



# CITY OF FORT DODGE, IOWA COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PLAN

United States Environmental Protection Agency  
Community-Wide Brownfield Assessment Grant

Cooperative Agreement Number: BF# 96707701



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## 1. Introduction

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The City of Fort Dodge Brownfields Program will identify potential hazards, prepare for remediation, and create new redevelopment opportunities within the City. To encourage investment, the program will support environmental assessment and technical assistance.

Through U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Community-Wide Brownfield Assessment funding, the Brownfields Program will provide pre-development resources to encourage community-based projects that will serve as a catalyst to promote brownfield site redevelopment, affordable/workforce housing, and open/green space projects. The City received \$500,000 for this initiative from the EPA.



This Community Involvement Plan (CIP) will describe the methods the City of Fort Dodge Brownfields Program will utilize for communication to inform the community about program activities. The CIP will serve as a roadmap in engaging and educating stakeholders, citizens, and private investment entities to achieve redevelopment plans with community buy-in and based on common community goals. To meet the needs of the community, the City has identified the following actions:

- Host up to five public open house events (in person and/or virtually).
- Publish open house events in several outlets (local organizations, media, etc.).
- Develop a dedicated Fort Dodge Brownfields Program website.
- Develop and maintain a program specific brochure.
- Update the City Council on program activities.
- Mailings may be sent to area residents, businesses, organizations, and property owners as needed.
- Maintain a depository of all technical reports.
- Post meeting notices in public facilities and community locations:

**Fort Dodge City Hall**  
819 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue S  
Fort Dodge, Iowa 50501

**Fort Dodge Public Library**  
424 Central Avenue  
Fort Dodge, IA 50501

**Citizen's Central  
Community Center**  
617 Central Avenue  
Fort Dodge, IA 50501

## 2. Background

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The City of Fort Dodge is located in north-central Iowa and has a population of 27,338 (2020 Census). The city serves as the county seat of Webster County and is an economic hub for the area.

Originally established as Fort Clark in 1850, the city quickly grew as regional rail lines allowed for intense industrial development. However, disinvestment in the area and the closure of numerous large plants led to job loss and population decline since the 1970s. The city is designated as an economically distressed area, ranking among the bottom third of the state for economic health (Iowa Economic Development Authority).

It is estimated that Fort Dodge currently has 649 brownfield facilities, 186 of which reside in the downtown area (according to the Platform for Exploring Environmental Records). The downtown area includes numerous underutilized sites that are prime targets for redevelopment. The poverty level of Fort Dodge is 17%, notably higher than the state average at 11.1% (2020 Census estimates). Furthermore, the downtown area's poverty rate sits at a staggering 30.3%.

This Brownfield Community-Wide Assessment Grant will help the City determine environmental conditions, conduct and prioritize an inventory of brownfield sites, develop cleanup plans, and complete an area-wide redevelopment plan. This will allow the City to build a better future for its residents and alleviate economic distress that has been experienced over the past decades.



### 3. Program Description

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This Brownfields Program will allow the City of Fort Dodge to determine environmental conditions of brownfield sites across the community. A comprehensive field inventory of potential brownfield sites will be conducted as part of the site investigation component of this program. An estimated twenty (20) Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESAs), seven (7) Phase II ESAs, four (4) supplemental Phase II ESAs, which will inspect for asbestos-containing materials (ACM) and/or lead-based paint (LBP) hazards, and three (3) site-specific cleanup plans will be completed.

Additionally, this program includes developing an area-wide redevelopment plan for the City of Fort Dodge. Components of the area-wide plan could include land use assessment, infrastructure evaluation, revitalization planning, community health assessment, evaluation of market viability, market study, resource road mapping, site disposition strategies, site reuse assessment, and reuse visioning.

The City of Fort Dodge selected Impact7G, Inc (Impact7G) as the Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP) for assistance with this grant after a public Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process.

The program supports the following activities related to brownfield redevelopment:

- **Task 1: Cooperative Agreement Oversight.** This task includes general administration of the grant and will be completed by both the City and Impact7G.
- **Task 2: Community Outreach.** This task includes all activities related to involving the public and key stakeholders in the grant as recommended by this plan.
- **Task 3: Site Work.** Site work includes completion of the ESAs as noted above. As the QEP for this project, Impact7G's environmental specialists will lead inspections and utilize certified laboratories for hazardous materials testing.
- **Task 4: Planning.** As detailed above, this task will identify a long-range plan for the City and community leaders to follow as future sites are considered for brownfields redevelopment. Planning will be led by Impact7G.

## 4. Key Stakeholders

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Through this CIP, stakeholders in the community will be provided a venue for participation in the project through a two-way communication system. Members of the community will gain knowledge of the Fort Dodge Brownfields Program activities and the redevelopment process. This CIP will help ensure that the communication process is ongoing and project information is available as key project components are initiated and completed.

Through the grant application and planning process, several stakeholders and community supporters have been identified as integral in the implementation of the EPA Brownfields Community-Wide Grant awarded to the City. As the City embarks on assessment and planning activities, these longstanding stakeholders and partnerships at the local, state, and federal levels will be engaged as the project progresses and will provide input as opportunities arise. The following is a listing of key stakeholders and their contact information.

**Vickie Reeck**

City of Fort Dodge, Iowa  
vreeck@fortdodgeiowa.org  
515.576.4551 ext. 1243

**Paige Wheeler**

City of Fort Dodge, Iowa  
pwheeler@fortdodgeiowa.org  
515.576.4551 ext. 1201

**Matt Bemrich**

City of Fort Dodge, Iowa  
mbemrich@fortdodgeiowa.org  
515.573.7144

**Mel Pins**

Iowa Department of Natural Resources  
mel.pins@dnr.iowa.gov  
515.725.8344

**Astra Ferris**

Greater Fort Dodge Growth Alliance  
astra@greaterfortdodge.com  
515.955.5500

**Main Street Fort Dodge**

director@mainstreetfd.org  
515.573.3172

**Jamie Anderson**

Human Resource Director  
janderson@fortdodgeiowa.org  
515.576.4551, ext. 1290

**Amanda Holmes**

Fort Dodge Human Rights  
Commission  
Aholmes@fortdodgeiowa.org  
515.576.4551, ext. 1225

**Joshua Porter**

Fort Dodge Community School District  
jporter@fdschools.org  
515.574.5651

## 5. Main Points of Contact

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### **Main Point of Contact (City/Grantee)**

Vickie Reeck, Community & Economic Development Director, will serve as the Project Manager for the Brownfields Assessment Grant and will serve as the spokesperson for the project. Her role is to provide direct access between the City, relevant stakeholders, and Impact7G relating to project activities. She will provide any updates to this CIP during the course of the project and will also serve as the Emergency Contact should any issues arise during the course of the project.

Vickie Reeck, Community & Economic Development Director  
819 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue South, Fort Dodge, Iowa 50501  
vreeck@fortdodgeiowa.org  
515.576.4551, Extension 1243

### **Main Point of Contact (QEP)**

Jon Reis, Senior Project Manager at Impact7G, will be the main point of contact for the QEP. His role is to ensure deadlines and deliverables as identified in the approved EPA Workplan are achieved, including site work and planning activities.

Jon Reis, Senior Project Manager  
8951 Windsor Parkway, Johnston, Iowa 50131  
jreis@impact7g.com  
515.231.3719

### **Main Point of Contact (EPA)**

Sandeep Mehta, Brownfields Project Manager with EPA Region 7, will serve as EPA's representative for this Cooperative Agreement. Sandeep and his team will be tasked with determining site eligibility, reviewing quarterly reports, and approving Phase II ESA Work Plans.

Sandeep Mehta, Brownfields Project Manager  
11201 Renner Blvd, Lenexa, Kansas 66219  
Mehta.sandeep@epa.gov  
913.551.7763

## 6. Community Outreach Commitments

Impact7G and the City agree to conduct the following tasks as part of this Brownfields Community-Wide Assessment Grant.

Task	Outputs	Outcomes
<b>Community Meetings</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold at least five public meetings to present projects, schedule, and progress to the City and community</li> <li>• Host annual (at least four total) City Council meeting presentations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentations/open houses at City Council meetings or community events</li> <li>• Agendas, attendance lists and meeting notes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve community awareness, understanding, and participation in assessment and the redevelopment process</li> </ul>
<b>Community Involvement Plan</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop Community Involvement Plan with key project information for public review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Involvement Plan available community wide for review/comment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve community awareness, understanding, and participation in assessment and the redevelopment process</li> </ul>
<b>Outreach Materials</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create brownfields website</li> <li>• Develop program-specific brochure</li> <li>• Develop success story upon successful project completion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easy to navigate and attractive website for current information</li> <li>• Brochure will be available on brownfields program website, available at City Hall, and available at City meetings</li> <li>• Success stories write-up with high-quality photographs and sustainability information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up-to-date marketing tools to promote project work and disseminate information and promote the EPA Brownfield process</li> </ul>



## 7. Schedule

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The following table lists when community involvement activities will occur throughout the grant program.

Date	Event
December 2023 – January 2024	Create Fort Dodge Brownfields Website
January - March 2024	Develop Project Specific Brochure & FAQ
January – March 2024	Kick-off Presentation/Open House at City Council Meeting
June – August 2024	Public Meeting/Open House
September – December 2024	Public Meeting/Open House
September - December 2024	City Council Update Year 1
June – August 2025	Public Meeting/Open House
September – December 2025	City Council Update Year 2
June – August 2026	Public Meeting/Open House
September – December 2026	City Council Update Year 3
June – August 2027	Public Meeting/Open House
June – December 2027	Develop Project Success Story
September – December 2027	Project Wrap-up Presentation at City Council Meeting

## 8. Involvement Strategy

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This CIP will utilize the Inform and Involve two-step strategy for engaging all relevant stakeholders throughout the project. The table below outlines each of the steps that constitute a holistic approach to community involvement.

Inform	Involve
<b>Objective</b>	
To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the project activities and opportunities for involvement.	To work with the community to ensure stakeholder concerns are understood and considered where possible.
<b>Tools and Activities</b>	
Kick-off Meeting Public Meetings/Open House Events Brownfields Website Program Brochure Press Releases	City Website Kick-off Meeting Public Meeting/Open House Events Stakeholder Mailings

Brownfield program documents generated as part of this project will be available for review at Fort Dodge City Hall. The information repository will be available at the following address.

**Fort Dodge City Hall  
819 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue S  
Fort Dodge, Iowa 50501**