments

Date	Awarding Agency	Amount	Accomplishments	Specific Outputs And Outcomes
2020	Economic Development Administration	\$400,000	CARES Act Supplement Funds to support COVID recovery.	Help local governments and regional partners plan and strategically implement COVID recovery strategies.
2019	Economic Development Administration	\$210,000	Create regional planning efforts centered on economic development that focus on leveraging partnerships and funding and minimizing duplication.	Development and implementation of Comprehensive Development Strategy (CEDS).
2018	Department of Energy Recovery Act	\$31 million	Major expansion of alternative fuel vehicles and refueling infrastructure.	540 alternative fuel vehicles; 140 fueling stations (46 sub-recipients and 200 technology providers).

(2) Compliance with Grant Requirements

TJCOG met all of the requirements and conditions of the grant funding described above, including consistent communication with the granting agency’s project managers, project timeliness, achieving and recording expected results, and submitting all required reports in a timely manner. TJCOG is also diligent when following Federal procurement policies for contractual work.

**1. Applicant Eligibility**

The Triangle J Council of Governments (TJCOG) is a regional governmental agency. A copy of the establishing charter resolution is attached.

**2. Community Involvement**

TJCOG will work with the Target Area communities and other county and local government partners in the region to establish a Brownfields Task Force, composed of local staff, community representatives, and stakeholders from the development community. Members of the Task Force will serve as brownfield ambassadors and advisors throughout the project and will meet at least quarterly, in a hybrid manner, to review the project's progress, ensure project alignment with community interests and needs, promote the project, and communicate with project staff. A strong emphasis on developing a Task Force composed of diverse representation in age, gender, and expertise will be prioritized.

Individual representatives for Fuquay-Varina and Wake Forest will lead individual Community Workshops within their Target Areas. These Community Workshops will include representatives of each specific Target Area (residents, business leaders, stakeholders) and will review the site inventory, prioritize additional sites for assessment, discuss redevelopment plans, invite public comment, and solicit feedback for their target community. The Task Force will rely on the input from each Community Workshop to make project decisions and ensure community needs are met. Attendance at Community Workshops will be evaluated to identify the diversity of attendees and to ensure decisions are truly being formed and implemented on behalf of nearby community members.

**3. Named Contractors and Subrecipients**

N/A. TJCOG did not name a contractor or subrecipient in the narrative portion of this grant application.

**4. Expenditure of Existing Grant Funds**

N/A. TJCOG does not have an open EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant or Multipurpose Grant.