

## City of Bakersfield FY2017 Community-Wide Assessment Grant Close-out Report

### Project Summary

The focus of the City's FY2017 Community-Wide Assessment Grant was encouraging productive reuse of vacant, blighted, and underused properties. The City identified three focus areas where application of grant funding would be key to activating productive reuse: downtown Bakersfield, Highway 58/Mt. Vernon, and the Municipal Airport area. These focus areas align with several ongoing revitalization efforts including the City's Economic Opportunity Areas Plan that identifies the same three Focus Areas as Opportunity Zones where redevelopment will be promoted using a range of incentives.

Site assessment activities focused on a variety of City- and privately-owned properties with outcomes that benefitted a wide range of stakeholders. Beneficiaries of assessment activities included Boys and Girls Club of Kern County, Mercy Housing California (affordable housing developer), City of Bakersfield and Kern County homeless support services, Bakersfield Senior Center, and Bakersfield ARC (support organization for people with developmental disabilities). The City convened a brownfield advisory committee and convened three meetings prior to the arrival of Covid, and developed a GIS-enabled brownfield inventory for each of the three focus areas. The City's contractor performed Phase I environmental site assessments (ESAs) for 12 properties and completed regulated building material surveys at four properties, including the former Calcot property that was subsequently transformed into the Brundage Lane Navigation Center.

The cornerstone product of the City's EPA brownfield assessment grant is the *South Union Avenue Corridor Revitalization* plan created with significant collaboration, support, and input from with the City and project stakeholders. The study area is a 150-acre portion of Bakersfield along Union Avenue and generally bounded to the south by White Lane, to the north by Watts Drive, and to the east by the Bakersfield Municipal Airport. The plan examines existing conditions, analyzes property and market conditions, and establishes a set of community enhancement strategies to revitalize the area and put abandoned properties back into productive use. Reuse and improvement strategies focus on improvements to the built environment, establishing a supportive regulatory and policy framework, and building long-term partnerships between government agencies and community stakeholders to advance the community's revitalization goals. The overarching goal is to reposition the corridor for increased economic prosperity and providing a better quality of life for residents and businesses.

### Site Specific Successes

#### Brundage Lane Navigation Center

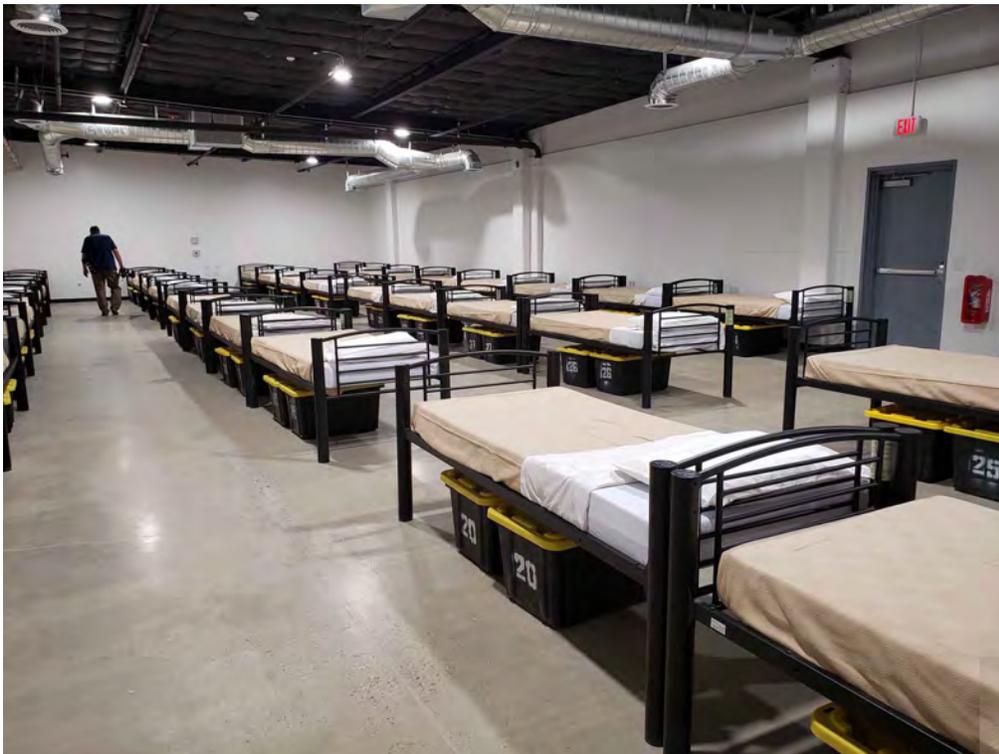
The former California Cotton (Calcot) property is a 17-acre site which has been vacant since the 1990s. Phase I site assessment and regulated building materials surveys performed under the grant supported the City's purchase of the site (including the existing 35,000 square foot former office building) in 2019 and subsequent conversion of the existing building to the Brundage Lane Navigation Center. The center, which opened in 2020, provides wraparound homeless support services including 150 shelter beds. The navigation center provides 'low barrier' shelter services and partners with Kern County to provide onsite medical, mental health, and social services to at-risk populations.

*Figure 1 – Brundage Lane Navigation Center (former Calcot property)*



The navigation center has been an overwhelming success. In its first year of operation, the center provided over 700 individuals with health and housing services and matched over 100 individuals with permanent housing. In January 2022, the City authorized expansion of the center onto an adjacent 8-acre property to add two additional men's dormitories, expanded pet kennels, a new recuperative care dormitory, and additional expanded services.

*Figure 2 - Dormitory at BLNC*



Expansion of Affordable Housing (231 Quantico Avenue and 1885 Madison Street)

Phase I environmental site assessment of existing apartment buildings at 231 Quantico Avenue and 1885 Madison Street facilitated purchase of these buildings by Self-Help Enterprises, which intends to renovate the buildings and manage them as 80 units of affordable housing. The total project cost is expected to exceed \$13 million. The City is providing \$1.5 million in local sales tax as a residual receipts loan, and the rehabilitation project will also utilize tax credits, a seller carryback loan, HOME funding, and a permanent loan.

*Figure 3 - 1885 Madison Street*



*Figure 4 - 231 Quantico Avenue*



814 & 820 Monterey Street (Boys and Girls Club of Kern County)

The City's EPA grant funded Phase I site assessments of 814 and 820 Monterey Street to facilitate purchase of these lots by Boys and Girls Club of Kern County, who intends to expand the Armstrong Youth Center located at 801 Niles Street. The Boys and Girls Club provides a broad range of youth services including before- and after-school programs, mentorship, nutrition programs, athletics, and job training and experience. Purchase of these two properties is in process.

530 & 610 4<sup>th</sup> Street (Bakersfield Senior Center)

The City allocated funding for Phase I site assessment and regulated building materials surveys for the Bakersfield Senior Center located at 530 and 610 4<sup>th</sup> Street. The RBM survey supported the planned renovation and expansion of the senior center which will add approximately 6,000 square feet and significantly expand affordable housing and services for seniors. The redevelopment plan includes adding a 'seniors promenade' recreational trail along the adjacent Kern Delta Water District canal.

*Figure 5 - Seniors Promenade Vision from Community Design Charrette*



## 2212 South Union Avenue (Bakersfield ARC)

EPA grant funding provided Phase I environmental assessment for several properties along South Union Avenue operated by Bakersfield ARC (BARC), an organization whose mission is to provide job placement and training to people with intellectual disabilities. BARC operated the facility as a recycling center staffed by BARC program participants. A gradual shift away from the profitability of materials recycling was exacerbated by the Covid pandemic, when stay-at-home orders caused supply of recyclables to far outstrip demand. BARC sold the facility to the City of Bakersfield and pivoted to a new location on California Avenue and a revived mission which focuses on integrating program participants into community-based job programs. The City continues to operate the recycling center.

### **Area-Wide Planning Successes**

#### South Union Avenue Corridor Revitalization

One significant planning output of the City's FY2017 EPA brownfield assessment grant is the *South Union Avenue Corridor Revitalization* plan created by Stantec and Kosmont with significant collaboration, support, and input from with the City and project stakeholders. The study area is a 150-acre portion of Bakersfield along Union Avenue and generally bounded to the south by White Lane, to the north by Watts Drive, and to the east by the Bakersfield Municipal Airport. The plan examines existing conditions, analyzes property and market conditions, and establishes a set of community enhancement strategies to revitalize the area and put abandoned properties back into productive use. Reuse and improvement strategies focus on improvements to the built environment, establishing a supportive regulatory and policy framework, and building long-term partnerships between government agencies and community stakeholders to advance the community's revitalization goals. The overarching goal is to reposition the corridor for increased economic prosperity and providing a better quality of life for residents and businesses.

The planning process included the following key components:

- Property inventory. The plan identified properties with redevelopment potential as well as properties with characteristics and challenges typical of underutilized brownfields.
- Community priorities. The collaborative planning process documented the community's priorities for the focus area, which served to guide subsequent recommendations. The project's stakeholder group consisted of government partners, developer/real estate representatives, property owners, and community service organizations. The stakeholder group provided feedback, personal perceptions, and recommendations that helped identify and articulate community priorities.
- Community vision and planning strategies. The project team developed a future vision for the focus area and a set of planning strategies to put the community's goals in motion and position the corridor for revitalization. The project identifies four development districts within the planning area, describes several streetscape improvements, identifies planned amenity improvements, and designates key catalyst redevelopment sites suitable for private development/infill projects.
- Action plan. The action plan matrix is intended to guide the City, government partners, and community stakeholders through implementation of the identified planning strategies. The action plan organizes strategies by timeline, vital partners, and individual actions. The action plan and associated matrix are a step-by-step process for realizing redevelopment opportunities in alignment with community vision and desires.

Looking Forward. The City has applied for a \$500,000 FY2022 EPA community-wide brownfields assessment. If awarded, grant funding will be used to advance redevelopment strategies and priorities identified under the FY2017 grant and serve to further develop a sustainable brownfields revitalization program for the City.

Figure 6 - Area-Wide Plan Focus Area Map

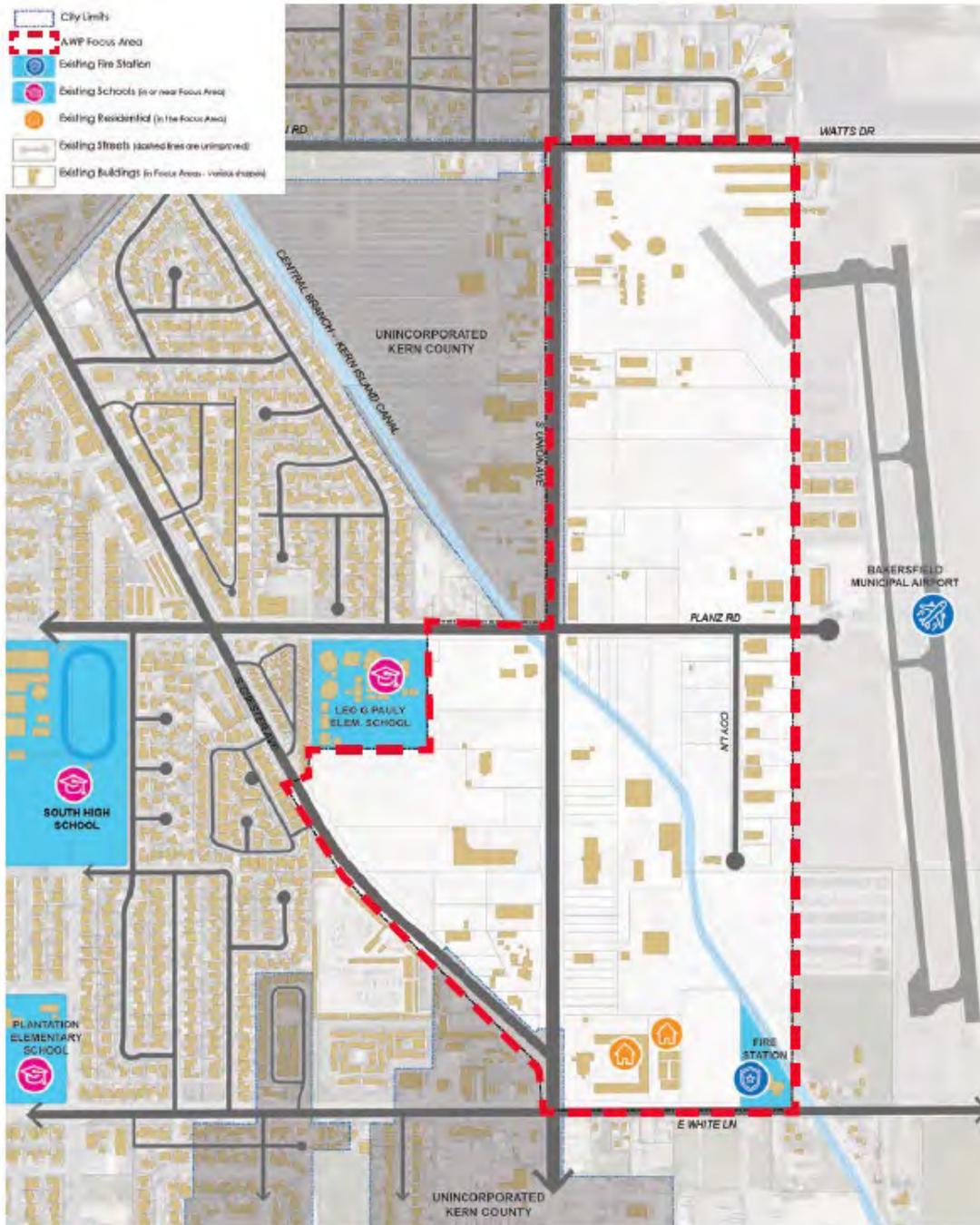


FIGURE ES2 – AWP FOCUS AREA MAP

## **Lessons Learned / Best Practices**

Following is a discussion of lessons learned and best practices that may be relevant to other communities or organizations implementing EPA brownfields assessment grants.

### Building and Maintaining Momentum

It can take time for a brownfields revitalization program to gain momentum. The City held multiple BAC meetings with project stakeholders to identify impactful and meaningful ways to utilize the grant funding. Momentum picked up in 2019 with identification of two key revitalization projects (the Brundage Lane Navigation Center and the Bakersfield Senior Center) and subsequent development of the South Union Avenue revitalization plan. Starting in early 2020 the Covid pandemic imposed additional constraints on the project in terms of outreach and overall availability of resources at the City and various project partners. The good news is that documentation of some of these early 'wins' and personnel stability at the City should result in an ongoing and sustainable brownfields revitalization program.

### **Partnering/Leveraging**

Significant partnering and leveraging accomplishments are described below.

#### Bakersfield Senior Center

Redevelopment activities will include 20 units of affordable housing, new solar power arrays, and electric vehicle transportation for residents. Site redevelopment includes renovation of the adjacent 3,800 sf building (610 4<sup>th</sup> Street) for senior center use. The total project cost is estimated at \$6.1 million. The project is eligible to receive a portion of \$5 million allocated by the City of Bakersfield for affordable housing projects under Measure N, a local one-cent sales tax measure that provides up to \$58 million of annual revenue. The center can also receive funding from Home Investment Partnership Program (HOME) funds administered by HUD (the City currently receives approximately \$1 million in HOME funds annually). The Senior Center has applied for HUD Community Development Block Grant funding available to the City of Bakersfield.

#### 231 Quantico and 1885 Madison (Self-Help Enterprises affordable housing)

The total estimated project cost is \$13.5 million. The City is providing \$1.5 million in Measure N funding and the project will also utilize tax credits, a seller carryback loan, HOME funding, and a permanent loan.

#### Brundage Lane Navigation Center

In response to significant demand for expanded homeless assistance serves, the City purchased the former Calcot property and converted it to the Brundage Lane Navigation Center. Expansion of the Brundage Lane Navigation Center is supported by \$5.8 million in Measure N funding.

## **Work Plan Accomplishments**

The following is a description of accomplishments pertaining to each task of the project's Cooperative Agreement Work Plan (CA Work Plan).

Task 1 – Project Management and Reporting. The City and their environmental contractor successfully completed grant administration and management activities including quarterly and annual reports, monthly calls with the USEPA project officer, and timely drawdowns of grant

funding. City staff attended the California brownfields conference in 2018 and the national brownfields conference in 2019.

Task 2 – Community Outreach. The City convened a brownfields advisory committee (BAC) to solicit meaningful input on the City's grant implementation process. The BAC met in December 2016, January 2018, and October 2018 to update the public on project status and to solicit input. The City developed and distributed project fact sheets and site nomination forms.

Task 3 – Brownfield Inventory and Prioritization. The City's consultant developed a GIS-enabled brownfield site inventory for four priority areas: downtown, the 34<sup>th</sup> Street corridor, Highway 58/Mt. Vernon, and the Airpark area.

Task 4 – Phase I Environmental Site Assessments. The City's consultant completed eligibility determination forms and completed Phase I ESAs for 12 properties. Stakeholders/beneficiaries consisted of private citizens and non-profit groups including Boys and Girls Club of Kern County, Mercy Properties, Bakersfield Senior Center, and Bakersfield ARC.

Task 5 – Phase II Environmental Site Assessments The City's consultant regulated building materials surveys at four properties.

Task 6 – Remedial Action Plans and Area-Wide Planning. The City's completed an area-wide plan entitled the *South Union Avenue Corridor Revitalization* plan. The study area was comprised of a 150-acre portion of Bakersfield along Union Avenue and examined existing conditions, analyzed property and market conditions, and established a set of community enhancement strategies. The process incorporated community feedback via iterative collaboration sessions with government partners, developer/real estate representatives, property owners, and community service organizations. The resulting product included an action plan matrix intended to guide the City, government partners, and community stakeholders through implementation of the identified planning strategies.

### **EPA Acknowledgement**

USEPA was consistently acknowledged as the provider of grant funding for the duration of the project. This information was conveyed on project fact sheets, during outreach meetings, and during one-on-one outreach between City staff and brownfield property owners and project proponents. All project deliverables (Phase I/II ESA reports, SAPs, etc.) also identified USEPA as the funding source.

### **Community Wide Assessment Spreadsheet**

A community wide assessment spreadsheet is attached and all ACRES site entries are up to date.

## Budget

The following table summarizes the closing balance on the FY 2017 assessment grant. As indicated, funding has been substantively utilized.

<b>Budget Category</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Costs Incurred to Date</b>	<b>Total Remaining</b>
<b>Personnel</b>	\$10,048.02	\$10,048.02.00	\$0.00
<b>Travel</b>	\$3,450.00	\$3,450.00	\$0.00
<b>Contractual</b>	\$285,501.98	\$285,501.98	\$0.00
<b>Other</b>	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.00
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$300,000.00</b>	<b>\$300,000.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>