

THRESHOLD CRITERIA

1. APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

a. Eligible Entity

The City of Rensselaer is an eligible applicant, per U.S. EPA guidelines, as a general purpose unit of local government, as defined under 40 CFR Part 31.

b. Site Ownership

The City of Rensselaer acquired the property in 1959 and has been the owner of the property since that time. The City of Rensselaer will maintain sole ownership of the property for the duration of the cleanup grant.

2. LETTER FROM STATE ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORITY

A letter from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) acknowledging the City's intent to submit this application, and in support of the application, is included as Attachment A.

3. SITE ELIGIBILITY AND PROPERTY OWNERSHIP ELIGIBILITY

- a. **Basic Site Information:** The site is called The Hollow and it is located in the City of Rensselaer. The City of Rensselaer is not liable for contamination on the property under CERCLA.
- b. **Status and History of Contamination at the Site:** (a) The site is underutilized green space that is contaminated with hazardous substances (metals, primarily lead and copper); (b) The site was part of what was known as Rensselaerwyck Manor, a large feudal landholding established by Kiliaen Van Rensselaer in 1629 (Fraser and Associates, 2009). A portion of the site was used as the Rensselaerwyck Rifle Range from approximately 1894 to 1938. The site is currently mostly wooded land that is used by the residents of the City for passive recreation and bird watching; (c) Contaminants of concern at the site include heavy metals used in ammunition, mainly lead and copper. Maximum lead and copper concentrations in soil sampled from the bunker hill were 39,000 mg/kg and 2,200 mg/kg, respectively. (d) The site was used as the Rensselaerwyck Rifle Range from approximately 1894 to 1938. A hill behind the bunker served as an impact hill receiving small-arms projectiles shot from the firing range. Based on the results of the Phase II Environmental Site Assessment (ESA), the extent of contamination is generally confined to the bunker hill.
- c. **Sites Ineligible for Funding:** The City of Rensselaer affirms the site is: (a) not listed or proposed for listing on the National Priorities List; (b) not subject to unilateral administrative orders, court orders, administrative orders on consent, or judicial consent decrees issued to or entered into parties under CERCLA; and (c) not subject to the jurisdiction, custody or control of the U.S. government.
- d. **Sites Requiring a Property-Specific Determination:** Per the U.S. EPA guidelines, the site does not require a property-specific determination.
- e. **Environmental Assessment Required for Cleanup Proposals:** A written Phase I ESA report was prepared in compliance with ASTM 1527.00 in May 2011. A Phase II ESA was completed in November 2012. The Phase I and II ESAs were funded by the City's US E.P.A. Brownfields Hazardous Substances Assessment Grant and completed by ARCADIS of New York, Inc.

- f. **CERCLA §107 Liability:** The City of Rensselaer affirms that it is not potentially liable for contamination at the site under CERCLA §107. The City:
- was not owner or operator of the facility at the time of disposal of a hazardous substance,
 - was not a party that arranged for the treatment or disposal of hazardous substances,
 - was not a party that accepted hazardous substances for transport to disposal or treatment facilities at the site;

The City purchased the property on August 5, 1959. The City meets the requirements of the CERCLA landowner liability protections by having met the inquiry requirements for properties purchased prior to May 31, 1997 (CERCLA § 101(35)(B)(iv)(I)),

Specifically:

- the City had no specialized knowledge or experience to believe the property might be contaminated;
 - the purchase price was equivalent to the value of the property, if the property was not contaminated;
 - there was no commonly known or reasonably ascertainable information about the property that indicated contamination;
 - the presence or likely presence of contamination at the property was not obvious; and
 - the City would not have been able to detect the contamination by appropriate inspection.
- g. **Enforcement Actions:** The City is not aware of any ongoing or anticipated orders related to the site nor any inquiries or orders from federal, state, or local government entities regarding the responsibility of any party for the contamination at the site.
- h. **Information on Liability and Defenses/Protections**

i.) **Information on Property Acquisition:** The City of Rensselaer purchased the property on August 5, 1959 from the State of New York. It is recorded in Deed Book 75 Page 140 in Rensselaer County. The City has been the sole owner of the property since that time. The City will maintain sole ownership of the property for the duration of the cleanup. The City has had no affiliations with any prior owners and operators.

ii.) **Timing and/or Contribution Toward Hazardous Substances Disposal:** All disposal of hazardous substances at the site occurred more than two decades prior to the City's acquisition of the property. The City has not caused or contributed to any release of hazardous substances at the site and has not, at any time, arranged for the disposal of hazardous substances at the site or transported hazardous substances to the site.

iii.) **Pre-Purchase Inquiry: Pre-Purchase Inquiry:** The City conducted the following pre-purchase inquiries appropriate for properties purchased prior to May 31, 1997, as detailed in CERCLA § 101(35)(B)(iv)(I). Specifically:

- the City had no specialized knowledge or experience to believe the property might be contaminated;
- the purchase price was equivalent to the value of the property, if the property was not contaminated;

- there was no commonly known or reasonably ascertainable information about the property that indicated contamination, for example, no underground storage tanks were present;
- the presence or likely presence of contamination at the property was not obvious; and
- the City would not have been able to detect the contamination by appropriate inspection.

iv.) **Post-Acquisition Uses:** After the City acquired the property in 1959, the property has remained vacant with no structures present. City of Rensselaer residents use the property for passive recreation and bird watching and unregulated All Terrain Vehicle traffic.

v.) **Continuing Obligations:** The City of Rensselaer has and continues to comply with the "Reasonable Steps" part of the Bonafide Prospective Purchaser (BFPP) status. Specific appropriate care that has been exercised with respect to hazardous substances found at the site by taking reasonable steps to: stop any continuing releases; prevent any threatened future release; and prevent or limit exposure to any previously releases hazardous substance. The City intends to comply with all land-use restrictions and institutional controls; assist and cooperate with those performing the cleanup and provide access to the property (including adjacent property owned by the City); comply with all informational requests and administrative subpoenas issued in connection with the property; and provide all legally required notices.

i. **Petroleum Sites:** Not Applicable.

4. CLEANUP AUTHORITY AND OVERSIGHT STRUCTURE

a. **Cleanup Oversight:** All budget tasks under the contractual category will be completed in compliance with the requirements of the U.S. EPA. Additional technical expertise will be required to conduct, manage and oversee the cleanup. The City will hire a qualified environmental professional, consistent with the competitive procurement provisions of 40 CFR 31.36 and ensure this expertise is in place prior to beginning cleanup activities. The consultant will help to prepare a Remedial Action Plan approved by U.S. EPA and NYSDEC, from which, specifications and bidding documents will be developed for the procurement of a cleanup contractor. The consultant will provide oversight of the cleanup contractor and prepare a closure report for the site.

b. **Access to Adjacent Properties:** Access to the adjacent property is not necessary to conduct clean up, confirmation sampling or for monitoring offsite migration of contamination. The site is approximately 60 acres, and the contaminated soil is located within the bounds of the site. Access to the site is from public roads.

5. COST SHARE

- Cost Share:** The City is committed to the cleanup and redevelopment of The Hollow property and has allocated 20 percent of the proposed grant, equal to \$40,000 from the City's budget to provide the required cost share.
- Hardship Waiver:** The City is not requesting a hardship waiver for its cost share requirements.

6. COMMUNITY NOTIFICATION

The City provided the community with notice of its intent to apply for a U.S. EPA brownfields grant and an opportunity to submit comments. A public notice was published in the Troy Record, a newspaper of record for the City, on November __, 2012. On November __, 2012, the City also posted a notice on its web site which announced the public meeting and posted the draft application and draft ABCA. As advertised in the public notice and on its web site, the City held a public meeting to discuss the draft grant application and draft ABCA on November 26, 2012 at City Hall. A copy of the public notice and the website are provided as Attachment B.

RANKING CRITERIA

1. COMMUNITY NEED

c. Health, Welfare and Environment

i.) Effect of Brownfields on Target Community

In 1897, the City of Rensselaer was incorporated from the villages of Greenbush, East Albany and Bath. The City of Rensselaer occupies approximately three square miles along the Hudson River across from the City of Albany, New York State's capital. The City is long and narrow, with approximately four miles of waterfront and an average width of approximately three-quarters of a mile. Because of its configuration, the City has been closely tied to the Hudson River throughout its history. In the mid 19th century, the City had one of the most important rail centers in the United States.

The City has 4,695 housing units, including 319 vacant parcels. In 2010, approximately 8% of the City's population was unemployed and 17.9% of the population lived in poverty. The City has a lower median income, higher poverty indicators, and lower education levels than the rest of Rensselaer County and New York State as a whole.

At one time, the City of Rensselaer had a population of 15,000. According to the U.S. Census, the City's population in 1970 was 10,136. The population declined according to the 1980, 1990 and 2000 censuses to 7,761 in 2000. The current population of the City is estimated by the U.S. Census Bureau to be 9,392.

As part of the City's draft Comprehensive Plan (December 2005), the City has developed a Vision Statement to guide it through the redevelopment process. The Vision Statement includes the following:

The City's waterfront along the Hudson River will be reinvented as a place to live, work and recreate. Public access to the Hudson River from neighborhoods, the train station and the central business district will be of paramount importance. A waterfront pathway/trail will provide continuous public access, connecting to activity centers such as downtown, the train station and adjacent neighborhoods.

AND

The City will include a variety of housing options that meet the needs of its diverse population. Residents will be engaged in the City's continuous planning and development process, especially at the ward level. Citizens will have a unique sense of civic duty and pride working to continually improve all aspects of the City.

This plan was formed to preserve and enhance the natural resources within the City including the Hudson Riverfront, parks, and open space. Special attention will be given to the waterfront because of its environmental, aesthetic, and recreational value. The City is committed to redeveloping brownfields, infill sites, and identified redevelopment areas prior to development of any open spaces.

ii.) Health and Welfare of Sensitive Populations

Sensitive populations within the vicinity of the site include children at Rensselaer Middle and High School. In addition, 20 percent of the city population that are minority residents (2010 U.S. Census data).

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the racial makeup of the City was 80.2% White, 8.0% African American, 0.3% Native American, 6.1% Asian, 1.1% from other races and 4.2% from two or more races. Hispanic or Latino of any race comprised 4.8% of the population. There were 4,272 households out of which 17.8% had children under the age of 18 living with them, 27.5% were married couples living together, 14% had a female householder with no husband present, and 50.9% were non-families. Forty percent of all households were made up of individuals and 12.6% had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older. The average household size was 2.14 and the average family size was 2.87. Of the population age 25 years and older, 15.9% had not received a high school diploma. In the City, the population was spread out with 7% under the age of 5, 15.5% between the ages of 5 and 19, 24.8% between the ages of 20 and 34, 27.8% between the ages of 34 and 54, 12.4% between the ages of 55 and 64 and 12.6% who were 65 years of age or older. The median age was 37.1 years.

There is an increased cancer risk for residents in Rensselaer County compared to New York State based on age-adjusted incidence rates of various types of cancer from 2005 to 2009, as provided by the New York State Department of Health Cancer Registry (<http://www.health.state.ny.us/statistics/cancer/registry/vol1/v1calbany.htm>).

According to the Diesel Soot Health Impacts Clean Air Task Force, the average lifetime diesel soot cancer risk for a resident of Rensselaer County is 1 in 22,377. This risk is 45 times greater than EPA's acceptable cancer level of 1 in one million. In addition, Rensselaer County ranks 699 out of 3,109 counties nationally in risk from Diesel Soot (Ref: <http://www.catf.us/diesel/dieselhealth//county.php?c=36083&site=0>).

Rensselaer County has the 33rd largest amount of toxic release inventory (TRI) chemicals released to the environment of the 56 New York Counties (<http://www.scorecard.org>).

In 2010, the City of Rensselaer's property crime rate was higher than the property crime rate in the State of New York by 41.4% (<http://www.cityrating.com/crime-statistics/new-york/renselaer-city.html>).

The environmental cleanup of The Hollow site will remove soil that is contaminated with lead and copper from its past use as a small-arms firing range. The Phase I ESA identified the bunker hill as a recognized environmental condition. The Phase II ESA showed copper and lead at concentrations that exceeded the New York State Restricted Residential Standards, which is the guidance value appropriate for parks and passive recreation. Copper was present at concentrations as great as 2,200 mg/kg, exceeding the Restricted Residential Standard of 270 mg/kg while lead was present at concentrations as great as 39,000 mg/kg exceeding the standard of 400 mg/kg. The Hollow property is currently used by city residents for passive recreation and bird watching, and by community members operating unregulated All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs). The property is frequented by teenagers who use the property for carousing. Access to the approximately 60 acre site is currently unregulated.

Through our program, including both the cleanup and community outreach efforts, the City and its partners are working toward bridging the economic gaps between the significantly disadvantaged populations and lesser impacted communities in the region. Cleanup of the The Hollow site will help to reduce the specter of contamination that discourages investment in this neighborhood.

d. Financial Need

i.) Economic Impact of Brownfields on Target Community

The City of Rensselaer's demographic and economic data shows that its poverty rate (17.9%) is higher than Rensselaer County's (11.5%). Of persons under the age of 18, 32.3% are below the poverty level. Of the population 25 years of age and older 15.9% do not have a high school degree. Of the 4,695 housing units in the City of Rensselaer, 319 were vacant. Owner occupancy in the City of Rensselaer is 43%.

The City of Rensselaer continues to struggle as compared to the rest of the Rensselaer County, and New York State. The poverty rate, income levels, and sensitive populations in this area are significant compared to the County and State data, as indicated below in the following table from 2010 U.S. Census statistics.

Median Household Income	Persons below the Poverty Rate	Unemployment	Median Family Income	Median Housing Value	% Families with Female Head of Household	% Rental Units
City of Rensselaer	17.9%	8.4%	\$49,484	\$147,200	14.5%	54.0%
Rensselaer County	11.5%	10.2%	\$71,909	\$178,600	13.7%	33.6%
New York State	16.0%	9.5%	\$66,582	\$285,300	13.1%	46.4%

ii.) Factors that Limit Ability to Draw on Other Funding Sources

The Hollow site has benefited from successful completion of Phase I and Phase II ESAs under our previous U.S. EPA Brownfield Hazardous Substance Assessment Grant. However, additional funding is needed to conduct the cleanup at this property to facilitate redevelopment. The City's funds for remediation activities are limited given the difficult budget situations facing the City. Unfortunately, the NYSDEC no longer has state funds available for brownfields restoration.

U.S. EPA funds are direly needed. The City does not have funds available for the remediation, and is applying for cleanup grant dollars with this application. These funds would result in the cleanup of a blighted property, protect the public's health, and allow for positive redevelopment as green space.

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND FEASIBILITY OF SUCCESS

a. Project Description

i.) Project Description

The Hollow site is located in the northeast portion of the City of Rensselaer. The site is approximately 60 acres and is adjacent to the City of Rensselaer Middle School and High School, and residential neighborhoods. The City would like to build an accessible, multi-use trail network throughout the site to be used by City residents and the High School cross country team. Grant funds will be utilized to excavate contaminated soil at a portion of the property and to eliminate potential risks to human health and environment. The ultimate goal is to use the site as a City Park.

A Phase I ESA in compliance with ASTM 1527.00 was prepared in May 2011. A Phase II ESA was completed in November 2012. The Phase I and II ESAs were funded by the City's previous U.S. EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant. As part of these investigations, soil, groundwater, sediment and surface water were characterized. This characterization showed that soil on the bunker hill, into which shots were fired, was contaminated with metals associated with ammunition, mainly lead and copper. Maximum lead and copper concentrations in soil sampled from the bunker hill were 39,000 mg/kg and 2,200 mg/kg, respectively. The City of Rensselaer has developed a Master Plan for The Hollow to utilize the site as a city park, providing a place for hiking, biking, cross country skiing, snow shoeing, and picnicking. The park will also be utilized by the City of Rensselaer High School cross country team.

ii.) Proposed Cleanup Plan and Potential End Use

The proposed cleanup plan is designed to eliminate potential human health risks related to the presence of heavy metals present in surface and subsurface soil. Once cleanup objectives are met, the property will be available for use as a City Park. The City of Rensselaer is committed to complete soil excavation and cleanup within 24 months of obtaining grant funding.

The proposed cleanup plan will involve the excavation, transportation and disposal of approximately 350 to 400 tons of contaminated soil from the bunker hill location of the site. Once the soil is removed, confirmation soil samples will be collected to verify the impacted soils have been remediated. Clean backfill soil will then be placed in the excavation in lifts and re-compacted in accordance with engineering standards presented in the Remedial Action Plan (RAP). The site will be re-graded and topsoil will be placed and seeded to complete the project.

b. Budget for EPA Funding, Tracking and Measuring Progress, and Leveraging Other Resources

- i)** The City is requesting a grant in the amount of \$200,000 and is not requesting a waiver for the \$40,000 cost match. All budget tasks under the contractual category will be performed by a qualified environmental consultant in accordance with U.S. EPA and NYSDEC guidelines.

Budget Categories	Task 1: Analysis of Brownfield Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA)/ Remedial Action Plan and Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP)	Task 2: Remediation	Task 3: Remediation Monitoring and Remedial Action Completion Report	Task 4: Community Outreach, Programmatic Expenses & Travel	Total
Personnel					
Fringe Benefits					
Travel				\$2,000	\$2,000
Equipment					
Supplies					
Contractual	\$25,000	\$160,000	\$48,000	\$5,000	\$198,000
Other					
U.S. EPA Funds	\$15,000	\$135,000	\$48,000	\$7,000	\$240,000
Cost Share	\$10,000	\$25,000	\$0	\$5,000	\$40,000

ii) **Plan for Tracking and Measuring Progress**

Task 1: QAPP, ABCA/RAP and Contractor Bidding and Procurement - \$25,000

The City will complete a Quality Assurance Project Plan, an Analysis of Brownfield Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA) and Remedial Action Plan (RAP), to be completed by a qualified environmental professional in accordance with applicable U.S. EPA and NYSDEC requirements. Remedial cost estimates will be prepared and request for proposals and subcontractor selection tasks will also be performed under this task. In addition, a project-specific Health and Safety Plan (HASP) will also be included as part of this task. Plans and specifications and bid documents for procurement of a cleanup contractor are also included in the contractual line.

Task 2: Remediation - \$160,000

Remediation tasks will include excavation of metal – impacted soil from the bunker hill. Verification soil sampling will be performed in accordance with RAP specifications. Following completion of the verification sampling, site restoration activities will be conducted.

The breakdown of the estimated cost of \$160,000 associated with the remedial activities presented herein is as follows:

- Project Management – \$10,000
- Mob/Demob/Project Set-Up/Contractual Costs – \$15,000
- Soil Excavation and disposal - \$118,000
- Field Oversight/Documentation – \$10,000
- Site Restoration -- \$7,000

During cleanup activities monitoring will be conducted in accordance with the QAPP and HASP to protect worker and public health.

Task 3: Remediation Monitoring and Remedial Action Completion Report - \$48,000

Post-remedial sampling will be conducted to verify that cleanup objectives have been met. A qualified professional will prepare a Remedial Action Completion Report in accordance with NYSDEC requirements. The report will include a detailed summary of the remedial tasks performed and will present the confirmation sampling data. A Remedial Action Completion Report will be prepared and submitted to the U.S. EPA and the NYSDEC for the property.

Task 4: Community Outreach, Programmatic Expenses & Travel - \$7,000

Several meetings with the public at various steps in the project will be required. This task also includes funds for programmatic activities including: set up and provision of notice for public meetings; presentations to explain the cleanup to neighborhood representatives and other affected parties; preparation of fact sheets; and travel to brownfield-related meetings with NYSDEC and U.S. EPA, as appropriate.

The City understands that there are additional costs associated with implementing a grant and will commit to providing the costs for legal fees associated with access agreements, staff time to administer the grant, conducting bidding activities for the procurement of a qualified environmental consultant, overseeing consultants and contractors, and staff participation in public involvement meeting and meetings with NYSDEC and U.S. EPA staff.

iii) Leveraging

U.S. EPA Brownfields funding is key in providing the financial resources necessary to establish a strong base for redevelopment. If additional funds are needed for cleanup costs beyond those funded by the U.S. EPA grant, the City may apply for funding from other federal and/or state sources. Beyond grant funding, the City of Rensselaer may commit funds from its general revenue and other financial resources to ensure the success of the project if necessary. Rensselaer is committed to brownfields redevelopment and will build upon the momentum created by the funding from our previous U.S. EPA Brownfields grants and associated funding previously leveraged to supplement this project.

This project will help stabilize and enhance the investment and development that has already taken place or been committed to the neighborhood in recent years.

If additional funds are needed for cleanup the City will provide these funds from its budget for other sources.

Programmatic Capability (Has Received an EPA Brownfields Grant)

i.) Management System

The City of Rensselaer has worked with the U.S. EPA and the NYSDEC in previous grant management efforts for brownfields projects. We have worked with the U.S. EPA and the NYSDEC to oversee our activities on the previous U.S. EPA grants and have participated in its brownfields initiative since 2007. The City utilizes staff in the community development, planning, engineering, parks, building, and legal departments to successfully implement grants. The Project Manager (Sarah Crowell, Director of Planning and Development, City of Rensselaer) has direct, relevant experience from her related experience with the previous and existing U.S. EPA brownfields grants. From this work she has experience in procuring and working with consultants, contending with legal access issues, and managing the financial aspects of the grant. Ms. Crowell also administers other federal, state and private grants as part of her duties. Ms. Crowell is known within the community. Should Ms. Crowell be unable to fulfill her role in administering this grant for any reason, an alternate City of Rensselaer employee who is experienced with the City's brownfields program and federal grant administration will be selected by the City of Rensselaer to replace her.

Procurement of consultants and contractors will be in accordance with competitive Procurement Standards in 40 CFR 31.36, as well as New York State General Municipal Law. Opportunities to consult or contract with the City will be publically advertised.

ii.) Adverse Audit Findings

The City has had a long history of managing federal and state funds and we have never had any adverse audit findings relating to the management of those funds. The City has not received any adverse audit findings from an OMB Circular A-133 audit, an audit conducted by a federal, state, tribal or local government inspector general or similar organization, or audits conducted by the U.S. General Accounting Office. We are not, nor have previously been required to comply with special "high risk" terms and conditions under agency regulations implementing OMB Circular A-102.

i.) Past Brownfield Grants

Rensselaer is a past recipient of U.S. EPA Brownfield Grants, including a Petroleum Substance Assessment Grant (BF-97249407-0) and a Hazardous Substance Assessment Grant (BF-97249507-0).

Under past and current grants, the City has complied with required quarterly report submittals, annual financial reporting and other reporting and communication with U.S. EPA. Under the Petroleum Substance Assessment Grant, the City completed four Phase I ESAs, two of which also included Site Sampling and Health and Safety Plans and Phase II ESAs. The City has spent \$130,200 of the Petroleum Substance Assessment Grant. Under the Hazardous Substance Assessment Grant, the City completed six Phase I ESAs, one site included Site Sampling and Health and Safety Plans and a Phase II ESAs. These sites were municipally-owned properties that were adjacent to former dry cleaners, gasoline stations or automotive service stations. The City has spent \$117,350 of the Hazardous Substance Assessment Grant.

Rensselaer has existing cooperative agreements with U.S. EPA and is in compliance in terms of quarterly report submittals, communication with U.S. EPA and annual financial reporting requirements. To continue this positive momentum, this grant application seeks cleanup funds for The Hollow site to supplement previous activities paid for with the City's U.S. EPA assessment grant and NYSEC ERP grant. As the City would like to build an accessible, multi-use trail network throughout the site to be used by City residents and the high school cross country team, this project is a high priority for the City.

3. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS

a. Plan for Community Involvement/Communication

The City understands that successful redevelopment must include the community. Public participation is vital for the success of this project, as the brownfields are part of the community. During the development of its Downtown Development Plan (June 2003) and the draft Comprehensive Plan (December 2005), the City solicited public input and will continue this practice as part of this assessment grant.

As the City has done in the past, it plans to communicate at different levels to maximize the opportunity for interested parties to participate. The City will confer directly with elected and appointed community leaders, issue press releases to Rensselaer's media, post information on its web site, and hold public informational meetings in the affected community.

The City will hold a stakeholders meeting early in the cleanup planning and reuse planning process. To further involve the affected community, the City also intends to conduct public meetings at major project milestones, including: 1) a kick-off meeting at the inception of the project; 2) a meeting upon the completion of remedial action plan activities; and 3) a meeting during cleanup activities. A three week outreach and comment period will precede each of these public meeting milestones. Via the public comment period and meetings, the public will be encouraged to participate by submitting comments or questions to the City. Comments received will be discussed openly in public meetings and directly when contacting the City of Rensselaer. Every effort will be made to answer questions as quickly and directly as possible at the time they are received. Questions for which a direct and immediate response is not forthcoming will be directly addressed with the individual or group which has made the inquiry.

To communicate project updates and status to City residents, information, including legal notice of public meetings, will be provided through the local newspaper, and also by local radio station news and the City's website. Specific stakeholders may also receive information and notices via mail. Communications will be provided primarily in English, as U.S. Census figures show that only 5.3% of the population speaks English less than 'very well.' The proposed multi-media approach will be reviewed and evaluated throughout the grant to ensure all residents are notified and invited to participate. The City will also make available copies

of any grant or loan applications and provide brochures and fact sheets to educate the public. All public comments received will be taken into serious consideration during the cleanup and redevelopment process.

In addition to the quarterly update reports to the U.S. EPA, the City anticipates using the Assessment, Cleanup and Redevelopment Exchange System (ACRES) to submit site data to the U.S. EPA. This on-line tool will be used to electronically submit data directly to EPA. This information will then be used to develop project websites that can be accessed by the public so that they can stay informed on progress for the project.

b. Partnerships

To be completed.

c. Description and Role of Key Community-Based Organizations Involved in the Project

The organizations listed below have pledged their support as partners in the City's U.S. EPA brownfields cleanup initiative. Letters of support from these organizations are included in Attachment C.

Each Organization will serve in specific role(s) within the project:

To be completed.

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Contact Person</u>	<u>Phone No.</u>	<u>Role in Project</u>

4. PROJECT BENEFITS

a. Welfare and/or Public Health

U.S. EPA brownfield cleanup funding will allow the City to eliminate threats and minimize exposure to metals originating from the use of a portion of The Hollow site as a firing range. The community will benefit by having a property that is currently underutilized cleaned up to eliminate these risks from exposure to contaminated soil. Sensitive populations within vicinity of the site include children attending the Middle School and High School and minority residents of the neighborhood which has been designated as a Potential Environmental Justice Area by the NYSDEC

(http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/permits_ej_operations_pdf/rensselaerej.pdf). These sensitive populations will be protected during the cleanup by implementation of a NYSDOH-approved Community Air Monitoring Program and the use of engineering controls such as fencing or barriers to preclude accidental trespass.

Further, the City will be bringing information regarding the environmental and health threats of brownfields to the forefront as part of the community notification process associated with the grant. Announcements and public meetings will be conducted at the inception of the project, upon the completion of remedial action plan activities, and during cleanup activities. Given the comprehensive media notification methods to be used, the extended comment period (three weeks), public awareness will be sufficiently raised with

regard to potential environmental conditions. Raising awareness will enable public protection via limiting contact with environmental conditions, as well as serve as a basis for motivating the leverage of additional funding to further assess and/or cleanup other brownfield sites elsewhere in the City.

b. Economic Benefits and/or Greenspace

i.) Economic benefits

It is anticipated that the use of The Hollow site as a park will draw members of the community and those from outside the community, bringing people in contact with local businesses. The Hollow site is approximately 60 acres, and is one of the few remaining natural areas in the City of Rensselaer. Redevelopment of this area as a park and greenspace would increase property tax revenue from the site and the surrounding neighborhood, due to increased valuation. Increased property tax values will encourage further reinvestment in the neighborhood. The proposed trails will provide a linkage between the school and the surrounding neighborhoods, the Amtrak Station, and the Hudson River Waterfront.

Completing cleanup of the The Hollow site will help define and mitigate risks and decrease the environmental stigma that can prevent redevelopment and investment. The proposed reuse of the The Hollow site will be compatible with the City's zoning and the new Master Plan. Our goals for economic development remain focused on (1) increasing the tax base; (2) enhancing property values; (2) facilitating job creation; and (4) bringing people from outside communities in contact with City of Rensselaer businesses. Through our brownfields efforts the City will work to bridge economic gaps that impact the tax burden of residents located adjacent to underutilized properties.

ii.) Other non-economic benefits

The proposed end use plan for the The Hollow site is to convert the site into a City Park with handicap - accessible trails. The Hollow site contains the Quackenderry Creek, which is a tributary to the Hudson, and is primarily wooded. The habitat contains diverse populations of wildlife. The Hollow is surrounded by land primarily zoned for residential use, with the exception of the City of Rensselaer Middle School and High School. The creation of a City Park would give residents and students access to educational opportunities. The site is also has historical significance, in that it was part of the Rensselaerwyck Manor established in 1629. The Hollow also contained the Rensselaerwyck rifle range from 1894 to 1938. With 17.9% of the population below the poverty line, there is limited access to public parks. Eight City Parks exist; however they are urban style parks that do not provide access to historic areas and the unique ecology and wildlife of The Hollow site. The Hollow's location in close proximity to downtown is unique considering the diverse wildlife and natural beauty.

With the creation of a City Park, the public would have access to local history in addition to the diverse ecology of the site. The Hollow is one of the few remaining wooded areas in the City of Rensselaer. Developing The Hollow as a City Park would prevent destruction from ATVs and instead provide a place for hiking, biking, cross country skiing, snow shoeing and picnicking. The Hollow would serve as a wildlife corridor, while limiting the noise, air and water pollution that comes from development. The Hollow would serve as a place that encourages community interaction. The park would be utilized by the City of Rensselaer High School's cross country team. The High School neighbors The Hollow site.

c. Environmental Benefits from Infrastructure Reuse/Sustainable Reuse

Located in the northeast portion of the City of Rensselaer, The Hollow will use existing roads as access points for the City Park. The development of The Hollow as a park will not require new gas, water, or sanitary and storm sewer systems for the City to build.

The City continues to improve its education and outreach opportunities and work with our existing businesses to prevent the creation of additional brownfields within the City. By identifying and cleaning the older sites, it is our intention to provide either increased housing, commercial, industrial, or greenspace opportunities for our residents. This will not only increase our tax base, but will provide positive reuse of blighted properties. Each site will be evaluated and required to conform to existing land use plans and the specific needs within its particular neighborhood.

V.C. Other Factors

The City of Rensselaer's population of 9,392 qualifies it as a "micro" community.

In 2008, The Hollow and portions of the City of Rensselaer suffered severe flooding that caused approximately \$20 million in damages.

List of Attachments

- A. New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Division of Environmental Remediation, Support Letter
- B. Notification and Public Meeting Information (copy of public notice)
- C. Letters of Support from Community-Based Organizations