

## **Ranking Criteria for Assessment Grants**

### **1. Community Need: Targeted Community and Brownfields**

*i. Targeted Community Description:* Located in the center of Connecticut, Meriden was formerly a leading manufacturing city. Once known as the “Silver City” due to the predominance of silver manufacturers, Meriden’s city center is now characterized by corporate and institutional flight, flooding, and disinvestment. Since the 1970’s, silver manufacturers disbanded or moved overseas, the community hospital and associated facilities relocated, and retail and other businesses fled to avoid persistent flooding. This disinvestment led to a hollowed out downtown, degraded neighborhoods and abandoned brownfields located in the heart of the city center. Three dozen known and potential brownfields (former manufacturing sites, an abandoned hospital, former printing facilities and automotive related sites) are intermingled with residential areas, public open space and commercial areas.

The presence of brownfields create multiple concerns for exposure to chemicals and asbestos in buildings that children and homeless frequently trespass, off-site migration into streams and open spaces, and the potential for direct exposure to airborne pollutants. The City will perform assessment activities in the target area that comprises Census Tracts 1701, 1702, 1703, 1709, 1710 and 1714. Activities will reduce the risk of exposure to environmental hazards and ultimately repurpose contaminated sites to create better housing and economic opportunities.

*ii. Demographic Information:* The target area includes the residential and commercial areas most affected by the decline of the silver manufacturing industry and the associated job loss, economic disinvestment, and environmental hazards. According to the American Community Survey (2008-2012, 5-year estimate) the area is predominantly low income, with a median household income of \$27,638; transient, with 48% of the population having moved in within the last five years; increasingly foreign born, with the number of foreign-born residents at 12%; and non-white, with a population that is 57% Hispanic and 10% African American. In almost every statistic, from individual and household income to educational attainment, target area residents lag far behind other city and state residents. While 21% of all Meriden residents fall below the poverty line, 33.8% of the residents within the target area fall below the poverty line. Citywide, median household income is \$51,363, but just \$26,329 within the target area. 59% of citywide households are owner occupied, but in the target area just 22% of households own their home.

While the national economic downturn eased during 2014, residents of the target area continue to be impacted by high levels of unemployment and lack of economic opportunity. In September 2014, citywide unemployment was 7.4%, a decrease from 9.5% in the prior year. However, a recent survey completed as part of the Choice Neighborhood (CN) planning process found that target neighborhood residents were significantly more likely to be unemployed than Meriden as a whole, with 25.6% of survey respondents reportedly not working and actively looking for work (Choice Neighborhoods Needs Assessment, November 2014). In that same survey, 17.8% of respondents reported that they struggle to find a job because they did not have the right skills; 16.9% said that they did not have the right education; and 23.5% said that they did not have adequate transportation.

The lack of ladders of opportunity in the target neighborhood is a worsening problem requiring residents to increasingly rely on state and federal aid. According to the 2010 Connecticut KIDS

COUNT Data Book, child recipients of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program in Meriden increased 32% from 2007-2009. The same source reports that 59% of children in Meriden are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches, and 1,588 children in Meriden were receiving assistance through Connecticut’s family welfare program (Temporary Family Assistance, TFA), a 10% increase from 2007 (while the state’s average increase was 2.3%). Young children bear the greatest burden of poverty with 68% of children under five living in families with incomes below the federal poverty level.

	Target Community/ Census Tracts: 1701-1703, 1708-1710, 1714	City: Meriden	State: Connecticut	National
Population	12,677 <sup>6</sup>	60,868 <sup>1</sup>	3,574,097 <sup>1</sup>	308,745,538 <sup>1</sup>
Unemployment	20.7% <sup>6</sup>	7.4% <sup>2</sup>	6.4% <sup>3</sup>	6.7% <sup>3</sup>
Poverty Rate	33.8 <sup>6</sup>	15.1% <sup>4</sup>	9.7% <sup>4</sup>	11.8% <sup>4</sup>
Percent Minority	69% <sup>6</sup>	26.5% <sup>1</sup>	22.4% <sup>1</sup>	26.7% <sup>1</sup>
Median HH Income	\$27,638 <sup>6</sup>	\$49,144 <sup>4</sup>	\$67,427 <sup>4</sup>	\$51,371 <sup>5</sup>
<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census		<sup>2</sup> CT Department of Labor, Sept. 2014		
<sup>3</sup> BLS, September 2014final		<sup>4</sup> 2008-2010 ACS 3-Year Estimates		
<sup>5</sup> 2009-2011 ACS		<sup>6</sup> ACS 2008-2012 5 Year Estimate		

*iii. Brownfields:* There are at least 35 known or potential brownfields in the target area. Sites include former manufacturing sites, an abandoned hospital, former printing facilities and automotive related sites intermingled with residential areas, public open space and commercial areas. City land use analysis shows that 30% of the target area is commercial or industrial, 42% is residential, 11% is vacant, and 26% is tax exempt. Six of the vacant, tax exempt sites (totaling 36 acres) in the target area are city-owned brownfields and relics of the once mighty silver industry now ready for assessment, cleanup, reuse planning and redevelopment.

For more than ten years, the city actively engaged with the public to identify and address the negative impact of brownfields. Representatives from community-based neighborhood organizations, including Dutch Hill, Action 13, Downtown Neighborhood Association, Goodwill/Lewis Ave, and the Mills Memorial Housing Complex/Meriden Children's First Family Zone, have and will play a key role in assessing and addressing brownfields. In 2002, the city formed Blight and Brownfields (B&B) a city-council sanctioned committee that includes city staff, Meriden Economic Development Corporation, stakeholder coalitions, such as the Meriden Council of Neighborhood Associations (Meriden CONA), and key property owners and residents from the affected neighborhoods (Action 13, Dutch Hill), as well as the Meriden Chamber of Commerce, educators, and environmental professionals actively working on assessment and cleanup activities. This group meets quarterly to discuss and address community concerns related to blighted and contaminated properties and to hear progress from city staff on brownfields related assessments and cleanup activities. Residents continually raise concerns about vacant buildings and properties, future plans for former manufacturing and industrial sites, how to repurpose underutilized retail and commercial sites, and removing abandoned residential structures. Key environmental concerns regularly addressed by residents include exposure to dust or other contaminants as a result of site cleanup, exposure to unknown contaminants in open

stream channels, vermin and pests, potential exposure to lead paint resulting from dilapidated housing stock, and trespassers on shuttered properties.

In 2011, the city and neighborhood-based community groups implemented several *Healthy Neighborhoods* workshops across the target area. Meetings were held (in Spanish and English) to identify community concerns related to the environment, health, safety, and economy. Following these workshops, the city completed tasks to address residents' concerns and to prioritize future action. Tasks included compiling an inventory and map of known/potential brownfields, creating a catalog of all brownfield reports and cleanup activities completed to date (over 100 reports covering 19 sites), and targeting several properties for acquisition. One recent acquisition is the former Meriden Wallingford hospital, which the city acquired in 2014 through tax foreclosure after the facility had been vacant for more than 20 years. The site includes a 245,000 square foot abandoned building occupying two city blocks. The site is located in the TOD zoning district, adjacent to a low income residential neighborhood, and in close proximity to an open stream channel (Harbor Brook) prone to flooding. The TOD district will be served by a commuter rail line currently under construction. A 2014 Phase I Assessment report revealed potential environmental concerns including: underground storage tank systems; asbestos; lead; PCBs; miscellaneous waste (universal, solid, hazardous); and potential radiation sources. Recent visits found a skateboard park set up in the basement, several 55-gallon drums of unknown chemicals, and hanging asbestos. Additional assessment work, such as an analysis of the hazardous building materials, Phase II/III Assessment reports, and site reuse planning are all needed. Addressing this site is a key concern to the Dutch Hill and Action 13 Neighborhood Associations.

The presence of contaminants at 1 King Place and other sites in the target area creates potential environmental hazards and makes site redevelopment difficult, at best, due to the fact that while many of the specific environmental hazards are unknown, the potential for the presence of significant environmental hazards is high. Many of the identified sites were once part of the silver manufacturing industry, whose legacy now includes the presence of numerous hazardous substances including volatile organic compounds, petroleum hydrocarbons, and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, and the metals antimony, arsenic, copper, lead, and vanadium. It is clear that economic development is hindered by both the real and perceived environmental hazards present. No significant development has occurred in the target area in more than 40 years.

*iv. Cumulative Environmental Issues:* Other cumulative environmental issues, such as asthma, low birth weights, and exposure to lead paint, disproportionately affect the residents compared to other city and state residents. A recent survey completed as part of the CN planning process suggests that target area residents near brownfields were significantly more likely to be impacted by asthma than citywide residents. The CN survey found the asthma rate among children in the target area is alarmingly high and trending in the wrong direction, with 41.7% of respondents indicating a household child diagnosed with asthma (CN Needs Assessment, November 2014). Data from the Connecticut Department of Health's Burden of Asthma Report shows that Meriden residents suffer from asthma more than other state residents, with 14.8% of Meriden residents in comparison to the state average of 9.2%. The Asthma Report also documented findings that asthma rates were twice as high for those with an annual household income less than \$15,000. Asthma, a leading cause of student absenteeism and disability, currently affects 1,633 (16.3%) of school age children in Meriden.

Second, target area residents have a greater risk of exposure to lead than other citywide residents due to the age of the housing stock and the prevalence of lead based paint in older housing structures. There are 4,401 housing units in the neighborhood, and the median age of the housing stock is 74 years. Citywide, the median age of the housing stock is 68 years old (23,787 housing units total). Older housing stock that is not maintained, and abandoned structures that are not secured, may impact neighborhood children that have access to these properties and play in contaminated soils and in direct contact with lead paint. City Health Department reports 30 children with 5 to 19 mg/dl of lead in blood and one child with above 20 mg/dl were treated for exposure to lead paint (from July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013).

The I-91 expressway, a major highway serving over 200,000 long haul trucks every year, and a major rail corridor runs within two miles of the target area. These diesel powered engines emit particulate emissions, a known toxic, which is also a threat to health and the environment.

***b. Impacts on Targeted Community:*** Target community conditions include a prevalence of brownfields with known or potential environmental hazards and depressed economic conditions, which disproportionately affect low income and minority residents living in the target area. Many residents are unable to report health concerns or take action because of educational/ awareness or language barriers, putting these sensitive populations at even higher risk of potential health problems. Identified brownfields undermine property values and are a stigma that impedes investment.

Data is available that shows that low income and minority residents are disproportionately affected by environmental hazards caused by abandoned brownfields compared to other Meriden residents. Targeted redevelopment of brownfields for new housing development will help alleviate exposures to aging housing stock. Lead exposure risks are high due to the city's high percentage of older housing stock and abundance of brownfields resulting from the city's industrial past. According to the 2008-2010 American Community Survey, within the target area, 77.7% of the housing stock was built before 1980 with a median housing age of 74 years, which is 8 years older than the city as a whole. In addition, 2010 Census statistics show that 39.1% of housing city-wide and 58.8% of housing within the target area is not owner-occupied. Meriden maintains programs in lead poisoning prevention and regulation enforcement through its Health Department and supports removal of lead hazards through its housing preservation program and through enforcement of its housing code and a Certificate of Occupancy program, which requires a bi-annual inspection of all rental units. However, residents who participated in the *Healthy Neighborhoods* workshop process and the CN survey stated they had concerns about lead paint, asbestos, and mold. Residents have also stated that landlords were reticent in correcting reported problems. The Connecticut Department of Public Health reports that in 2009 1.2% of Meriden children younger than six years had elevated blood lead levels ( $\geq 10 \mu\text{g/dL}$ ). This is over a third higher than the state's rate as a whole. These lead levels are most likely caused by young children living in older housing and having exposure to contaminated soils. The National Cancer Institute recognizes New Haven County (in which Meriden is located) as the highest cancer rate in the state, and Susan G. Komen data shows Meriden as one of six urban centers in Connecticut with high rates of late stage breast cancer.

According to CT Department of Public Health Annual Registration Reports, 8.3% of all infants and 14.8% of black infants born in Meriden in 2008 were of a low birth weight (potential connection to PAH exposure), higher than the state rate of 8%. According to the CT Department of Education data on physical fitness, Meriden children are less fit than the state average. As of January 2010, almost 70% of Meriden children were enrolled in the HUSKY federal Medicaid program and enrollment has increased by over 66% from 2006-2010 (2010 Connecticut KIDS COUNT Data Book). An environmental justice concern is the lack of access to healthy food and opportunities for exercise. The targeted redevelopment of some brownfields for recreational and greenspace uses will help to reverse these statistics.

The CN survey (more than 300 respondents fall within the targeted area) found that in addition to alarmingly high rates of asthma, other health problems included Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD or ADHD) (16.1% of survey respondents) and mental illness (10.1%). Respondents indicated concerns associated with litter, pests, safety and environmental conditions.

### ***c. Financial Need***

*i. Economic Conditions:* While the city has highly prioritized redevelopment of brownfields, the city lacks the local resources to fund the assessments. EPA grant funds are indispensable to the city and its residents as they face huge challenges associated with eliminating environmental impacts and revitalizing the target area. Previous EPA Assessment grants helped advance assessment and cleanup of several brownfields including some large sites such as the the HUB, Factory H and 116 Cook Ave. However, numerous sites remain of various size and potential contamination which require additional assessment funding support. The city has no current EPA assessment grants but there numerous sites that need assessment and reuse planning to facilitate reinvestment and sustainable growth in the target area. The city will utilize EPA Assessment funds to continue environmental assessment of sites that are targeted for redevelopment under other federal and state programs. For example, the State of Connecticut offers cleanup funds on a competitive basis; however not until Phase I/II/III and Remedial Action Planning is complete. The city will use EPA funds to complete assessments needed to leverage these cleanup funds and ultimately redevelop sites.

Assessment and cleanup costs for Meriden's brownfields are high due to the significant level of environmental hazards. The private sector shows no willingness or interest to absorb the cost and risk associated with the investigation and reuse of the brownfields. This is evidenced by the fact that no significant private development has occurred throughout the target area in more than 40 years. The city's path to repurposing the brownfields in the community includes environmental assessment using federal funds, cleanup using state or other federal programs, and ultimately transferring these properties back to the private sector for economically productive use.

*ii. Economic Effects of Brownfields* The large presence of brownfields has hindered economic growth in the target area. This is evidenced in the fact that the target area has been devoid of significant economic development since the silver manufacturing industry left over 40 years ago. City land use analysis shows that over two thirds of the target area is vacant (11%) or tax exempt (26%). Cleaning up and repurposing brownfields sites will help increase private ownership and grow the tax base. This is a key goal for all citywide residents, due to the fact that Meriden overwhelmingly relies on property taxes to fund city services. A decrease in property values

significantly impacts the City's ability to fund city services. In FY13/14, the City Manager projected that the City's Grand List would decrease by \$31 million from the prior year resulting in a \$1 million loss of property taxes compared to the prior year. Repurposing brownfield sites will help increase the Grand List and allow the City to fully fund all citywide services.

With an unemployment rate over twice as high in the target area than citywide, a large number of residents are unemployed, not financially self-sufficient, and heavily reliant on state and federal assistance. The number of households in Meriden receiving SNAP increased 60% from 2005 to 2010 (4,700), and much of this can be attributed to the loss of jobs and the lack of economic investment. The target area has a median household income of \$27,638 while according to Connecticut's self-sufficiency standard, a single-head of household needs to earn at least \$23 an hour, or \$47,840 annually, to make ends meet. Target area residents need jobs and access to jobs to help them become financially self-sufficient and less reliant on state and federal assistance.

## **2. Project Description and Feasibility of Success**

*i. Project Description:* The City of Meriden will use these grant funds to complete key tasks aimed at advancing the community revitalization plans within the target area. Tasks to be completed include project management (6% of the total project), Community Engagement (5.5%), Phase I/II/III Environmental Site Assessments (76%), and Site Reuse Planning (12.5%) on up to 35 sites in the target area. The project will enhance the Livability Principles of "supporting existing communities" and "valuing communities and neighborhoods." The historic neighborhoods and residents are valuable resources for the downtown revitalization and will benefit from improved access to recreation, greenspace, and transit and economic development. Assessment funds will lead to site redevelopment and the related jobs and opportunities for area residents. The city is committed to retaining the current residents while offering healthier and safer housing options and economic opportunities. To ensure that existing low-income residents benefit from the advent of improvement, the EPA Assessment funds will continue to direct stakeholder engagement and reuse planning to ensure assessment and cleanup result in economic and social benefits for neighborhood residents. Some sites can attract new small manufacturing or other businesses and jobs if the stigma of contamination is eliminated.

Assessment funding will also continue to support flood mitigation efforts by assessing sites to provide flood storage and greenspace. A lack of safe greenspace exists for the burgeoning pre-kindergarten and elementary age population. New pocket parks and small playgrounds will be a priority. Greenways and bikeways, planned and awaiting construction funding, will serve as connections to the downtown TOD. The city will seek opportunities to complete connections, utilizing brownfields within the neighborhoods.

*ii. Project Timing:* The Meriden Office of Economic Development will implement and execute project activities within the three year period of performance. Estimated timeline is as follows:

- Year 1 Key Tasks: Hold B&B Committee meetings (quarterly). Review priority sites for further assessment. Issue RFQ/RFP for Environmental Professionals. Complete Phase I ESAs. Complete Quarterly reports, drawdown EPA funds.
- Year 2 Key Tasks: Hold B&B Committee meetings (quarterly). Complete Phase II/III ESAs on up to five priority sites. Complete Quarterly reports, drawdown EPA funds.

- Year 3 Key Tasks: Hold B&B Committee meetings (quarterly). Complete site reuse planning on one to two sites (anticipated). Hold a community meeting on site reuse planning. Complete Quarterly reports, drawdown funds, issue Final Report.

Leading the city's efforts will be the Director of Economic Development, who is assisted by the Economic Development Associate. Both are full time staff reporting directly to the City Manager. Staff will also be assisted by the City Purchasing Officer, who plays a key role in contractor procurement and compliance with federal purchasing requirements. The Economic Development Associate will be responsible for report writing and grant compliance. Site selection and prioritization will be guided by the B&B Committee. The EPA Brownfields project manager, as well Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CTDEEP) remediation manager, will be ex-officio members and invited to quarterly B&B meetings.

The city will comply with all programmatic and financial reporting requirements and information will be provided to EPA in the ACRES database and through quarterly reporting to the EPA Brownfields project manager. To support EPA's GPRR reporting requirements, information will be available to EPA beyond the performance period of this grant. The city will identify a timeline of key milestones that can be linked to the desired outcomes for this project. Milestones will be created in a transparent fashion with key community stakeholders, in order to manage expectations regarding the assessment process. Key steps will include selecting and procuring a contractor, prioritizing site selection, and managing site access, as needed. Upon award of the grant, the city will initiate an open bid process for qualified environmental professionals (QEP) to submit qualifications. The city will use submissions to generate an on-call list of QEPs that can bid on projects as they are released by the city.

*iii. Site Selection:* The city has an existing inventory of 35 brownfields within the target area, of which more than a dozen of the sites are city-owned and more than a dozen are currently vacant. Sites will be prioritized for assessment and cleanup based on a stakeholder-driven reuse planning process intended to eliminate health impacts and create economic opportunities for residents, as well as healthy and safe living conditions. Working with the local health department, the B&B Committee will prioritize brownfields based on the impact to the community and potential for redevelopment. Additional decisions about site selection and prioritization will be influenced by ongoing activities associated with the larger redevelopment planning efforts associated with the HUD Choice Neighborhoods Grant and Promise Zone initiatives.

Priority projects include the Mills "Megablock", the focus of the Choice Neighborhood Planning Grant, where low-income residents live in environmentally-degraded conditions, and 1 King Place, a former turn-of-the century hospital with significant potential environmental impacts. The city identified 12 additional properties in the TOD District as priorities for assessment in order to determine the viability of these sites for future housing development and as potential sites for future relocation of Mills residents. Sites in the TOD District will compliment pedestrian-friendly, compact, mixed-use development.

**b. Task Description and Budget Table**

*i. Task Description: **Task 1: Cooperative Agreement Oversight** (6% of total project, based on 200 Project Manager hours at \$46.70/hr. plus travel expenses related to brownfields conferences*

*and workshops*). Funding will be used for city staff to: 1) attend brownfields educational workshops/ conferences, 2) complete all required performance reporting (ACRES), and 3) oversee assessment work. The city assumes two people will travel to a Brownfields Conference (with costs not to exceed \$1,764 for hotel, airfare, per diem and miscellaneous travel expenses) and a local, 2-day regional workshop (with costs not to exceed \$896 for hotel, car rental, per diem and miscellaneous travel expenses). The city has/will continue to contribute significant time of economic development, planning, and GIS personnel to manage and develop the brownfields program at no cost to the grant. The city made a major commitment to its brownfields program through material and in-kind staff support. Likely outputs from this task include enhanced staff knowledge, timely reporting, and well-managed assessment work.

**Task 2: Community Outreach & Engagement** *(5.5% of the total project, based on outside contractual support of 100 hours at \$100/hr. for stakeholder engagement)*. The city, and an outside contractor, will lead community engagement efforts, relying on support from members of the B&B Committee. The city will work with key community partners (below in Partnerships with Community Organizations) to secure outreach to constituents, including those in the targeted disadvantaged communities that might not have access to electronic media, and help develop meeting agendas for up to four community events. These events will build awareness and increase community engagement and participation in the assessment process and area-wide planning. Bilingual print media will be distributed at key locations to maintain visibility and diverse participation. Stakeholders will be actively involved in planning activities, including strategy creation to achieve equitable development principles, and help prioritize sites for brownfields assessment. Likely outputs include broad community and stakeholder involvement in assessment and area-wide planning activities and up to four community events.

**Task 3: Phase I and II/III Site Assessments** *(76% of the total project based on up to 5 ASTM Phase I Site Assessments at \$2400/each and up to 5 Phase II/III Site Assessments averaging \$30,000 each)*. ASTM standard Phase I Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs) will be performed on priority sites, selected based on the prioritization processes described above. Using the prioritization criteria and the required scope of investigation work, the city will identify up to five sites for Phase II/III ESAs. All appropriate inquiry will be conducted and prospective assessment sites will be submitted to EPA for approval prior to commencing any work. All state and federal technical requirements will be met, such as Quality Assurance requirements (QAPP) and Health and Safety Plan requirements (HASP), and the city will consult with EPA and meet the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and/or Section 7(a) (2) of the Endangered Species Act if any historic properties or endangered species may be impacted. Additionally, during assessment activities, care will be taken to protect the health and safety of the neighborhood and the community as a whole. A site-specific health and safety plan protective of workers and the public will be developed. Clear signage will be used to identify sites and a document repository will be created in City Hall and the Public Library for the duration of grant activities. Likely outputs will include up to 10 assessments completed.

**Task 4: Site Reuse and Cleanup Planning** *(12.5% of the total project based on outside contractual support of 250 hours at \$100/hr. for reuse planning strategies)*. Area-wide planning will be conducted to strategically support assessment and reuse. A planning document, consistent with the community's existing vision, will be created with a set of area-wide strategies to ensure

successful brownfields assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment throughout the target area. The strategies will be made available for public comment and input will be integrated into the area-wide plan. Strategies will identify opportunities to improve access to healthy and safe living, business development, and greenspace creation. The strategies will emphasize efforts to improve living conditions and health for current neighborhood residents, not to displace them.

Environmental justice and equitable development practices that avoid gentrification will also be integrated within the strategies and will relate to the city’s plans for improving its affordable housing stock through proposed ‘transit oriented developments’. The plan and strategies will focus on involving populations historically impacted by brownfields, ensuring they benefit from economic revitalization, such as job training, local investment, green business development, and local and minority-owned business development. These strategies will stitch together ongoing efforts in brownfield redevelopment, transit-oriented development, and neighborhood outreach, with increased involvement of new immigrant populations to create a collaborative area-wide plan that reflects extensive community input and a broad array of stakeholders. The strategies involving equitable development practices will provide a clear structure for how development in the downtown core can be carried through adjacent neighborhoods. Stakeholders include: Meriden Children First Initiative and its “Family Zone” project (modeled after the Harlem Children’s Zone), Greater Meriden Chamber of Commerce, neighborhood residents and businesses, and state and federal agencies. Likely outputs include an area-wide plan with a set of strategies for improving linkages between redevelopment efforts and increased outreach to the community. By channeling the community’s existing vision, as expressed in the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) and TOD Master Plan, into the broader area-wide planning proposed here, the city can draw strength from its past while working toward the future.

*ii. Budget Table*

<b>Budget Categories</b>	<b>Project Tasks</b>				
	Task 1: CA Oversight	Task 2: Outreach & Engagement	Task 3: Phase I/II/III Site Assessments	Task 4: Site Reuse & Cleanup Planning	<b>Total</b>
(programmatic costs only)					
Personnel	\$2,335	\$2,335	\$2,335	\$2,335	9,340
Travel	\$2,660				\$2,660
Supplies		\$1000			\$1,000
Contractual/QEP		\$10,000	\$152,000	\$25,000	\$187,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$12,000</b>	<b>\$11,000</b>	<b>\$152,000</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>	<b>\$200,000</b>

*c. Ability to Leverage:* EPA funds will be used to assess brownfields targeted for redevelopment under other federal and state programs. For example, the State of Connecticut offers cleanup funds on a competitive basis; however not until Phase I/II/III and Remedial Action Planning is complete. The city will use EPA funds to complete assessments and cleanup and reuse planning needed to leverage cleanup funds and ultimately redevelop these sites. Over the past decade, the city successfully leveraged funding from a variety of sources to support community revitalization and brownfield redevelopment. Previously leveraged funds that followed EPA-funded assessment activities include: \$1.4 million in Community Development Block Grant Section 108

Loan funds to demolish Factory H (140 Butler Street and 77 Cooper Street); \$12.89 million to remediate and construct a park and flood control storage area at the Hub site (1-77 State Street and 30-50 East Main Street); and \$200,000 for assessments at the Mills Mega Block site. The city was recently awarded \$757,000 State of CT Office of Brownfields funds for assessment and cleanup of city-owned sites in the TOD district including 1 King Place (\$180,000 for assessment) and 177 State Street (\$597,000 for cleanup). EPA funds will be used to leverage these new funding sources. The city is also working to leverage private investment in six, city-owned sites for a total investment potential of over \$50 million. In addition, the city contributes significant time of economic development, planning, and GIS personnel to manage and develop the brownfields program in Meriden at no cost to the grant (estimated at approximately \$10,000 a year). In addition, the B&B Committee members donate staff and volunteer time, and meeting space to the city's brownfield endeavors (estimated at \$500-\$2,500 per organization per year).

## **2. Community Engagement and Partnerships**

### **a. Plan for Involving Targeted Community & Other Stakeholders; Community Project Progress**

*i. Community Involvement Plan:* If awarded this grant, the city will continue a comprehensive stakeholder involvement program through the City/Meriden Housing Authority (MHA) Joint Planning Committee, the B&B Committee, and ongoing small business outreach and special outreach events. The City/MHA Committee, comprised of public housing residents, city and MHA staff, and the Board of Education, holds a public meeting monthly. Site assessments and site reuse planning will be incorporated into the Choice Neighborhoods Transformation Plan, which will be completed in November 2015. Stakeholders will also be encouraged to participate in the assessment and reuse activities through participation in quarterly B&B Committee meetings. Quarterly committee meetings are open to the public at locations convenient to stakeholders. B&B Committee members participate in Meriden Council of Neighborhood Association meetings to inform residents of B&B related activities. City Economic Development staff and the Meriden Chamber of Commerce meet regularly with small business owners in the target area to encourage participation in community meetings and share ideas about redevelopment in the target area. The city engages with the public by hosting special events and advertising events on the city website, distributing meeting flyers, and posting information on social media (through the City of Meriden Facebook and Twitter pages as well as through [www.meridenbiz.com](http://www.meridenbiz.com) brownfields page). A public meeting was held on December 11, 2014 to review and discuss this application. Public notice of the meeting was published in the *Meriden Record Journal* newspaper and posted on [www.meridenct.gov](http://www.meridenct.gov) from December 5 through December 11, 2014.

*ii. Communicating Progress:* Continuing its commitment to public engagement, the city will use the website [www.cityofmeriden.gov](http://www.cityofmeriden.gov) to inform the public about upcoming meetings and events. Events are regularly posted to the "Announcements" section and to the Public Meetings Calendar. Minutes of public meetings are also posted online at [meridenct.virtualtownhall.net/public\\_documents/MeridenCT\\_webdocs/minutes](http://meridenct.virtualtownhall.net/public_documents/MeridenCT_webdocs/minutes). Meriden maintains Facebook and Twitter accounts, used to advertise public meetings, forums, special events, and key milestones. The city also uses two websites, [meriden2020.com](http://meriden2020.com) and [meridenbiz.com](http://meridenbiz.com), to provide in depth information about downtown redevelopment and brownfields activities and progress towards key milestones. The Director of Economic Development regularly posts relevant information to the "Meriden Community Forum", a

Facebook page with over 2,500 participants, and uses her Twitter account to post information about various redevelopment activities. Additional activities will include public notification of the grant and the process of community involvement in the *Record Journal*. Grant and outreach information will be made available for public review at City Hall. All information will be included on the City of Meriden's brownfields webpage. All information and websites will be provided in English and Spanish, including carrying out communication in English and Spanish, as needed, throughout the process.

**b. *Partnerships with Government Agencies***

*i. Local/State/Tribal Environmental and Health Agencies:* The B&B Committee includes the local Health and Human Services Department, community organizations, and state agencies, such as the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (CTDECD) and CT Dept. of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), and EPA Region 1. Participants in the B&B Committee and are integrally involved in community outreach and strategic decision-making. CTDEEP participation in the B&B Committee is invaluable since it is responsible for overseeing the brownfields program.

*ii. Other Relevant Federal, State, and Local Governmental Agencies:* The City of Meriden will continue to work with the EPA Region 1 Brownfields staff. As well, the US Dept. of Housing and Urban Development is deeply engaged in efforts to foster development of a mixed-use, walkable, TOD community. These efforts continue in 2014 and 2015 with the implementation of the HUD Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant. CTDECD (primary funder of the HUB Park and Flood Control Project) recognizes the opportunity to invest in the redevelopment of the city to create a place to live, visit, and work, while facilitating development of affordable and workforce housing. CT Dept. of Transportation is investing \$20 million to revitalize the train station and institute commuter rail service from New Haven to Hartford (via Meriden).

*c. Partnerships with Community Organizations:* Meriden actively engages organizations in its brownfields program. Support letters documenting roles and commitments can be found in the Attachments. Meriden Children First Initiative (CFI) - Will provide outreach to Spanish-speaking residents, including the new immigrant community and youth populations. Dutch Hill Neighborhood Association - Will solicit feedback and maintain open lines of communication to the Dutch Hill neighborhood residents. Meriden Council of Neighborhoods - Will represent residents and businesses to ensure quality of life improvement is represented by this project. Greater Meriden Chamber of Commerce - Will act as liaisons with the business community and assist the city in hosting and organizing community meetings directed at their constituents. Meriden Housing Authority - Will work together to complete assessments for future development of affordable housing and mixed use development. Action 13 Neighborhood Association - Will solicit feedback and maintain open lines of communication to the Action 13 neighborhood residents. Quinnapiac River Watershed Association - Will represent the interests of the watershed and restoration of waterways envisioned in its Watershed Basin Plan. Meriden Linear Trail Advisory Committee - Will actively participate in the process to help ensure the linear trail system and waterways are free of environmental contamination. Meriden Land Trust - Will participate to ensure resources in the vicinity of Harbor Brook are restored.

**4. Project Benefits: a. *Health and/or Welfare and Environment***

*i. Health and/or Welfare Benefits:* Assessment and reuse planning of target area brownfields will result in specific health and welfare benefits for low income and minority residents. The outcomes of the assessment activities will better characterize the environmental contaminants and directly improve public health by identifying, quantifying, and preventing health risks to the area's most sensitive populations. By targeting sites with the greatest risk to children, blood lead levels in children may be reduced and asthma rates may also be lowered. A key component of the area-wide planning activities and resulting plan will be to develop strategies and policies that pave the way for equitable development principles, allow the transient, low income and minority populations to benefit from revitalization activities and reduce the health risks associated with old, distressed housing stock that currently exists in the target area.

*ii. Environmental Benefits:* This project and the city's overall revitalization program are intended to correct the disparities found within these neighborhoods by eliminating environmental impacts, improving economic opportunities, increasing recreational and open space resources, and through the removal of blighted and abandoned structures from the community. Assessment activities will pave the road for new, healthier and safer housing choices and connections to economic development and employment opportunities, both inside the target area and outside the target area through the advent of regional commuter rail service beginning in 2016.

***b. Environmental Benefits from Infrastructure Reuse/Sustainable Reuse Planning, Policies, and Other Tools:***

*i. Planning Policies, and Other Tools:* Meriden uses planning and zoning as a key tool to encourage dense development within walking distance to public transportation infrastructure and as a way to maximize the use of limited land area, particularly in the target area. Dense land use development has the potential benefit of utilizing existing infrastructure and reducing vehicle emissions by encouraging a greater share of pedestrian, bicycle, and transit use. Meriden recently adopted a TOD zoning regulation for the city center and the half-mile surrounding the Meriden Transit Center. These regulations are intended to promote pedestrian-friendly, compact, mixed-use development. The form-based code establishes key design criteria for new development and the adaptive reuse of existing structures. The code includes a streamlined approval process, density and mixed use incentives, and reduced parking requirements. It takes advantage of existing infrastructure, including existing power, sewer, and water infrastructure that has serviced the sites before, and proximity to the new 2016 Meriden Transit Center and commuter rail service. Linear trails and pedestrian pathways connecting the train station to key locations downtown will once again create a walkable community. Providing pathways for pedestrians and bikers will reduce impacts on local roadways while improving quality of life downtown.

Meriden planning data estimates citywide only 10% of its vacant and available land is developable (extreme topography, wetland, flooding). The limited developable land constrains the city in new development (residential or economic). The city must adapt or reuse brownfields to accommodate future growth. Redevelopment of target area brownfields creates opportunities for green building and green infrastructure as part of redevelopment.

*ii. Integrating Equitable Development/Livability Principles:* This project will improve livability by promoting affordable housing, increased use of public transit and economic activity in Meriden's City Center proximate to public transit and amenities. The CN survey found that area residents already use public transit to a much greater extent than citywide residents, and

therefore there is likelihood for continued public transit use once the commuter rail service opens. Redevelopment of the existing residential neighborhoods will support existing communities, as well as improve residential access to greenspace, recreational property, transit, and other institutional uses. Redevelopment of the Mills Megablock site specifically will improve the quality and quantity of low-income, affordable housing for residents. New housing center plans include energy efficient units to promote sustainability and help manage resident utility costs. Proximity to the downtown TOD District and associated revitalization projects provides opportunities for residents to access low cost resources.

***c. Economic or Community Benefits (long term benefits)***

*i. Economic or Non-Economic Benefits:* Potential economic benefits resulting from assessment and reuse of underutilized/vacant brownfields include long-term, sustained growth in Meriden's central core, an increase in real tax revenue, and improvement of surrounding property values. Additional economic benefits can be measured in cost savings from travel time reduction, increasing redevelopment potential of vacant and underutilized properties, and jobs created from the redevelopment activities. In addition, brownfields reuse planning, assessment, and redevelopment within the target area, coupled with the city's demolition and flood control infrastructure improvements, will help the city recapture the economic value of the downtown properties now vacant due to contamination and flood risk.

The City of Meriden assessed the economic impact of nine potential housing development sites located within part of the target area. These sites have the potential to attract over \$175 million in private investment which would generate over \$4 million in new tax revenue every year. The city forecasts that 600-1000 new residential units and 28,000 square feet of retail space can be developed on one or several of these sites in an economically sustainable way. The city's demographics suggest that up to 40-90% of the residential units will likely be developed as affordable units to support the existing market demand.

The city is in the midst of a TOD Developer RFQ/RFP process for six, city-owned properties totaling 26 acres in the target area. Redevelopment of the 26 acres would add property value to the tax base and create hundreds of construction jobs. Further, the state is in the middle of constructing a \$460 million commuter rail service and a new rail station in the target area. These activities, from the construction of new housing and mixed use development in the target area, and access to jobs and economic activity through increased commuter transit service, can help transform the area from an economically distressed to an economically productive area.

*ii. Job Creation Potential:* The city reached out to North Star Center for Human Development regarding their Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training grant. The city will coordinate work opportunities at up to five potential sites pertaining to environmental remediation, installation of energy efficiency technologies, lead paint abatement, and lead renovation, repair and painting with North Star. The city will ensure that the CT Office of Brownfield Remediation and Development and CT Works, are made aware of work opportunities resulting from this project.

**5. Programmatic Capability and Past Performance**

***a. Programmatic Capability:*** The city successfully managed numerous federal grants. Current federal grants related to housing and community development, transportation, public safety, and

economic development/brownfields total over \$12 million. The city’s Health and Human Services Department and the Board of Education manage several million dollars in state and federal grant funds.

Juliet Burdelski, the city’s Director of Economic Development manages all brownfields projects and oversees the implementation of the TOD Pilot project being used to foster economic development and increased transit use in Meriden’s Central Business District. Previously, Ms. Burdelski served as the city’s Grants Administrator from 2007-2011 and as the TOD Pilot Project Manager from 2011-2012. Primary responsibilities include fostering economic development in Meriden in order to sustain and grow the tax base and provide jobs and assisting the city implement critical infrastructure improvements that are necessary to support and sustain economic growth. Ms. Burdelski has a Master of Urban Planning degree from the University of Michigan. Assisting in this effort is Paola Mantilla, Economic Development Associate. Paola has over 15 years of experience in small business lending and municipal economic development. Mrs. Mantilla holds a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and Applied Relations from Eastern Connecticut State University and a Master in Public Administration from University of Phoenix. She is also a native Spanish speaker.

The city does not anticipate any change in project leadership, but should the need arise to hire city staff or recruit new leadership, it will ensure that all new hires have experience in managing large federal grants, specifically EPA Brownfields grants. All contracts with outside consultants will be competitively awarded in compliance with the Procurement Standards in 40 CFR Part 30 or 40 CFR Part 31.36, as appropriate. The city has a process to encourage proposals from small and disadvantaged businesses. As with all city contracts, awarded contracts are evaluated using a variety of criteria, including, but not limited to, expertise, availability, past work, and cost.

**b. Audit Findings:** An audit finding (2013-001 Period of Availability - CDBG - Section 108 Loan Guarantees) was issued because HUD required all grant funds be drawn down by May 31, 2013. The city did not draw down all of the funds in the Guaranteed Loan Funds Account prior to May 31, 2013. \$24,242 of expenditures reported in the schedule of expenditures of federal awards was incurred subsequent to the expiration of the grant award period and may not be reimbursed by HUD. The city is in discussions with HUD to obtain an extension to the period of availability. The city submitted an amendment in June 2014 and is awaiting a response. No adverse audit findings were found in FY 2014. Administrative structures are in place that deadlines are met for all federal grants.

**c. Past Performance and Accomplishments**

*i. Currently/Has Ever Received an EPA Brownfields Grant:* Meriden successfully managed EPA Brownfields Grants (FY 13, FY12, FY 09 and FY 07), two of which are ongoing. The city complied with relevant quarterly progress reports, financial and reporting measures, and final reports. The city complied with all financial and programmatic reporting on its awards and all data collected on the following grants were reported to EPA in the ACRES database.

1. Compliance with Grant Requirements and Accomplishments

Grant Title/Description	Compliance	Accomplishments
<b>FY13 EPA Cleanup</b>	<b>In progress.</b>	Task 1: City finalized scope of work and

Grant Title/Description	Compliance	Accomplishments
<b>Grant (BF 96179501)</b> 50 East Main Street (Hub site) \$200,000 \$40,000 local	Quarterly reports submitted and up to date. Grant balance = \$172,257.75 (12/1/2014) Funds will be expended by December 2015.	executed agreement with EPA. All quarterly reports have been submitted on time and all work is on schedule. Task 2: Community meetings held in 2014; Signage posted at HUB site; information and Comm. Relations Plan posted to meridenbiz.com. in 2014. Task 3: Finalized cleanup scope of work with QEP. Work leverages \$12.89 million state and City funded activities at 1-77 State Street and 30-50 East Main St (Meriden HUB site). Task 4: Contractor selected to complete remediation and site construction. Cleanup to be completed within 18 months.
<b>FY12 EPA Cleanup Grant (BF 96166191)</b> 116 Cook Avenue \$200,000 federal \$40,000 local	<b>In progress.</b> Quarterly reports submitted and up to date. Grant balance = \$184,817 (12/1/2014) federal/\$40,000 local share. Funds will be expended by end of 2015.	Task 1: City of Meriden finalized scope of work and executed agreement with EPA. All quarterly reports have been submitted on time and all work is on schedule. City has a contract in place with QEP as of 6/11/2013. Task 2: Community meetings held in 2014. Information and Comm. Relations Plan posted to meridenbiz.com. in 2014. Task 3: QAPP completed for 116 Cook Ave. RFP for Site Clean completed July 2014. UST removal completed 11/2014. Balance of funds to be reprogrammed to additional onsite cleanup activities.
<b>FY09 EPA Assessment Grant (2B96110701 - Recovery Act)</b> \$200,000 federal	<b>Project completed and financially closed in 2013 (\$199,997.72).</b>	Completed outreach and stakeholder meetings. Completed Phase IIs for 116 Cook Ave. and 85 Cooper St. Completed Phase IIIs for 77 and 85 Cooper St., 104 Butler St., and 116 Cook Ave. Completed building hazards report for 116 Cook Ave. and soil sampling at 104 Butler St.
<b>FY07 EPA Cleanup Grant (BF 97182201)</b> 77 Cooper Street \$200,000 federal \$40,000 local	<b>Project completed and financially closed in 2013 (\$194,488).</b>	Cleanup activities completed in 2013. City is currently seeking private development proposals for site reuse/redevelopment.
<b>FY07 EPA Assessment Grant (BF 97182101)</b> \$200,000 federal	<b>Project completed and financially closed in 2013 (\$200,000).</b>	Completed market and reuse analysis of Factory H neighborhood. Supplemental subsurface investigation: 77 Cooper and 104 Butler Street. Completed Phase I ESA on over 10 properties. Completed Phase II for 161 State St.

**Attachment A:**  
***Threshold Criteria***

## **THRESHOLD CRITERIA FOR ASSESSMENT GRANTS (III. C.)**

### **1. Applicant Eligibility**

The City of Meriden is an eligible entity for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Brownfields Assessment Grants as a "General Purpose Unit of Local Government" as presented in Section III.A. of the Proposal Guidelines for Brownfields Assessment Grants.

### **2. Letter from the State Environmental Authority**

As an applicant other than a State or tribal environmental authority, the City of Meriden must provide a letter from the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CTDEEP) acknowledging its plan to conduct assessment activities. We have provided such a letter in the Attachments.

### **3. Community Involvement**

All applicants must demonstrate how they intend to inform and involve the community and other stakeholders during the planning, implementation and other brownfield assessment activities described in their proposal. The city included the community in the development of this assessment grant, by posting draft applications for public comment (<http://www.meridenbiz.com/Content/Brownfields.asp>), issuing a public notice (<http://www.meridenbiz.com/News/default.asp>) on December 5, 2014 about the city hosting a public meeting on December 11, 2014 to receive comments on the application. Additionally, the city elaborated on community involvement efforts in Section 3 of the Ranking Criteria. Specifically, the city will continue to include the Blight and Brownfields (B&B) Committee in activities associated with this assessment grant and will ensure information is communicated broadly to stakeholders through appropriate mechanisms, such as the city's website.

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

N/A. The city is submitting a community-wide assessment grant proposal for hazardous waste.

**Attachment B:**  
*State Environmental Authority Letter*

**Attachment C:**  
***Documentation of Committed Leveraged Resources***

**Attachment D:**  
*Letters of Support from Community-Based Organizations*

**Attachment E:**  
*Other Factors Checklist*