



# COLUMBUS BROWNFIELDS PROGRAM

Georgia Planning Association (GPA)  
Annual Conference  
October 2, 2019

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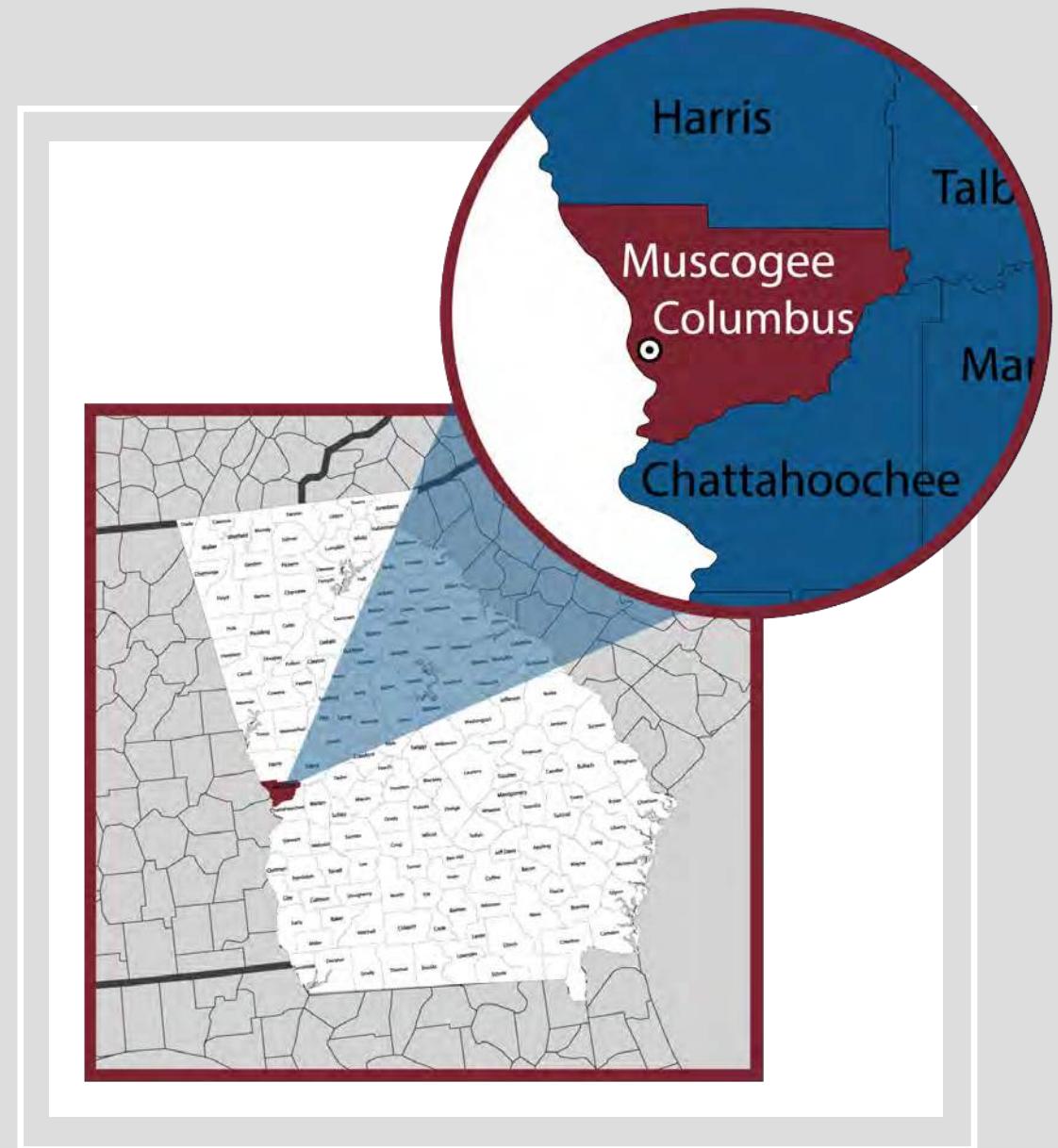
**Laura Johnson, Columbus Consolidated Government  
Director of Community Reinvestment**

**Amanda M. Herrit, M.S., Terracon Consultants, Inc.  
Senior Environmental Scientist**



# COLUMBUS, GEORGIA

- Located on the west-central border of the Georgia-Alabama line, 100 miles southwest of Atlanta
- Adjacent to Fort Benning, U.S. Army Maneuver Center of Excellence
- Corporate headquarters - Aflac, TSYS, Synovus, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Georgia, and Realtree
- Local colleges - Columbus State University, Troy University, Chattahoochee Valley Community College (CVCC), and Mercer University School of Medicine (2021)
- Tourist/recreational attractions - National Infantry Museum, Coca-Cola Space Science Center, Westville, Columbus Botanical Gardens, whitewater rafting, and ziplining
- Conference centers - Columbus Conventions and Trade Center, Rivermill Event Center, and the Liberty Theatre Cultural Center



## WHAT IS A BROWNFIELD?

“...real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or **potential** presence of hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant.”\*

**Practical implication: Brownfields are everywhere!**

\* Public Law 107-118 (H.R. 2869) - “Small Business Liability Relief and Brownfields Revitalization Act”, signed into law January 11, 2002.



# BROWNFIELDS

- Properties with possible environmental issues that are limiting use of the site
- Eligible for Liability protections and Funding for the Environmental Component of a Redevelopment Project
- Local Government plays a Leading Role



# THE COMMUNITY ROLE IN BROWNFIELDS REDEVELOPMENT

- Brownfields funding is not possible without the support and often the participation of local government— they play a leading role
  - Few private sector entities are eligible for grant funding- However Nonprofits are eligible entities
- Community support is a **continuum** which ranges from “supportive” to “innovative”
  - **Supportive:** planning, fee waivers, expedited permit review, infrastructure development, grant applicant/recipient
  - **Innovative:** interim title holder, site promotion/marketing, catalytic site developer

# EPA BROWNFIELD GRANTS AND BENEFITS

## EPA Brownfield Grants

- Brownfield Assessment Grants
- Brownfield Cleanup Grants
- Revolving Loan Fund

## Benefits of Brownfield Redevelopments

- Facilitate jobs
- Increase local tax base
- Help utilize existing infrastructure
- Reduce blight
- Improve and protect the environment



# COLUMBUS

## 2<sup>ND</sup> AVENUE CORRIDOR/THE MILL DISTRICT

- Columbus was known as the largest southern riverfront mill district spanning the Chattahoochee River from Bibb City south to Uptown Columbus (5 major textile/grist mills).
- The mill closures from the 1960's to the 1990's left the industrial sites of historic downtown and the 2nd Avenue Corridor vacant and a blight on the community.
- Many businesses closed throughout the City further exasperating the rate of economic decline.
- Many areas of the City never recovered, which has left neighborhoods struggling with property abandonment and blight.
- A large number of the abandoned properties are also considered brownfields because they have the potential of containing contamination.
- Many of these properties are located in the poorest areas of the City.



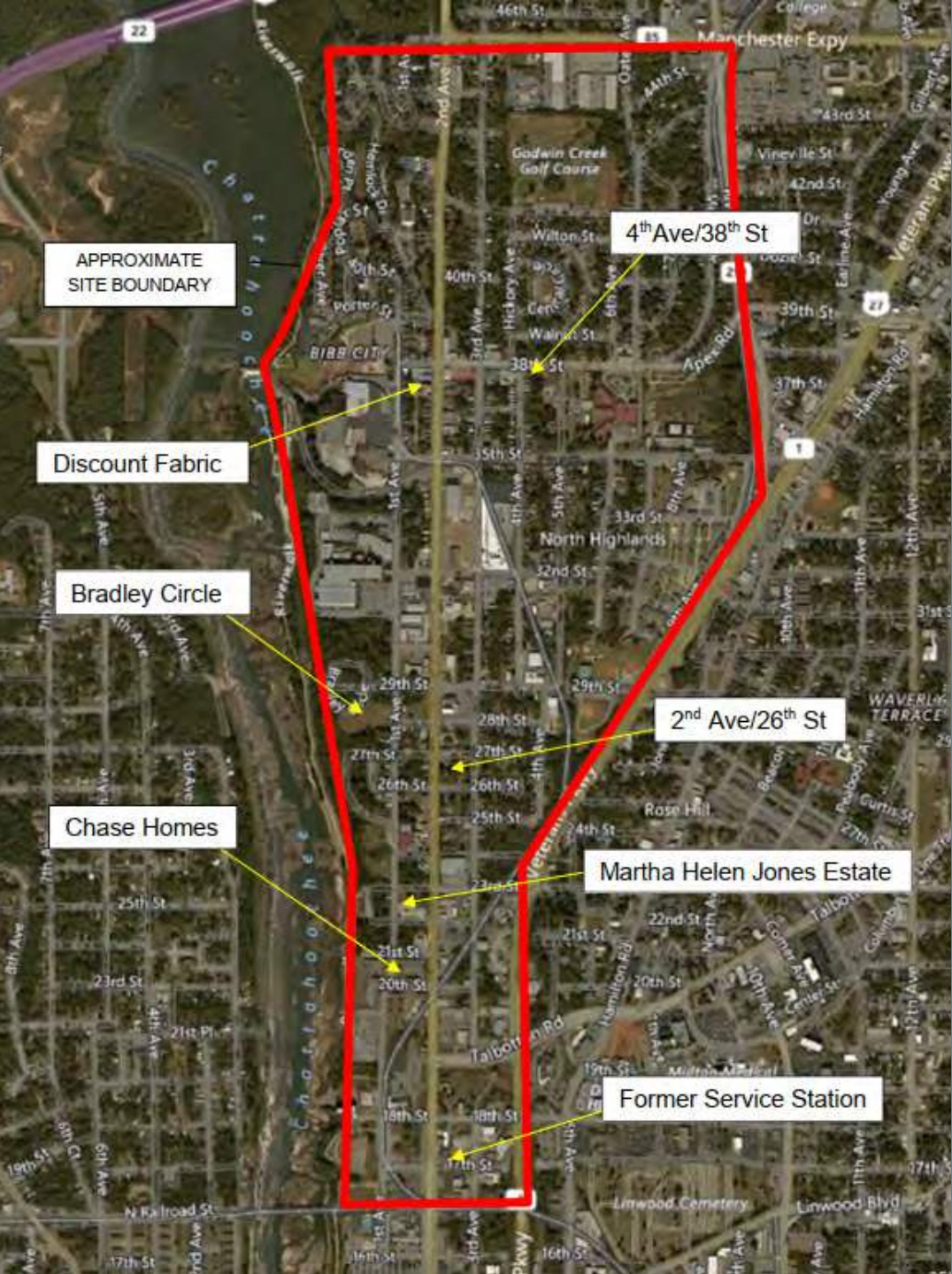
West end of the multiple-story mill on the banks of the Chattahoochee. Library of Congress, Print and Photographs Division, HAER Georgia, 108-COLM 27-2.



## FY2017 EPA BROWNFIELD ASSESSMENT GRANT

- Columbus was the recipient of an EPA Brownfield Grant for \$300,000 FY2017.
- The funding has been used to conduct ESA Phase I's, Limited Site Investigations, Hazardous Material Surveys, and a Site-Specific Quality Assurance Project Plan at 9 separate locations.
- Properties that we have used grant funding on:
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue @ 26<sup>th</sup> Street (7 parcels)
  - Discount Fabric Outlet (3 parcels)
  - Former Port Columbus – 800 Lumpkin Blvd.
  - Louis T. Chase Homes – 120 20<sup>th</sup> Street
  - Martha Helen Jones Estate - 2212 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue
  - Former Service Station – 201 17<sup>th</sup> Street
  - 3710, 3712, and 3714 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue
  - Bradley Circle Properties (8 parcels)
  - Former Georgia State Farmers Market – 318 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue





# 2<sup>ND</sup> AVENUE CORRIDOR/ THE MILL DISTRICT TARGET AREA

# STAKEHOLDERS

## 2<sup>ND</sup> AVENUE CORRIDOR/THE MILL DISTRICT

- The Mill District – Local redevelopment area containing designated OZ and a TAD boundaries.
  - Target area for the 2017 EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant
- Stakeholders
  - Mill District, Inc. is a local non-profit that serves as the “community quarterback” for this district.
  - Neighborworks Columbus is a local non-profit affordable housing developer and Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) whose target areas are located within the Mill District boundaries.
  - Other partners include the Columbus Housing Authority, Fox Elementary School, Mercy Medical, Truth Springs, Historic Columbus, Neighborhood Associations, and many more.



# PURPOSE-BUILT COMMUNITY

## 2<sup>ND</sup> AVENUE CORRIDOR/THE MILL DISTRICT

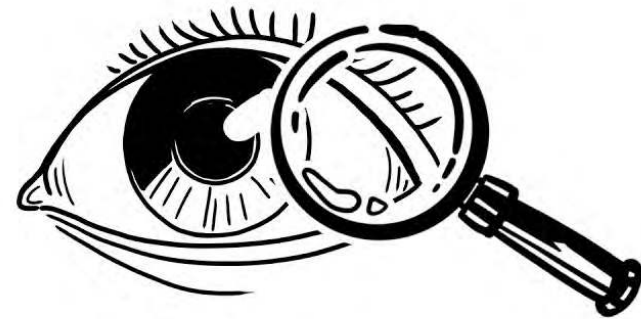


- The Mill District is currently being designated a Purpose-Built Community.
  - The Purpose-Built vision guides neighborhood revitalization by creating pathways out of poverty for the lowest-income residents, and building strong, economically diverse communities.
  - The Purpose-Built model is a three-pronged approach to change with high quality mixed-income housing; a cradle-to-college education pipeline; and community wellness programs, all guided by a “Community Quarterback” leadership group.

## THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

- It's not always what it seems...
- Some sites may look like obvious Brownfields, but they are not.
- Some sites may not appear to be Brownfields, but they are.
- Some sites are exactly what they appear to be.

# Visual Perception





# PORT COLUMBUS

Site: 800 Lumpkin Blvd – 12.4 acres (540,613 sq. ft.)

Above ground storage tank farm located on the riverfront

- Assessment Conducted: Phase I ESA
- Results: Soil, groundwater, and soil vapor contamination levels were below EPA's threshold
- Future Redevelopment: City is in process of demolishing tanks and other structures to prepare property for redevelopment

\*Could not use grant funding for Limited Site Investigation because the City was responsible for prior contamination.

## The Good!



# FORMER SERVICE STATION

Site: 201 17<sup>th</sup> Street

- Assessments Conducted: Phase I ESA, Hazardous Materials Survey, Limited Site Investigation (LSI)
- Results: Phase I ESA recommended LSI USTs located on-site – Considered a REC, LSI – soil vapor samples – VOCs
- Future Redevelopment – May need to address soil vapor in building design

The Bad!!





## FORMER WHATLEY SERVICE STATION

Site: 3710, 3712, and 3714 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue

- Assessments Conducted: Phase I ESA, Hazardous Materials Survey, Limited Site Investigation (LSI), Soil Vapor Assessment
- Results: Phase I ESA identified RECs. LSI reported elevated VOCs in soil vapor, Soil Vapor Assessment - VOCs in soil were below site specific levels using EPA soil gas modeling.



## The Bad!!



## BRADLEY CIRCLE PROPERTIES

Site: 2, 5, and 9 27<sup>th</sup> Street, 2838  
Bradley Circle, 2711, 2715, 2719, and  
2805 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue (8 vacant parcels)

- Assessments Conducted: Phase I  
ESA, Limited Site Investigation (LSI)
- Results: RECs - Historical dry  
cleaner, Undocumented landfill
- Additional investigation is  
recommended.

The UGLY!!!



## FORMER GEORGIA STATE FARMERS MARKET

Site: 318 10<sup>th</sup> Street

15 acres – Former Georgia  
State Farmers Market

- Assessments Conducted:  
Phase I ESA, Hazardous  
Materials Survey, Limited Site  
Investigation, ABCA
- Results: Presence of USTs,  
petroleum products, asbestos,  
lead-based paint

**The UGLY!!!**



# THE GEORGIA BROWNFIELDS PROGRAM

- The City applied for the Georgia Brownfields Program through the Environmental Protection Division (EPD) for the Farmers Market property.
- The program facilitates voluntary clean-up and reuse of brownfields by offering liability protection and other incentives designed to improve demand for these properties.
- The limitation of liability takes effect upon approval by EPD. The limitation of liability transfers to the successors in title (unless the successor contributed to the contamination).
- The Brownfield Tax Incentive provides tax relief for properties where costs were incurred to obtain a brownfield limitation of liability.
- Costs documentation is submitted to EPD for review and a certification of eligible costs is issued to prospective purchaser who applies to the local taxing authority.
- The brownfield assessment provides tax savings by freezing the ad valorem value of the property for up to ten years.



# EPA BROWNFIELD CLEANUP GRANT

- Awarded an EPA Brownfield Clean-Up Grant for \$500,000
- Only governments and non-profits can apply for this grant.
- Requires 20% local match
- Cleanup to begin October 2019 (must be expended within 3-years)

TOP STORY

## Columbus gets \$500K grant to de-contaminate old farmer's market



Columbus gets \$500K grant to de-contaminate old farmer's market

## LIBERTY DISTRICT AREA

- Surrounded by Porterdale, East Porterdale and Riverdale Historic Cemeteries
- Liberty Heritage Historic District – designed in 1969 to preserve historic properties
- Master Plan for the Liberty District – developed in 2003
- 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue/Liberty District Tax Allocation District (TAD) – developed in 2015
- State Enterprise Zone developed in 2000 surrounding the site
- Located in a Federal Opportunity Zone
- 2038 Comprehensive Plan - preservation of residential areas including enforcing codes, promoting neighborhood events, discouraging non-residential encroachment, reopening the formerly closed street network, and promoting connectivity through additional greenspace and trails.
- Redevelopment of the site will have a positive impact on the Liberty District and will help stimulate the economy.



# FUTURE REDEVELOPMENT

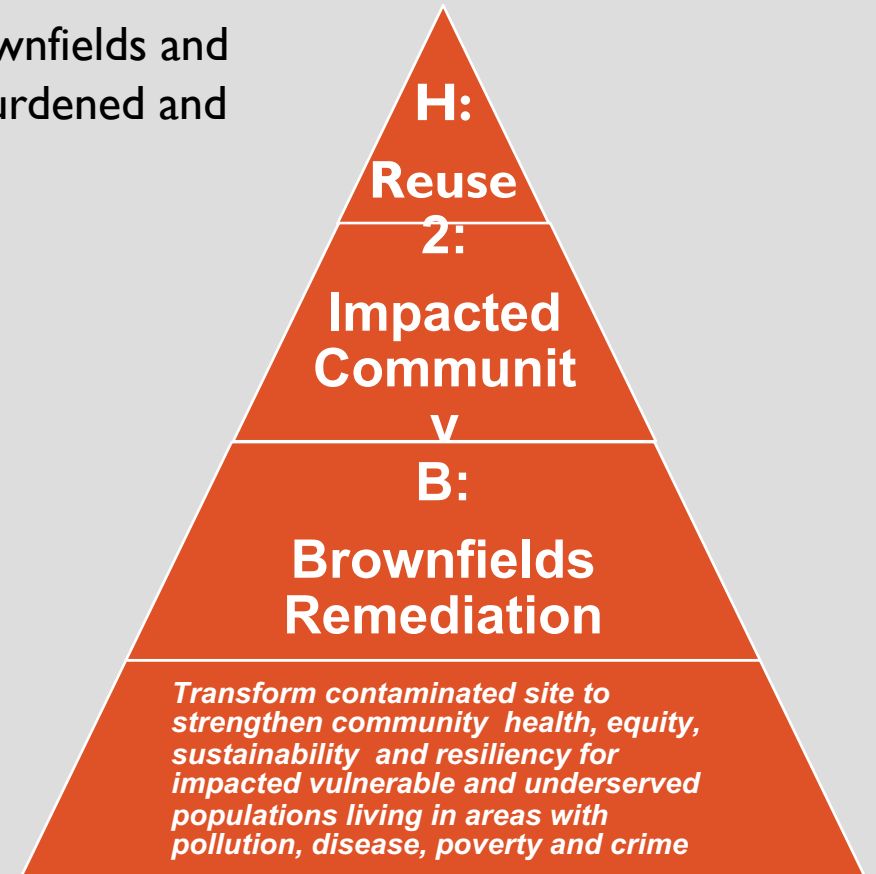
- Urban agriculture and agro-tourism hub
- Demonstration gardens
- Urban farms and food forest
- Community gardens
- Walking trails
- Event spaces
- Open and indoor markets



# BROWNFIELDS TO HEALTHFIELDS – B2H

B2H is a community centric, multi-stakeholder strategy that transforms brownfields and strengthens community health, equity, sustainability, and resiliency for overburdened and underserved populations.

- “Healthfields” refers to the transformation of Brownfields Sites into viable projects that increase access to health care, recreation, and healthy foods, educations, and jobs.
- B2H leverages resources to address contaminated site remediation, advance environmental justice, promote community health, restore urban watersheds, and support communities.
- The end result of a Heathfield redevelopment could include housing, produce markets, community gardens, health clinics, or parks.



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Columbus has conducted the following community engagement activities:

- Developed Community Engagement Plan
- Digital Engagement
  - Website  
<https://columbusgabrownfields.com/>
  - Social Media  
<https://www.facebook.com/ccgcommunityreinvestment>
- Public meetings in the target area
- Professional Development Trainings
- Brownfield Advisory Committee Meetings and Trainings
- Public Access to Project Reports - All reports are available for public review





# PROGRAM PARTICIPATION


[www.columbusgabrownfields.com](http://www.columbusgabrownfields.com)



The Columbus Consolidated Government

## BROWNFIELDS PROGRAM

Terracon

 Columbus Consolidated Government  
EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant

### Brownfield Site Application/ Consideration Form

This form is for property owners that are interested in having their property assessed as part of the Brownfields Assessment. It is requested that the form be filled out as completely as possible to provide the Columbus Consolidated Government with the information necessary to select sites as part of the annual prioritization.

**What is a Brownfield?**  
Brownfields are defined as "real property," the expansion, redevelopment or reuse of which is complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. Cleaning up and reinvesting in brownfields properties protects the environment, reduces blight, and takes development pressures off greenspaces and working lands.

**Contact information:**  Property Owner  \*Legal Representative of Property Owner

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
\* How are you the Legal Representative? \_\_\_\_\_  
Form completed by (please provide contact information, if different from above): \_\_\_\_\_

**Property:**

Property Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Property Appraiser ID Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Parcel Size: \_\_\_\_\_  
Size of structures on site, if applicable: \_\_\_\_\_  
Is the property currently located within the City limits? \_\_\_\_\_  
Property Concerns: \_\_\_\_\_  
Current site use: \_\_\_\_\_  
Historical site use: \_\_\_\_\_  
Does the property have any known petroleum use? \_\_\_\_\_  
Does the property have any known hazardous substance use? \_\_\_\_\_  
Historic significance of site: \_\_\_\_\_  
What are the proposed redevelopment plans, if applicable? \_\_\_\_\_  
What is the timeline for redevelopment, if applicable? \_\_\_\_\_  
Has the property been involved in any other environmental cleanup programs? If yes, please specify the regulatory agency involved, when, and any project identification numbers: \_\_\_\_\_

Submit to: Columbus Consolidated Government  
Attn: Laura Johnson, [LJohnson@Columbusga.org](mailto:LJohnson@Columbusga.org)  
(706) 653-6613





Laura Johnson  
Director of Community Reinvestment  
[ljohnson@columbusga.org](mailto:ljohnson@columbusga.org)  
(706) 225-3918



Amanda Herrit, M.S., CPESC, QHP  
Senior Environmental Scientist  
[Amanda.Herrit@terracon.com](mailto:Amanda.Herrit@terracon.com)  
(423) 602-2109