



CITY OF BESSEMER

Final Closeout Report

January 2023

Cooperative
Agreement:
BF-01D10920

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1.0 PROJECT SUMMARY

In May 2020, the EPA awarded the City of Bessemer a \$300,000 Brownfields Assessment Grant. Assessment activities targeted Bessemer's downtown, which is mostly located within a Qualified Opportunity Zone. Established in 1887 as an industrial hub for iron and steel, Bessemer rapidly expanded to become Alabama's fourth-largest city in just 15 years, earning the nickname "The Marvel City". The thriving iron and steel industries employed black and white residents, fostering a booming downtown. However, the City's reliance on a single sector proved unsustainable, leading to economic decline. The downturn in mining and restructuring of the steel sector precipitated a mass departure from the City causing the closure of mills and downtown businesses in the area targeted by this grant. This decline left behind numerous brownfields, marking a period of economic hardship.

The primary purpose of the assessment grant was to revitalize the Downtown Neighborhood. This initiative aligns with the City's Vision to transform Downtown through new housing and mixed-use projects. This report depicts a summary of project activities and accomplishments, a comparison of actual accomplishments vs. workplan goals, deliverables provided under the Cooperative Agreement, a summary of leveraged resources, and lessons learned.

2.0 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Our team has diligently worked to meet our project objectives, focusing on thorough project planning and open communication. We completed the procurement and work plan as planned. We maintained a steady pace in reporting with 11 quarterly reports and this closeout report, which provides a transparent overview of our progress under the Cooperative Agreement. Additionally, we have compiled Annual Reports reflecting our adherence to financial and regulatory standards.

We took steps to involve the community through our Community Involvement Plan. We facilitated an Advisory Board Meeting to ensure that various perspectives were considered in our decision-making processes. Establishing a document repository has helped us organize and manage our documents more efficiently.

In the realm of quality control, we created a Generic Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) to guide our efforts in maintaining high standards. Regarding project outputs, we completed 10 Phase I Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs) and six Phase II ESAs, each step taken with careful consideration and an eye towards continuous improvement. These efforts underscore our team's commitment to responsible management and the gradual achievement of our project milestones.



The table below compares actual accomplishments with the anticipated outputs and outcomes specified in the workplan.

COMPARISON OF ANTICIPATED OUTPUTS VS. ACTUAL OUTPUTS	
Workplan Outputs	Actual Outputs
Procurement and workplan submittal	Procurement and workplan submittal
11 quarterly reports, one closeout report	11 quarterly reports, one closeout report
3 Annual Reports (DBE & Federal Financial Reports)	3 Annual Reports (DBE & Federal Financial Reports)
Community Involvement Plan	Community Involvement Plan
Advisory Board Meetings	1 Advisory Board Meeting
Creation of Document Repository	Document Repository Created
1 Generic QAPP	1 Generic QAPP
12 Phase I ESAs	10 Phase I ESAs
9 Phase II ESAs	6 Phase II ESAs

These efforts, along with broader initiatives, have yielded tangible results, reflecting our dedication to enhancing our community's quality of life and economic vitality. Our focused approach has led to the assessment of 11 properties, paving the way for informed development decisions.

We've begun to catalyze the local economy by establishing new businesses, contributing to an entrepreneurial atmosphere. The construction of 31 new housing units since 2020 is evidence of our efforts and responsiveness to the growing demand for quality living spaces.

Employment opportunities have increased, with 46 more jobs available in our target area compared to 2019, underscoring our City's capacity for new job creation. These opportunities not only bolster the local economy but also enhance the socio-economic fabric of our community.

In line with our health and environmental goals, we've reduced the "Lead Paint Indicator" risk from the 97th to the 96th percentile in Alabama and lowered community exposure to particle pollution, indicating progress in our pursuit of a cleaner, healthier environment.

While the mean travel time to work remains unchanged, ensuring stability in daily commutes, we continue to aim for a reduction in vehicle miles traveled, seeking to improve traffic conditions and reduce carbon emissions. Downtown Bessemer has seen the initiation of mixed-use development projects, such as the planned renovation of the historic former Bessemer City Hall into apartments and retail space. This redevelopment is part of a broader vision to revitalize the downtown area and is expected to support a more connected, walkable urban environment that attracts residents and visitors alike. Together, these projects contribute to the City's long-term goal of creating a more vibrant, walkable downtown area to stimulate economic growth and provide safer, more enjoyable pedestrian experiences. Moreover, the percentage of people living in substandard housing conditions



has remained stable, illustrating our ongoing commitment to maintaining decent living standards for our residents. These milestones reflect our unwavering dedication to creating a dynamic, connected, and sustainable city that prioritizes the well-being of its citizens and the environment. Additional details are provided below:

COMPARISON OF ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES VS. ACTUAL OUTCOMES	
Workplan Outcomes	Actual Outcomes
Assessed parcels	11 assessed parcels
New business startups	The City's Building and Inspections Department reported there was \$66 million in commercial projects in 2023.
New housing units	31 housing units built since 2020. The Building Department reported \$6 million in residential projects in 2023.
New job creation	46 more jobs in the Target Area than in 2019. The unemployment rate in 2020, at the height of the pandemic was 19%. In November 2023, the unemployment rate was just 3.8 percent.
Facilitation of a more connected and walkable downtown in an environment that stimulates recreational/physical activity and provides safer conditions for pedestrians.	*See discussion above
Lower percentile for "Lead Paint Indicator" risk (<i>97th percentile in AL at time of grant submission</i>)	Lower percentile for "Lead Paint Indicator" risk (<i>96th percentile in AL at time of grant closeout</i>)
Reduced community exposure to particle pollution (<i>10.8 at the time of grant submission</i>)	Reduced community exposure to particle pollution (<i>10.2 at the time of grant closeout</i>)
Fewer vehicle miles traveled	Mean travel time to work unchanged
Lower Percentage of people living in substandard housing conditions in target census tract	Has remained relatively unchanged (was 5.8%, now 5.9%)

2.1 TASK 1 – PROJECT MANAGEMENT DELIVERABLES

This section details our progression through a series of well-defined stages, each linked with precise deliverables and timelines, under the stewardship of a designated city project management team. Initially, the project's foundation was laid by assembling a multidisciplinary internal team within the first quarter, which was instrumental in establishing the project schedule. In tandem, bid documents for contractor procurement were prepared.



The contractor was selected in September 2020, ensuring the project execution was poised to begin with a competent partner. With the contractor in place, a work plan was drafted by December 4, 2020, setting the stage for the project's operational phase to begin.

A significant component of any project's lifecycle is its dedication to thorough reporting. Quarterly progress reports to the EPA commenced on January 30, 2021, and continued throughout the project at three-month intervals, encapsulating the project's developments and compliance status. This routine was maintained diligently for 11 quarters.

Financial transparency is a cornerstone of this program. As required under the Cooperative Agreement, Federal Financial Reports were completed over the past three consecutive years; each report was timed for an October 30th submission. MBE/WBE reports were also submitted on October 30th annually. Forward-looking annual projections were prepared for October 30th in the second and third years, serving as strategic touchstones for evaluating the project's trajectory and adjusting course as necessary.

Task 1 implementation had a cumulative cost of **\$29,852.50**. Over the project lifespan, outputs associated with this task included preparing quarterly reports and managing ACRES, which may indicate a specialized project management or reporting system. The table below includes a link to each deliverable completed under this task:

TASK 1 DELIVERABLES	
Output	Link to Deliverable
Cooperative Agreement	Cooperative Agreement BF-01D10920-0 City of Bessemer NOA.pdf
Work Plan	2020 Bessemer Brownfield Assessment Grant Work Plan Rev. 1.docx
Quarterly Report 01	Quarterly Report - Bessemer Q1.pdf
Quarterly Report 02	Quarterly Report - Bessemer Q2, Final.pdf
Quarterly Report 03	Quarterly Report - Bessemer Q3.pdf
Quarterly Report 04	Quarterly Report - Bessemer Q4.pdf
Quarterly Report 05	Quarterly Report - Bessemer Q5.pdf
Quarterly Report 06	Quarterly Report - Bessemer Q6.pdf
Quarterly Report 07	Quarterly Report - Bessemer Q7.pdf
Quarterly Report 08	Quarterly Report - Bessemer Q8.pdf
Quarterly Report 09	Quarterly Report - Bessemer Q9.pdf
Quarterly Report 10	Quarterly Report - Bessemer Q10.pdf
Quarterly Report 11	Quarterly Report - Bessemer Q11.pdf
FFR Year 1	2021 FFR.pdf
FFR Year 2	2022 FFR.pdf
FFR Year 3	2023 FFR.pdf
MBE/WBE Year 1	2021 MBE WBE.PDF
MBE/WBE Year 2	2022 MBE WBE.pdf
MBE/WBE Year 3	2023 MBE WBE.PDF



2.2 TASK 2 – COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT/ENGAGEMENT

Bessemer has actively engaged with the community through various initiatives. A Brownfields Kickoff meeting took place on October 28, 2020, where a presentation was given. This was followed by the development of a Community Involvement Plan (CIP), which was finalized by January 15, 2021. Additionally, community outreach meetings were conducted, both in person and virtually. Between April and June 2023, the City also conducted two virtual meetings with the Bessemer Housing Authority to discuss progress and plans. These efforts were part of a larger commitment, amounting to a total expenditure of \$18,201.17. The table below outlines the deliverables completed under this task:

TASK 2 DELIVERABLES	
Output	Deliverable
Brownfield PowerPoint Presentation – Community Meeting #01	Bessemer Community Outreach Meeting 1.pptx
Brownfield PowerPoint Presentation – Community Meeting #02	Bessemer Community Outreach Meeting 2.pptx
Brownfield Advisory Committee Roles	Brownfields Advisory Committee Roles and Responsibilities.docx
Brownfield Advisory Committee Meeting Agenda	Brownfields Advisory Committee Roles and Responsibilities.docx
Brownfield PowerPoint Presentation –BAC Meeting Presentation #01	10-28-20 Bessemer BAC Meeting Presentation.pptx
BHA Meeting Notes	Bessemer Housing Authority Meeting - March 15, 2023.pdf
Community Flyer	City of Bessemer AL BF Flyer.pdf
Bessemer’s Community Involvement Plan	Community Involvement Plan - City of Bessemer BF Grant.pdf

2.3 TASK 3 – PHASE I & PHASE II ENVIRONMENTAL SITE ASSESSMENTS

Under the Cooperative Agreement, 10 Phase I ESAs and six Phase II ESAs were completed. Task 3 implementation had a cumulative cost of \$249,886.94. The table below links copies of each deliverable completed under this task. Following the table, a site-by-site summary is provided that

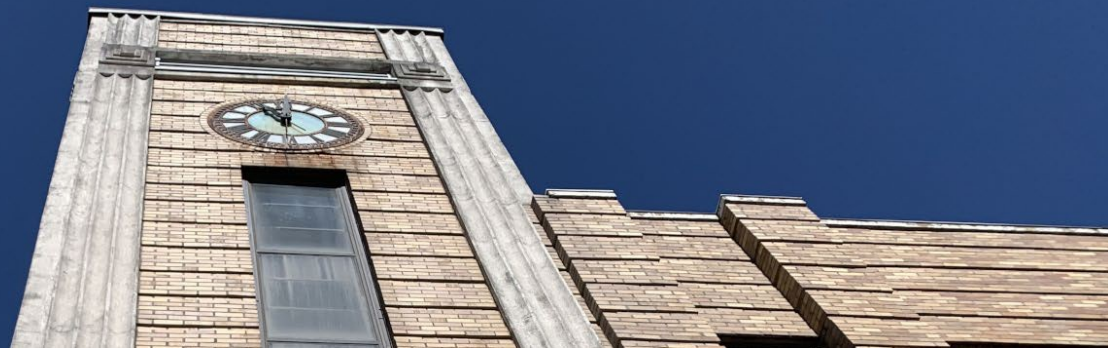


further describes each deliverable. While the work plan provided estimates (12 Phase Is and 9 Phase IIs), there was only enough funding to complete 10 Phase Is and six Phase IIs.

A color-coding system is included in the table below. This system is designed for clarity and ease of reference. For sites where both Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessments have been conducted under the grant, a unique color shading is assigned to each site. This color remains consistent across both Phase I and Phase II assessments for any given site, thereby providing a cohesive and easily interpretable visual representation of the assessment status.

TASK 3 DELIVERABLES

Output	Deliverable
Brownfield Inventory	Copy of Brownfields Inventory- Bessemer.xlsx
Generic Quality Assurance Project Plan	Bessemer AL Generic QAPP Rev 01.pdf
Phase I Environmental Site Assessments	
Former Railroad Freight Depot - Phase I Report	Former Railroad Freight Depot Phase I Report.pdf
Former Railroad Freight Depot - AAI Checklist	Former Railroad Freight Depot - AAI Checklist.pdf
Former Railroad Freight Depot - Site Access	Site Access - Former Railroad Depot.pdf
Former Garrett Masonry - Phase I Report	Garrett Masonry - Phase I Report.pdf
Former Garrett Masonry - AAI Checklist	Garrett Masonry - AAI Checklist.pdf
Former Garrett Masonry - Site Access	Garrett Masonry - Site Access.pdf
Former Auto Salvage Yard - Phase I Report	Former Auto Salvage Yard Phase I Report.pdf
Former Auto Salvage Yard - AAI Checklist	Former Auto Salvage Yard - AAI Checklist.pdf
Former Auto Salvage Yard - Site Access	Former Auto Salvage Yard - Site Access.pdf
Former McDonald Furniture - Phase I Report	Former McDonald Furniture - Phase I Report.pdf
Former McDonald Furniture - AAI Checklist	Former McDonald Furniture - AAI Checklist.pdf
Former McDonald Furniture - Site Access	Former McDonald Furniture - Site Access.pdf
Former Joe's Citgo Service Station - Phase I Report	Former Joe's Citgo - Phase I Report.pdf
Former Joe's Citgo Service Station - AAI Checklist	Former Joe's Citgo - AAI Checklist.pdf
Former Joe's Citgo Service Station - Site Access	Former Joe's Citgo - Site Access.pdf
14 th Avenue North - Phase I Report	14th Avenue North - Phase I Report.pdf
14 th Avenue North - AAI Checklist	14th Avenue North - AAI Checklist.pdf
14 th Avenue North - Site Access	14th Avenue North - Site Access.pdf
Former City Hall - Phase I Report	Former City Hall - Phase I Report.pdf
Former City Hall - AAI Checklist	Former City Hall - AAI Checklist.pdf
Former City Hall - Site Access	Former City Hall - Site Access.pdf
Former Masonry Arts - Phase I Report	Masonry Arts Phase I Report.pdf
Former Masonry Arts - AAI Checklist	Masonry Arts - AAI Checklist.pdf
Former Masonry Arts - Site Access	Masonry Arts - Site Access.pdf
Historic Lincoln Theater - Phase I Report	Historic Lincoln Theater - Phase I Report.pdf
Historic Lincoln Theater - AAI Checklist	Historic Lincoln Theater - AAI Checklist.pdf
Historic Lincoln Theater - Site Access	Historic Lincoln Theater - Site Access.pdf
Kate Waller Homes - Phase I Report	Kate Waller Homes - Phase I Report.pdf
Kate Waller Homes - AAI Checklist	Kate Waller Homes - AAI Checklist.pdf
Kate Waller Homes - Site Access	Kate Waller Homes - Site Access.pdf



Phase II Environmental Site Assessments	
Former Railroad Freight Depot- Phase II Report	Former Railroad Freight Depot - Phase II Report.pdf
Former Railroad Freight Depot- Site Access	Former Railroad Freight Depot - Site Access.pdf
Former Railroad Freight Depot- SED	Former Railroad Freight Depot - SED.pdf
Former Railroad Freight Depot- SSQAPP	Former Railroad Freight Depot - Site Access.pdf
Former City Hall/McDonald Furniture – Phase II Report	Former City Hall & McDonald Furniture - Phase II Report.pdf
Former City Hall/McDonald Furniture – Site Access	Former City Hall & McDonald Furniture - Site Access.pdf
Former City Hall/McDonald Furniture – SED	Former City Hall & McDonald Furniture - SED.pdf
Former City Hall/McDonald Furniture – SSQAPP	Former City Hall & McDonald Furniture - SSQAPP.pdf
Former Auto Salvage Yard – Phase II Report	Former Auto Salvage Yard - Phase II Report.pdf
Former Auto Salvage Yard – Site Access	Former Auto Salvage Yard - Site Access.pdf
Former Auto Salvage Yard – SED	Former Auto Salvage Yard - SED.pdf
Former Auto Salvage Yard – SSQAPP	Former Auto Salvage Yard - SSQAPP.pdf
Former Masonry Arts – Phase II Report	Former Masonry Arts - Phase II Report.pdf
Former Masonry Arts – Site Access	Former Masonry Arts - Site Access.pdf
Former Masonry Arts – SED	Masonry Arts - Site Access.pdf
Former Masonry Arts – SSQAPP	Former Masonry Arts - SSQAPP.pdf
Historic Lincoln Theater – Phase II Report	Historic Lincoln Theater - Phase II Report.pdf
Historic Lincoln Theater – Site Access	Historic Lincoln Theater - Site Access.pdf
Historic Lincoln Theater – SED	Historic Lincoln Theater - SED.pdf
Historic Lincoln Theater – SSQAPP	Historic Lincoln Theater - SSQAPP.pdf
Southside Homes – Phase II Report	Southside Homes - Phase II Report.pdf
Southside Homes – Site Access	Southside Homes - Site Access.pdf
Southside Homes – SED	Southside Homes - SED.PDF
Southside Homes – SSQAPP	Southside Homes - SSQAPP.pdf

Former Railroad Freight Depot – 2 18th Street North

Site # 01 – Former Railroad Freight Depot
Location – 2 18th Street North
Deliverables – Phase I & Phase II
Grant Dollars Utilized – \$26,289.97
ACRES Property ID - 245094

The area surrounding 2 18th Street North in Bessemer, Alabama, is part of the Downtown Bessemer Historic District, which is rich in history and architecture. The district was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1992, and it includes 70 contributing buildings spread over an area of 26 acres. The architectural styles in the

district range from Classical Revival to Modern Movement and Late 19th-century commercial designs. PPM Consultants, Inc. completed a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) for the Former Railroad Freight Depot on December 11, 2020. The subject property served as a railroad freight depot prior to 1905 and continued in this capacity until the mid-1960s. Subsequently, in 1965, it was repurposed into a builder's wholesale supply company, functioning in this role until the late 1980s. Following this period, it has been occupied by various small businesses. The surrounding vicinity has been a blend of residential and commercial establishments since before 1905, with minimal changes post-1940. During the Phase I, several recognized environmental conditions (RECs) were identified. The historical use of the site as a freight depot, coupled with the adjacent industrial and commercial activities, warranted further investigation to adequately assess and mitigate any environmental risks.

PPM's Phase II Assessment indicated a minor impact in the soil from historical activities on the site. Carbon tetrachloride, a volatile organic compound (VOC), was found in soil samples at concentrations above the recommended screening level (RSL) for groundwater protection. Additionally, arsenic, barium, and lead were detected in soil at levels surpassing their respective RSLs for groundwater protection. However, these elements did not exceed RSLs in actual groundwater samples, suggesting a low risk of leaching into groundwater. Arsenic levels specifically exceeded the industrial soil RSL in 10 samples, although most were within the natural background range for arsenic in Alabama's surface soils. Notable arsenic impact was observed near boring SB 2 and surface sample SS-4, suggesting localized soil contamination.

Brian Giattina, CFO of Blox and founder of the Bessemer Redevelopment Corps, purchased the property in March 2021. The plans for this property are community-centric and innovative. They include establishing a community garden, creating spaces for art lessons and music classes, and providing other engaging facilities for children and adults. This approach aims to revitalize the area and foster a sense of community through educational and recreational activities.

Link to Site Photographs: [Former Train Depot Site Photos.pdf](#)
News Article about this property: [The Vintage Station | 40+ Photos | Abandoned Alabama](#)



Garrett Masonry – 1726 Alabama Avenue

Site # 02 – Garrett Masonry
Location – 1726 Alabama Avenue
Deliverables – Phase I
Grant Dollars Utilized – \$4,600
ACRES Property ID - 245315

A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment for the Garrett Masonry facility at 1726 Alabama Avenue,

also known as 1729 1st Avenue North, was completed in February 2021. This property is roughly 1.55 acres. The site's history dates back to 1924. It was initially used for residential purposes before a rail spur ran through it before 1940, and ultimately, it was transformed into the current Garrett Masonry facility in the late 1960s. The surrounding area, mixed with residential and commercial developments since before 1905, has seen minimal change since 1940.



Key environmental concerns identified in the assessment include potential contamination from a 1,000-gallon underground storage tank (UST) installed in 1963 by G.A. Parsons Oil Company, which was out of service since 1989 and had a violation notice issued in 1993 for failing to upgrade. During its closure assessment, soil and groundwater contamination exceeding ADEM Initial Screening Levels (ISLs) were discovered, including methyl tertiary butyl ether (MTBE) in groundwater samples, leading to a series of investigations and monitoring efforts. The site also featured five above-ground storage tanks (ASTs), one of which historically contained off-road diesel fuel and multiple 55-gallon drums, some containing used oil and labeled mineral spirits, presenting further environmental considerations.

A Phase II was not conducted because the property was not readily eligible for grant funds as it is a federal Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST) site. A site specific determination would need to be made by the EPA and funds were prioritized elsewhere.

The City owns this property. It is currently zoned as C-2, which allows for various reuses. The City plans on applying for another assessment grant to conduct a Phase II on this property to delineate the level of environmental impacts to this property.

Link to Site Photographs: [Garrett Masonry - Site Photographs.pdf](#)



Former Auto Salvage Yard - 2900 12th Avenue North

Site # 03 – Auto Salvage Yard
Location – 2900 12th Avenue North
Deliverables – Phase I & Phase II
Grant Dollars Utilized – \$29,819.57
ACRES Property ID - 245316

A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) at 2900 12th Avenue North was completed in February 2021. The 2.86-acre facility operated as an automotive salvage yard from the 1960s until around 1990, operating under various names and primarily used for storing and dismantling cars for parts. The existing building, constructed in the 1960s for office use, was later leased by a construction company for

material storage around 2015 but was not cleared out after their departure. The property now stands vacant. The surrounding area is predominantly residential, with adjacent residential properties, a church, a small supermarket, and vacant land to the northwest. A railroad track and power transmission lines are roughly 250 feet northeast of the site.



The assessment found no RECs associated with the property, except for its historical use as a salvage yard, listed as a Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) Very Small Quantity Generator. The long-term storage of cars with motor oils, fuel, and batteries is considered a recognized environmental condition due to potential contamination risks.

A Phase II was completed on the property in September 2022. Minor soil impacts were found. Most soil samples revealed arsenic, barium, and lead levels, and one sample showed mercury, exceeding the Regional Screening Levels (RSLs) for groundwater protection. These RSLs are based on conservative assumptions, with only arsenic surpassing the RSL when recalculated for small source areas using a

Dilution Attenuation Factor (DAF) of 20. Except for arsenic, no contaminants exceeded the residential RSLs. Only one surface soil sample notably exceeded average background arsenic levels.

Regarding groundwater, no significant water presence was detected above bedrock in two monitoring wells. In the other wells, groundwater samples did not show Concentrations of Concern (COPCs) above their RSLs/ISLs. Low concentrations of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) such as acetone, benzene, xylenes, and toluene were found in one well.

Link to Site Photographs: [Auto Salvage Yard - Site Photos.pdf](#)



Former McDonald Furniture – 1816 3rd Avenue North

Site # 04 – McDonald Furniture
Location – 1816 3rd Avenue North
Deliverables – Phase I & Phase II
Grant Dollars Utilized – \$3,200
ACRES Property ID - 245789

The 0.25-acre site at 1816 3rd Avenue North was historically occupied by the J. W. McDonald Furniture Manufacturing Company from at least 1965 until the building was demolished sometime between 2017 and 2019 following damage from a vehicular collision. Currently, the site is a vacant concrete slab in an area used primarily for commercial purposes,

with some residential homes nearby. Retail businesses and local government buildings have characterized the immediate vicinity of the property. This property was priority site three in our grant application. A Phase I was conducted on December 11, 2020. Previously a furniture manufacturing site, the property is now a vacant lot. The investigation identified potential environmental concerns due to proximity to former dry cleaning establishments known for chemical use. However, no direct evidence of contamination was found on the subject property. The grant application stated that Scott Crawford Real Estate Development was interested in purchasing this site and the adjacent former Bessemer City Hall building. After the grant was awarded, Scott Crawford purchased both properties. Since completing the assessments, the company



has been trying to build capital by contacting Opportunity Zone investors and banks. They hope that the remaining finances can be secured via tax credits. Que El-Amin, the principal at his firm, is awaiting state historic preservation approval that could grant access to federal historic tax credits for a development project. These credits could provide approximately 20% of the project's equity. El-Amin plans to construct a 40-apartment complex with adjacent parking, influenced by Bessemer's economic upswing. If everything works out, this site could become part of a \$10 million mixed-use housing development with 40 units and about 4,000 square feet of retail space. The project is being planned in partnership with Cardinal Capital Management Inc., Montgomery Martin Communications

LLC, and LifeTagger LLC. The opportunity was identified after contact from a Brighton local. With familial ties to West Alabama, this marks El-Amin's inaugural venture in the state. The firm anticipates the historic designation decision soon and aims to start construction soon after.

A Phase II was conducted at the property combined with the adjacent former City Hall property Phase II. See the description of the assessment below.

Link to Site Photographs: [McDonald Furniture - Site Photos.pdf](#)

News Articles about this development: [Former City Hall set to become mixed-use development by 2023 - News - selmasun.pdf](#)

Former Joe's Citgo – 2231 9th Avenue North

Site # 05 – Joe's Citgo
Location – 2231 9th Avenue North
Deliverables – Phase I
Grant Dollars Utilized – \$3,500
ACRES Property ID - 248649

A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment of the Former Joe's Citgo Service Station at 2231 9th Avenue North was conducted on January 26, 2021. The 0.65-acre property was a retail petroleum station and automotive service station from the late 1940s to 1977. Key concerns include a possible underground storage tank (UST) fill port, indicating historical storage of petroleum fuels, a significant REC due to potential soil and groundwater contamination.

The current status of the property as a vacant lot with the existing concrete pad of the former building and the presence of the UST fill port indicates the likelihood of an underground storage tank, which may contain residual petroleum products. This scenario presents a notable environmental risk, particularly if the UST has degraded and leaked contents into the surrounding environment.

Additionally, the assessment highlights the surrounding area's historical and current land uses, a mix of residential and commercial developments since 1905. Several neighboring properties have activities that contribute to the RECs of the subject property. For instance, Rumore's BP and Buggy Wash, which operated with USTs for fuel Storage, and Hodgen's Oil Co. (currently Eli's Garage), a historical automotive facility and current repair shop, both suggest potential environmental impacts due to their proximity and the nature of their operations.

Further, the Bessemer U-Haul 775, historically using USTs, Stubbs Gulf Station, a former gasoline station, and Airway Cleaners, a historical dry cleaning facility, are all in the vicinity. Due to their historical usage and operations involving substances like petroleum and dry cleaning chemicals, these establishments contribute to the overall environmental risk profile of the area.

In summary, the site's history as a service station, the presence of potential USTs, and the historical operations of adjacent properties collectively define the environmental risks associated with the Former Joe's Citgo Service Station. The assessment underscores the need for careful consideration of these RECs in any future development or remediation efforts on the property.

A Phase II was not conducted as grant funds were prioritized elsewhere. The site is zoned as C4, which permits commercial and industrial use. The property is serviced by public sewer and water systems.

Link to Site Photographs: [Joe's Citgo - Site Photos.pdf](#)



14th Avenue North Properties – 2900 & 2901 14th Ave N

Site # 06 – 14th Avenue North Properties
Location – 2900 & 2901 14th Avenue North
Deliverables – Phase I
Grant Dollars Utilized – \$3,200
ACRES Property ID - 248650

PPM conducted a Phase I of this two-acre property on March 31, 2021. The site reconnaissance revealed the property's history as a local dog pound (1940s-1967) and an automotive salvage yard (1970-1988). The existing concrete building, dating back to the 1940s, housed the dog pound and an incinerator.

Currently, the site holds cars, horses, and debris from its past use. Surrounding areas are predominantly residential, with a church, supermarket, railroad, and Valley Creek nearby. Key RECs include the historical operations of the salvage yard and the incinerator, whose usage remains unclear, and the nearby former Holmes Used Auto Parts, a former automotive salvage yard with potential environmental impacts from stored and dismantled vehicles. Around most of the property boundaries, piles of debris appear to have been left over from the former auto salvage business that operated on the property. These historical uses, involving hazardous substances like motor oils, fuel, and batteries, contribute to the site's environmental conditions.



A Phase II was not conducted as grant funds were prioritized elsewhere. The area is zoned as R3, which allows for single-family, two-family, and commercial uses. The property has a history of being vacant land and is located in a predominantly residential area, with a church and a small supermarket in the nearby vicinity. Both properties are currently off the market and are located in an area with a mix of residential and commercial developments.

Link to Site Photographs: [14th Avenue North - Site Photos.pdf](#)

Former City Hall – 1800 3rd Avenue North

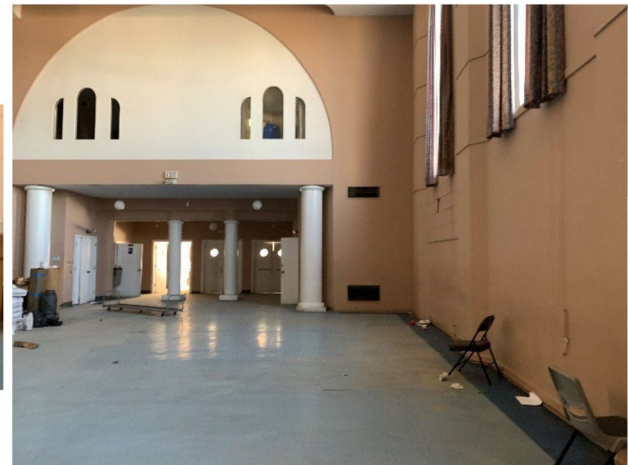
Site # 07 – Former City Hall
Location – 1800 3rd Avenue North
Deliverables – Phase I & Phase II
Grant Dollars Utilized – \$60,761.04
ACRES Property ID - 240693

The site at 1800 3rd Avenue North in Bessemer, Alabama, was a priority site in the grant application and has a rich history rooted in the City's growth during the steel industry boom. The current structure, Bessemer City Hall, was constructed between 1938 and 1941 as a Works Progress Administration project under Franklin Delano Roosevelt. This building was erected on the original City Hall and fire station site, which had been destroyed by fire. Designed in a modified Art Deco style, it features a three-story buff brick facade and a square corner tower adorned with the old City Hall's 1890 clock. The building was initially designed to include commercial space along 3rd Avenue to generate additional income for the City and houses the City Auditorium, a space for community events. The historical significance of this location is underscored by its inclusion in the Downtown Bessemer Historic District, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The site has been unused since 2016. A Phase I was completed on June 11, 2021. The assessment revealed several RECs related to the property's current and past uses and its surroundings. Concerns included uncertainty about the type of elevator in the former city hall building, the presence of historical gas tanks on the property and nearby (as identified in 1924 and 1950 Sanborn maps), and the proximity to various businesses like dry cleaners, a vulcanizing business, a tire and battery service, and a filling station. The nearby LUST sites were particularly notable, including a Gulf service station and a Shell service center, which had documented soil contamination but no recent groundwater contamination. These findings indicated potential environmental risks associated with the site's historical and current context.



Former City Hall – 1800 3rd Avenue North

A Phase II was completed on November 11, 2021. The Phase II Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) report, conducted by PPM Consultants Inc. for the former City Hall and McDonald Furniture properties in Bessemer, Alabama, aimed to evaluate potential soil, soil-gas, and groundwater contamination. This comprehensive study involved soil and soil-gas sampling, focusing on detecting various volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs). The assessment also included an asbestos and lead-based paint survey. Key findings revealed some soil contamination, notably benzene levels above regulatory limits in certain areas, and soil-gas samples indicating potential risks at several locations. Groundwater was not observed above bedrock; hence, it was not sampled. Regulated amounts of asbestos fibers were found in vinyl floor tile and sheets, interior window caulk, drywall mud, insulation, floor mastic, roof sealant, and ceiling tile.



Scott Crawford, Inc., a Milwaukee-based private development firm, purchased the property and plans to develop it and the former McDonald Furniture into a mixed-use housing development with 40 units and about 4,000 square feet of retail space. The project is being planned in partnership with Cardinal Capital Management Inc., Montgomery Martin Communications LLC, and LifeTagger LLC. The opportunity was identified after contact from a Brighton local. With familial ties to West Alabama, this marks El-Amin's inaugural venture in the state. The firm anticipates the historic designation decision soon and aims to start construction soon after.

Link to Site Photographs: [Former City Hall - Site Photos.pdf](#)

News Articles about this development: [Former City Hall set to become mixed-use development by 2023 - News - selmasun.com.url](#)

Former Masonry Arts – 8 22nd Street North

Site # 08 – Former Masonry Arts
Location – 8 22nd Street North
Deliverables – Phase I & Phase II
Grant Dollars Utilized – \$32,402.66
ACRES Property ID - 247829

The 0.42-acre site at 8 22nd Street North in Bessemer has a rich history dating back to 1888. It initially operated as the Bessemer Manufacturing Company Planing Mill, later becoming G.P. Martin Saw and Planing Mill in 1895. By 1899, it transformed into W.G. Gere and Company, a wood and coal facility. The property was undeveloped from 1913 to 1940, after which it became the Sinclair Refining Company, a gasoline depot with storage tanks. The site's

current use is as a storage yard for Masonry Arts, storing diverse construction materials. A Phase I was conducted in August 2021. The Phase I identified several RECs, including historical uses, presence of drums and former underground storage tanks (USTs), and the potential impact of neighboring properties like Arnold's Repair Shop.

A Phase II was completed on November 23, 2022. The Phase II involved detailed soil sampling and analysis for various contaminants, including volatile organic compounds (VOCs), polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), and metals. The study also included groundwater sampling to assess potential contamination. This investigation revealed that historical and/or current on-site activities have slightly impacted this property. Arsenic levels in the surface soil samples exceeded the industrial soil Regional Screening Levels (RSL) and Soil Screening Levels (SSL) for small source areas. Still, they



did not surpass twice the mean background concentration for arsenic. Other metal concentrations were within acceptable limits. Groundwater sample TMW-1 showed elevated dissolved benzene and isopropylbenzene levels, exceeding both the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) Initial Screening Level (ISL) and the EPA's RSL. Additionally, the TMW-1 sample had higher than recommended levels of benzo(a)anthracene, naphthalene, 1-methyl naphthalene, and 2-methylnaphthalene, with naphthalene also exceeding ADEM's ISL. The naphthalene concentration in TMW-2 was above the RSL but below the ISL.

Link to Site Photographs: [Masonry Arts - Site Photos.pdf](#)



Historic Lincoln Theater – 1926 1st Avenue North



Site # 09 – Historic Lincoln Theater
Location – 1926 1st Avenue North
Deliverables – Phase I & Phase II
Grant Dollars Utilized – \$13,077.50
ACRES Property ID - 255632

Constructed and opened in 1948, this theater was designed to cater to African-American audiences, offering them a venue for entertainment during segregation. It featured an orchestra and a balcony level, providing a significant cultural space for the community. Historical records indicate that the subject property was first developed between 1908 and 1913. In 1913, the property housed three smaller single-level buildings, including a tailor, restaurant, and saloon. Records from 1924 indicate that one of the shops was developed into a dry cleaning and pressing business. Unfortunately, like many theaters of its era, the Lincoln Theater faced declining audience numbers and eventually closed its doors in the late 1970s. Despite its closure, the structure remained, and for a period, the building was repurposed for retail use.

restaurant, and saloon. Records from 1924 indicate that one of the shops was developed into a dry cleaning and pressing business. Unfortunately, like many theaters of its era, the Lincoln Theater faced declining audience numbers and eventually closed its doors in the late 1970s. Despite its closure, the structure remained, and for a period, the building was repurposed for retail use.



A Phase I was conducted in April 2023 for this 0.17-acre site. The ESA identified several RECs and controlled recognized environmental conditions (CRECs), including the historical use of the property as a dry cleaner, the nearby Cook's Dry Cleaners, First Avenue Service Station, Samco Oil Company, and Anderson's Cleaners. A Phase II was completed in September 2023. The Phase II found that this site had not been impacted by historical and/or current on-and-off-site activities. Carbon disulfide, a common laboratory contaminant, and methylcyclohexane, a solvent, were the only VOCs detected above laboratory detection limits. Detections of carbon disulfide were below the EPA industrial soil RSL. No RSL is established for methylcyclohexane. Groundwater was not observed above the bedrock encountered at 13.5 to 14 feet

BGS in the four borings; groundwater was not sampled or analyzed.

Recently, there has been a renewed interest in the Lincoln Theater, highlighted by its addition to the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage in December 2021. This recognition is a step forward in renovating and potentially restoring the theater. The Lincoln Theater's historical significance, especially as a cultural venue during the segregation era and as the last remaining Black theater in Bessemer, adds to its value and the community's interest in its preservation and potential revitalization. Andre Hollard started a non-profit, The Holland Project, whose mission is to preserve and protect the Lincoln Theater.



Link to the website: [ABOUT - Lincoln Theatre \(alabamalincoln.com\)](http://alabamalincoln.com)

Link to Site Photographs: [Historic Lincoln Theater - Site Photos.pdf](#)

Kate Waller Homes – 1100 5th Avenue North

Site # 10 – Kate Waller Homes
Location – 1100 5th Avenue North
Deliverables – Phase I
Grant Dollars Utilized – \$15,515.33
ACRES Property ID - 255717

A Phase I was completed for this 25.74 acre property on June 6, 2023. The property is currently used for public housing (68 single-story residential buildings) managed by the Bessemer Housing Authority. These housing units, constructed in the 1960s, have remained essentially unchanged since their establishment. Historically, the site was utilized for private residences and churches.

The ESA identified several RECs and potential environmental concerns, including an unused Underground Storage Tank (UST) for gasoline near the maintenance building at the center of the property. Its inactive status for about 30 years raises concerns, classifying it as a REC. Secondly, the proximity of former automotive repair sites, such as Greg's Garage and Town and Country Garage, is located near the property's southern boundary. The use of solvents and oils in these garages poses potential contamination risks. Third, historical petroleum tanks previously located at the site of what is now Raggedy Ann's, adjacent to the southeastern boundary of the property. The absence of records regarding the removal of these tanks from the 1950s represents a historical REC.



Furthermore, a Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) Site-Specific Tiered Environmental Review by Dominion Due Diligence Group (D3G) revealed that parts of the property, including some building structures, are situated within a 100-year floodplain, adding another layer of environmental consideration. The property is converting to Project-Based Rental Assistance (PBRA) through HUD's Rental Assistance



Demonstration (RAD) Program, involving only maintenance with no activities exceeding those outlined within Notice CPD-16-02: Guidance for Categorizing an Activity as Maintenance for Compliance with HUD Environmental Regulations, 24 CFR Parts 50 and 58.

A Phase II was not conducted as grant funds were prioritized elsewhere.

Link to Site Photographs: [Kate Waller Homes - Site Photos.pdf](#)



Southside Homes Public Housing – 2500 Clarendon Ave South

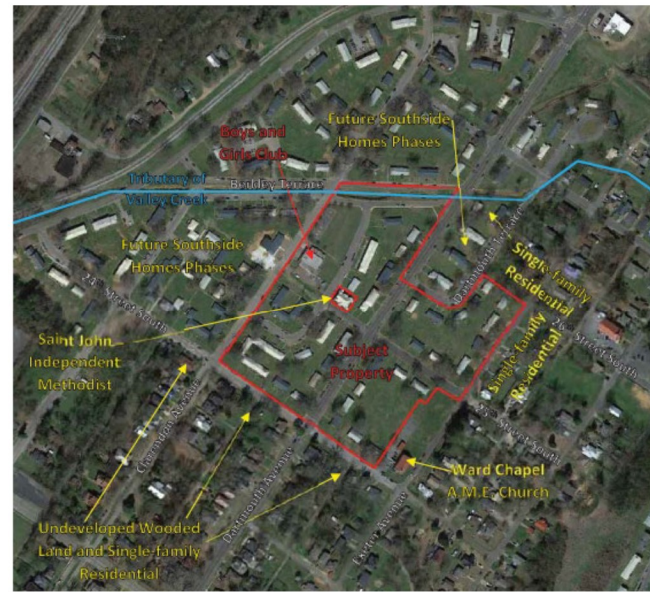
Site # 11 – Southside Homes
Location – 2500 Clarendon Avenue
Deliverables – Phase II
Grant Dollars Utilized – \$12,985
ACRES Property ID - 255719

On behalf of the City of Bessemer, PPM Consultants, Inc., and Dominion Due Diligence Group (D3G) conducted a Supplemental Phase II Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) at Southside Homes in September 2023. Prior to the Supplemental Phase II ESA, Phase I and Phase II ESAs were conducted by the Bessemer Housing Authority and D3G.

This assessment supplemented previous findings to further evaluate the presence of petroleum products and chemicals identified as Recognized Environmental Conditions (RECs). The investigation focused on soil gas and ambient air, particularly Select Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) like 1,3-butadiene, carbon tetrachloride, and tetrachloroethene. Elevated levels of these VOCs were detected, suggesting a potential vapor intrusion condition (VIC) for residents. D3G recommended additional investigations to assess the risk to residents, including a Tier II Vapor Encroachment Screen.

The property's history was also reviewed, noting its past use for residential and commercial purposes before being developed into multifamily housing in 1966. No evidence of underground or aboveground storage tanks was observed during the inspection. The property comprises 35 multifamily apartment structures and a Boys and Girls Club building, with various amenities and services provided. The objective of the Phase II ESA was to determine the presence of hazardous substances and assess risks according to HUD's toxic policy and unrestricted residential use criteria. Sub-slab vapor samples indicated that VOC levels were below EPA's VISLs, suggesting an incomplete exposure pathway for inhalation risks to residents. However, elevated levels of tetrachloroethene in indoor air samples necessitated further evaluation.

Link to Site Photographs: [Southside Homes - Site Photos.pdf](#)





2.4 TASK 4 – REDEVELOPMENT PLANNING

No redevelopment planning dollars were spent under this grant. This is because the City was focused on allocating money to identifying environmental hazards to pave the way for future planning for redevelopment.

3.0 LEVERAGED RESOURCES SUMMARY

A notable instance of leveraged funding included the performance of Phase I and Phase II ESAs at the Southside Homes project by the City's housing authority who conducted the two assessments prior to the Brownfield grant's funding of a Supplemental Phase II ESA. Estimated leveraged funds were around \$24,000.

4.0 LESSONS LEARNED

Through the course of this brownfield assessment grant project, the City has gained considerable insight into how to effectively manage such programs. This section documents challenges encountered, and lessons learned. They offer valuable guidance on optimizing project execution, ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements, and aligning our efforts with the overarching goals of sustainable redevelopment. These insights are derived from our hands-on experience in the field and serve as key takeaways for similar future endeavors.

1. **Strategic Prioritization of Properties for Phase I and II Environmental Site Assessments:** Initial assessments (Phase I ESAs) were proposed on several specific sites in the grant application that did not come to fruition for various reasons (property had already sold, inability to secure site access, etc.). One of the reasons this occurs is the approximate 1-year time lag between initial grant submittal and execution of the Cooperative Agreement. However, we were able to execute on several other sites within the grant period that did have defined redevelopment plans in place in our target area. **Key Takeaway:** When possible, prioritize properties with established development objectives already in place, but constantly search for other sites that may benefit from the program. Accept that some transactions may advance at a faster pace than is possible under the brownfield grant process and remain flexible.



2. **Enhancing Redevelopment Planning Efforts:** In the grant application, funds were earmarked for completion of one Analysis of Brownfield Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA), and other eligible planning activities including a Land Use Assessment and a Resource Roadmap. An ABCA was initially planned for the former City Hall project but was not implemented due to the developer's familiarity with the site-specific vapor issues identified during the Phase II ESA and his decision to address them with his own plans and resources. Other eligible planning activities were not implemented at the other sites due to various factors. However, the funding was used to complete environmental studies at additional sites. **Key Takeaway:** Inform stakeholders early in grant program implementation regarding the availability of planning funds to help advance redevelopment initiatives.
3. **Adherence to Protocol and Documentation Requirements:** During the City Hall Phase II assessment, procedural steps were bypassed due to pressing timelines and perceived verbal approvals from the EPA project officer. This led to the commencement of drilling activities without receipt of formal EPA signatures on the Site-Specific Quality Assurance Project Plan (SSQAPP). This misunderstanding resulted in project delays and corrective action discussions from the EPA to ensure the required approvals were received in writing on future projects. **Key Takeaway:** Unwavering adherence to all required EPA protocols and documentation, especially obtaining necessary signatures on the SSQAPP before proceeding with Phase II testing. In cases of scheduling conflicts, it is more prudent to reschedule critical tasks such as drilling to ensure compliance and avoid future complications.



5.0 FUNDING BREAKDOWN

The charts below show the amount of funding spent per task and the percentage spent on each task. For the 10 Phase I ESAs completed, the average price was \$5,122.37; for the six Phase II ESAs, the average cost was \$31,003.16.

