

Community Involvement Plan

Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council

Brownfields Assessment Grant

EPA Cooperative Agreement #02D29022

March 2023

Terracon Project No. H4237074



Prepared for:

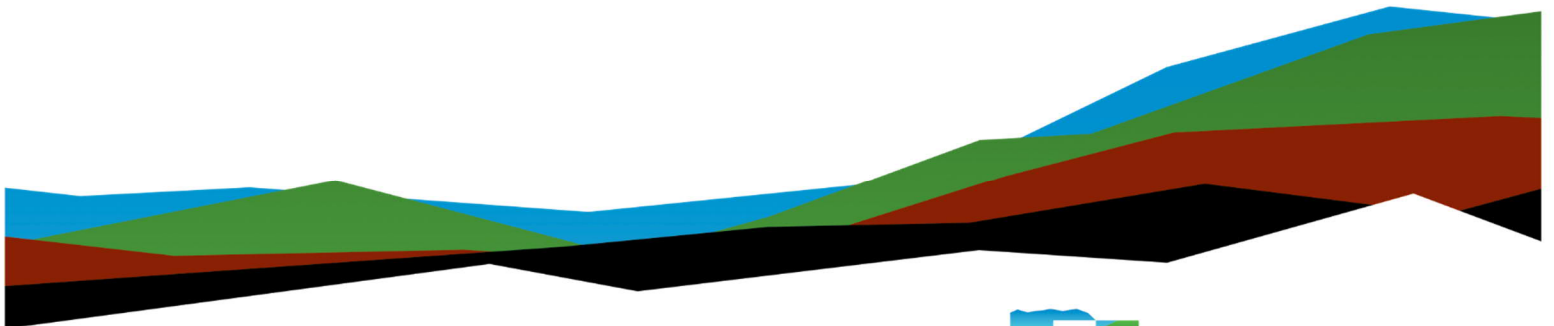
Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council

Fort Myers, Florida

Prepared by:

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Nationwide

[Terracon.com](https://www.terracon.com)

- Facilities
- Environmental
- Geotechnical
- Materials

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1.0 Community Involvement Plan Overview

This Community Involvement Plan (CIP) has been developed for the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council (SWFRPC) and outlines the ways in which the SWFRPC intends to engage with the community within the Target Area. The plan will identify the surrounding areas and how the SWFRPC will continue to encourage communication between all parties throughout the duration of the project. This can be accomplished through methods including:

- Identify community stakeholders, including but not limited to local residents, local businesses, local churches, property owners, SWFRPC Personnel and officials, local schools and other interested parties to encourage involvement.
- Develop informative flyers and other public printed materials to educate and inform the local community of the activities to be performed under the grant.
- Continue to discuss the needs, concerns, and aspirations of neighbors and stakeholders with active interests in the project. This can be accomplished through community informational sessions and by utilizing electronic outreach methods such as the SWFRPC website and social media platforms.
- Establish a clear understanding throughout the community of the project outcome(s).
- Ensure that the community involvement has real worth; value and ensure that all voices are heard.

2.0 Brownfield Project and Area Description

2.1 Project Description

The mission of the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council Brownfields Program is to develop a self-sustaining model program for the identification, assessment, remediation, and redevelopment of brownfield sites. SWFRPC seeks to raise awareness regarding economic incentives for redevelopment of brownfield sites within the target area (Census Tract 2) in Moore Haven, Florida. Through this project, the SWFRPC intends to bring citizens, environmental regulatory agencies, consultants, developers, landowners, and lenders together around a common goal of redevelopment. The Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council will use the FY

2022 Brownfield Assessment Grant to work towards this mission over the life of the project.

The objectives/tasks of the four-year Cooperative Agreement period are to conduct inclusive community outreach activities, improve and build upon an existing brownfields site inventory, conduct Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessments on priority sites and other locations identified during the life of the grant, and conduct reuse and remediation within the target area, as identified in the proposal. This grant will further the efforts of the SWFRPC towards redeveloping brownfields and improving local communities. SWFRPC intends to accomplish the following over the four-year time period of this award:

Program Objectives:

1. Educate the local community about the impact of brownfields and the utilization of properties in fostering redevelopment as part of a larger community reinvestment strategy.
2. Conduct site assessments based on environmental, health, social impact, and economic criteria.
3. Develop reuse plans for the affected sites to facilitate new employment opportunities, amenities, and infrastructure.

Program Activities:

1. Develop Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council Brownfields Program Generic QAPP.
2. Create an interactive Inventory of brownfields sites and GIS-based maps for planning and redevelopment purposes.
3. Create a Community Involvement Plan and conduct community outreach activities.
4. Perform geophysical investigations and site prioritization activities for up to twenty-seven (27) Phase I sites.
5. Perform up to twelve (12) Phase II Environmental Site Assessments (ESA) and complete up to twelve (12) Site-Specific QAPPs coupled with a Health and Safety Plan.
6. Perform Additional Soil and Groundwater Assessments (as needed).

7. Hold charrettes and visioning sessions to develop reuse plans and engage community members.
8. Maintain grant reporting requirements and coordination with Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP).
9. Develop up to six (6) Analysis Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA) Reports with recommendations from the environmental assessments.

2.2 Project Area

The target area for this community-wide assessment grant will be Census Tract (CT) 2, which encompasses the city limits of Moore Haven. The City of Moore Haven (population 2,599), founded in 1915, has throughout its history been plagued by cycles of boom and bust. The City, described as the Chicago of the south and located at the Caloosahatchee River Canal and Lake Okeechobee junction, benefited from riverboat traffic carrying cattle, fish, fruits, and vegetables to other parts of the state. The City enjoyed a boom of construction activity from its founding until 1921, only to suffer widespread flooding from historic hurricanes in 1926 and 1928. The City was resilient and continued to prosper into the 1950s until the original turnstile bridge across the river was replaced by a bascule drawbridge in 1954. This construction was the first wave of commercial relocation and destruction of historic property. These challenges worsened through the 1960s with the creation of the four-lane US-27. As the government-built US-27 and rerouted it twice, most businesses, especially throughout the historic downtown, relocated to be closer to commerce, exacerbating the city's economic decline. The historic district continued to deteriorate as the Moore Haven Sugar Mill closed in the 1970s and a high-rise, fixed-span bridge was built across the river in the 1990s, which split the historic waterfront in two. SWFRPC recognizes the tremendous growth potential of the target area, a federally designated Opportunity Zone that has access to the waterway, but leadership understands that environmental assessment is needed to move forward with planned redevelopment. The proposed redevelopment at both priority sites consists of mixed-use commercial, an RV Park, and affordable housing which will provide both economic and noneconomic benefits to the sensitive populations living in the target area. Redevelopment of the priority sites will improve property values, create new business and job opportunities, provide higher quality affordable housing opportunities, catalyze economic growth, and attract new residents.

2.3 Community Involvement Plan Objectives

Through this Community Involvement Plan, the communities in the project area will be provided opportunities for participation and engagement in the project through an effective and efficient communication system. Members of the community will gain knowledge of the EPA's Brownfields assessment and redevelopment process; as well as opportunities to participate in the decision-making process. This Plan will ensure that the communication process is ongoing, evolving and information is available as the project moves forward.

3.0 Community Involvement Activities

SWFRPC understands that community involvement is crucial for a successful Brownfields Program and intends to build on the community involvement efforts already in effect in order to generate increased community involvement and participation. The following activities will be utilized to ensure that stakeholders can sustain involvement in the project:

- The SWFRPC Brownfields Project Team will meet (including conference calls) bi-monthly to provide a forum for members to refine and develop the work plan, discuss strategies, plans and results for the Brownfields Program; as well as identifying effective means of public participation.
- The SWFRPC will conduct a Brownfields Kick-off Meeting and prepare for implementation of the grant. The Kick-off Meeting invitees include the EPA Region 4 Brownfields Grant Project Officer and members.
- Community-based organizations (CBOs) that supported the objectives of the SWFRPC during the grant process will be included in all opportunities for community engagement. The CBOs will be encouraged to reach out to their target constituencies.
- The SWFRPC Brownfields webpage will be updated to provide additional information about the Brownfields Assessment Grant Program, ongoing community outreach activities, meeting dates and locations, and other related announcements.

3.1 Point of Contact

Margaret Wuerstle, SWFRPC Executive Director, will serve as the Brownfield Project Director and will be the primary point of contact for the project. She will be responsible for the oversight and completion of administrative and financial

requirements of the Brownfield Program. Ms. Wuerstle has over 35 years of experience in urban and regional planning. In her current role she acts as the signatory, project overseer, and manager to ensure that goals and objectives are met, as well as facilitation, strategic planning, leveraging other funding streams, implementing quality improvement initiatives, and ensuring compliance with all aspects of grant awards. Charity Franks, Resiliency Planner, will serve as the Brownfield Project Manager and will assist Ms. Wuerstle. She will be responsible for the site inventory and gaining site access for assessment. They will be assisted by Ms. Rebekah Harp, Business Operations Manager, who will be responsible for managing the finances and ASAP.gov drawdowns. Rebekah has 14 years of fiscal project management experience.

Information will be distributed to the community on the SWFRPC's Brownfield webpage located on the SWFRPC's website: <https://www.swfrpc.org/programs/brownfields/>. Additional information will be circulated through mailed brochures and handouts presented at public meetings. Ms. Wuerstle's contact information is as follows:

Ms. Margaret Wuerstle
Executive Director
Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council
PO Box 60933
Fort Myers, Florida 33907
mwuerstle@swfrpc.org
239.938.1813 x222

Additional points of contact for community stakeholders, state, and local representatives are presented in Appendix A.

3.2 Distribution of Information

Information will be provided on the SWFRPC webpage regarding this project:

- Information regarding this project, including a project schedule and public meeting notices, will be provided on the SWFRPC website.
- Public meetings will be held with community stakeholders to educate, inform, update and address any questions and/or concerns regarding the Brownfields Program, including any health and safety aspects of the project.
- SWFRPC may use newspaper advertising, press releases and local community calendars throughout the duration of the project to reach target communities

and notify stakeholders of the Brownfields Program opportunities and activities.

- An informational brochure will be created to help communities better understand brownfields, remediation, redevelopment and community benefits.
- The SWFRPC will update the brownfields webpage regularly.
- Inclusiveness is a goal, and while English is the dominant language spoken in the target area, the SWFRPC will take steps to secure translators in different languages as needed. Translators for informational documentation will also be provided when needed.

3.3 Public Meetings and Town Hall Forums

The SWFRPC has and continues to actively seek and encourage citizen input throughout the brownfields process. It will continue these efforts throughout the grant implementation process, including preparing outreach/promotional materials to be distributed via email, neighborhood and stakeholder meetings, professional association meeting(s), newspapers, and through social media blasts, postings on the website and other social multi-media resources. It is invaluable to keep the community informed about the brownfields initiative. Local officials and CBOs involved in the initial grant process will be included and kept informed of community meetings and project status. Meetings are always open and accessible to the public.

The use of public meetings are vital to the exchange of information between the SWFRPC and community stakeholders. To ensure ample opportunity for full participation of stakeholders, meetings will mostly be held during evening hours. The following is a list of potential facilities that are heavily utilized by the community and are accessible to people of all abilities:

Glades County Public Library
201 Riverside Drive
Moore Haven, FL 33471

Bronson Arena
301 10th Street
Moore Haven, FL 33471

3.4 Community Support

The SWFRPC will continue its partnership with the community stakeholders; as well as state and federal agencies. The grant project values the support of local partnerships that are detailed within Appendix A under Contacts. Community Contacts are outlined as well as federal, state, local, environmental, municipal, state agencies and media. The SWFRPC is open to and encouraging new partners to join the initiative.

3.5 Information Repository

Keeping the public and community informed about the SWFRPC's Brownfields Program and benefits to local stakeholders is an essential economic development strategy. The SWFRPC will maintain a dedicated Brownfields Program webpage on the SWFRPC's website to provide general information and meeting notices in support of the program. The SWFRPC will make project related information available to local residents within the Brownfields Program website. Information that needs Council action will be advertised per SWFRPC regulations and be readily available for the public, municipal, officials, agencies, partners and media for easy access and review.

A physical copy will also be made available at the Glades County Economic Development Council office through the assistance of:

Ms. Rosemary Fllori
Executive Director
Glades County Economic Development Council
100 10th Street
Moore Haven, Florida 33471
rflori@gladescountyedc.com
863.946.0300

3.5.1 Table 1 - Community Involvement Activities

Date	Event	Representatives/Attendees
March 2023	Brownfields Kickoff Meeting	SWFRPC Personnel, Brownfields Project Team, EPA, FDEP
April 1, 2023 (annual event)	Muse Honey Festival	SWFRPC Personnel
April 2023	Tour of Moore Haven	SWFRPC Personnel, Brownfields Project Team
1 st Quarter 2023	Community Education Meeting – Virtual or in-person. In-person location TDB.	SWFRPC Personnel, Brownfields Project Team
6 th Quarter 2024	Community Education Meeting – Virtual or in-person. In-person location TDB.	SWFRPC Personnel, Brownfields Project Team
9 th Quarter 2024	Community Education Meeting – Virtual or in-person. In-person location TDB.	SWFRPC Personnel, Brownfields Project Team
11 th Quarter 2024	Community Education Meeting – Virtual or in-person. In-person location TDB.	SWFRPC Personnel, Brownfields Project Team

4.0 Project Location

4.1 Brownfield Project Area Description

The Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council Community-wide EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant focus area includes Census Tract 2 in the city limits of Moore

Haven, Florida. The project will identify and prioritize various potential sites within the designated area. A map showing the target area is included in Appendix D. With the assistance of appropriate community members, Terracon will develop a brownfield site inventory.

4.2 Site Selection

The SWFRPC has identified two priority sites within the Moore Haven city limits which include former fueling stations and automotive repair facilities. SWFRPC will utilize EPA Assessment Grant funding to complete a more thorough inventory of Brownfields properties. Sites identified will be prioritized based on redevelopment goals and potential. The inventory will be used to engage potential developers and incorporate site development potential into site prioritization and selection.

Several sites in the grant target area received initial assessment during the FY2018 grant period. These sites will be reviewed for additional funding needs and prioritized against the needs of the current grant. In general, SWFRPC believes that continued assessment of these sites will support the goals of the current grant.

The SWFRPC has started engaging property owners of potential brownfield sites, providing them with information on the “Brownfields Process” and the benefits of brownfields redevelopment.

4.3 Site Documentation

Documents and information related to this project are available for public review at the SWFBC webpage: <https://www.swfrpc.org/programs/brownfields/>. The following items are currently available or will be made available upon completion:

- Community Involvement Plan (CIP).
- Generic Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP).
- Informational handout available during public meeting.
- Any additional required documentation if applicable.

Appendix A – Contact Information

A.1 Partners



A.2 Environmental Consultant Contacts

Dan Nedvidek
Environmental Department Manager
Terracon Consultants, Inc.
Dan.Nedvidek@terracon.com
813.321.0313

Belinda Richard
National Brownfields Program Manager
Terracon Consultants, Inc.
Belinda.Richard@terracon.com
813.321.0345

Tara Szydowski
Due Diligence Group Manager
Terracon Consultants, Inc.
Tara.Szydowski@terracon.com
813.321.0346

A.3 EPA

Region 4 Officials

EPA Project Officer
Nichole Rodgers
419.575.1706
rodgers.nichole@epa.gov

EPA Florida Brownfields Grants
Laura Fowler
404.562.8427
fowler.laura@epa.gov

A.4 State Environmental Agency Officials

FDEP Brownfields Program
Kelly Crain
Brownfields Program Manager
850.245.8953
Kelly.Crain@FloridaDEP.gov

Appendix B – Glossary of Terms

Analysis of Brownfield Cleanup Alternative (ABCA): Remedial plan document that includes analysis of cleanup alternatives; identifies the objectives of the cleanup and provides an analysis of cleanup alternatives based on effectiveness, ability to be implemented and cost; documents if the situation meets the need for a cleanup; provides information pertaining to the site background and health and safety; and identifies the proposed action and explains the rationale for its selection.

Brownfields: Abandoned, idled, or under used industrial, commercial, or residential facilities/sites where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination.

Community: An interacting population of various types of individuals in a common location; a neighborhood or specific area where people live.

Community Involvement: The term used by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to identify its process for engaging in dialogue and collaboration with communities. EPA community involvement is founded in the belief that people have a right to know what the Agency is doing in their community and to have a voice in it. The purpose is to give stakeholders the opportunity to become involved in Brownfields activities and help shape the decisions that are made.

Community Involvement Plan: A management and planning tool outlining the specific community involvement activities to be undertaken during the course of a site investigation and cleanup. It is designed to (1) share communication between the affected community and the EPA, and (2) ensure public input in the decision-making process related to the affected communities.

Grant: An award of financial assistance, including cooperative agreements, in the form of money, or property in lieu of money, by the Federal Government to an eligible grantee.

Information Repository: A dedicated Brownfields Website that is convenient for local residents, community members, stakeholders and developers.

Objective: Something that one's efforts or actions are intended to attain or accomplish; purpose; goal; target.

Public: The community or people in general or a part or section of the community grouped because of a common interest or activity.

Public Meeting: Formal public sessions that are characterized by a presentation to the public followed by a question and answer session.

Site: Location selected for brownfields or environmental activity; place for potential redevelopment.

Spokesperson: An advocate who represents the policy or purpose of a particular organization/entity.

Stakeholder: Any organization, government entity or individual effected by the project or with a particular interest in the project.

Preservation: To maintain in safety from injury, peril or harm; protect.

Enhancements: To make greater, as in value, beauty, or effectiveness; augment.

Appendix C – Acronyms

ABCA	Analysis of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives
CIP	Community Involvement Plan
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ESA	Environmental Site Assessment
QAPP	Quality Assurance Project Plan
FDEP	Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Appendix D – Figure 1 Area Map

