

# DREXEL VILLAGE

at

Marion Station



## Steering Committee Kickoff Meeting

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EPA Brownfield Cleanup Grant  
02D63223

...  
Presented By:  
Heather Cotton

...  
Presented To:  
Drexel Project Steering Committee

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# Partners

	Community Development	Economic Development	Public/Quasi-Public Sector	Private Sector
City of Marion			✓	
Centro Unido Latino Americano (CULA)	✓			
Foothills Regional Commission			✓	
Marion Business Association (MBA)		✓		
McDowell Chamber of Commerce		✓		
McDowell County Economic Development		✓		
McDowell County Government			✓	
West Marion Community Forum	✓			
International City/County Management Association (ICMA)				✓
NC Department of Environment (NCDEQ)			✓	
US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)			✓	
Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP)				✓



# Project Overview





# Project Tasks

Clarify the project's main overall objectives and goals.

## Task

# 1

### Project Management

Overall execution and management of the project.

## Task

# 2

### Community Engagement

Develop community outreach activities and hold quarterly public engagement meetings.

## Task

# 3

### Cleanup Planning

Draft our QAPP, CIP, and ABCA, and oversee cleanup efforts carried out by contractor.

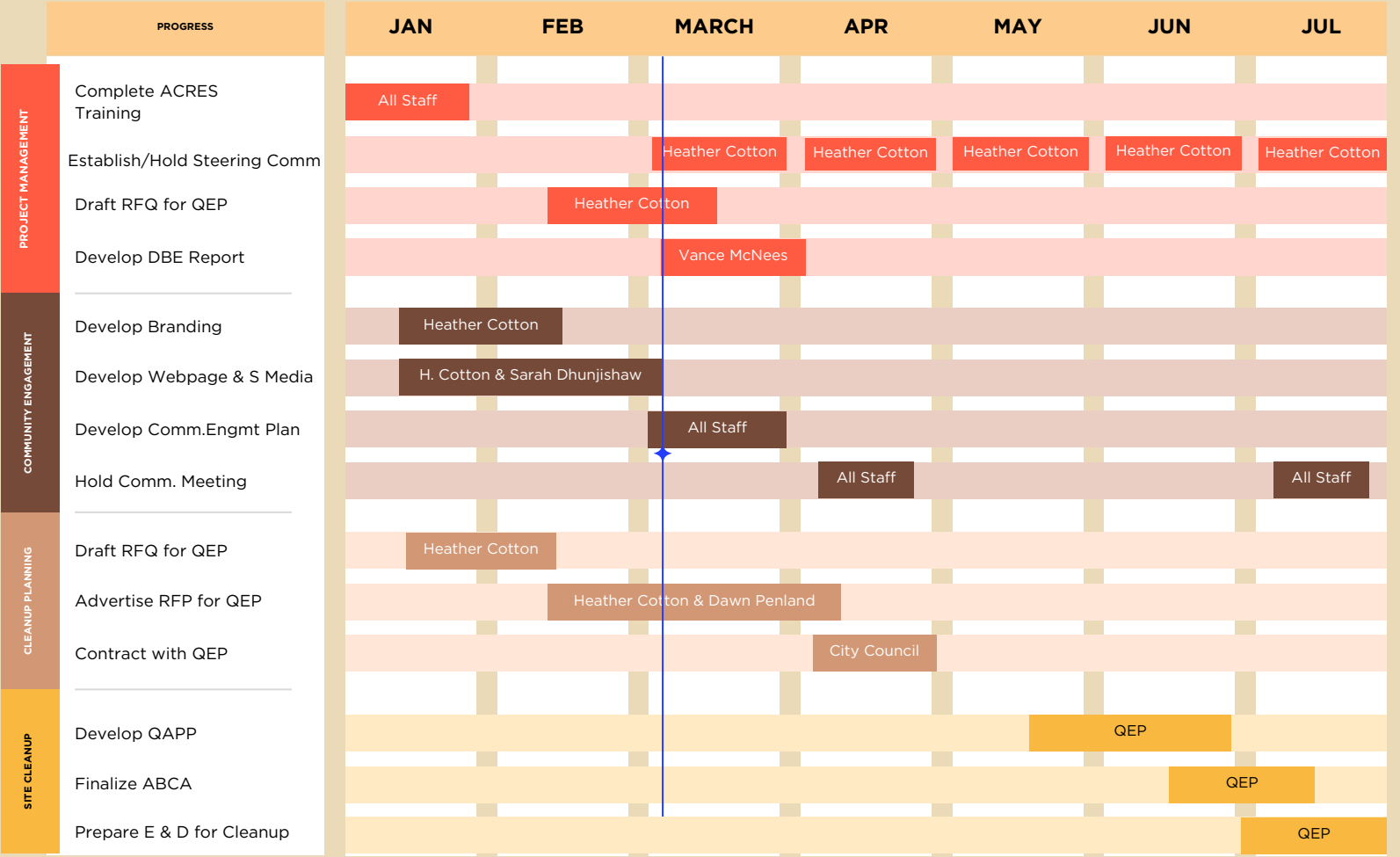
## Task

# 4

### Site Cleanup

Remediation Contractor to remove USTs and OWS from the site and complete required soil sampling.

# EPA BROWNFIELD CLEANUP



# Target Development Goals



Development Goals Identified as Priorities to the Community.

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Workforce Housing  
Medium/High Density  
Housing

- Rental
- First-Time Home Buyers

Commercial/Destination  
Development  
Extension of  
Downtown/ Mainstreet  
Development  
Passenger Rail Service

Workforce Development  
Business Center  
Childcare



# Drexel Project Resource Page

[EPA Brownfields Program](#)

[ICMA Brownfields Technical Assistance](#)

[NCDEQ Brownfields Redevelopment Section](#)

[City of Marion Drexel Project Information Page](#)





**For questions, contact:**



**Heather Cotton**  
Project Manager  
[hcotton@marionnc.org](mailto:hcotton@marionnc.org)



**Vance McNees**  
Assistant Project Manager  
[vmcnees@marionnc.org](mailto:vmcnees@marionnc.org)





## **DREXEL PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING**

March 5, 2024

**Attendees:** Brian Gross and Aditi from the EPA, Chris Harrell from ICMA, Bob Boyette, Heather Cotton, Vance McNees, Dawn Penland, Sarah Dhunjishaw, Ashley Wooten, Paula Swepson, Alan Toney, Emma Mathews, and Chuck Abernathy.

### **Executive Summary**

This meeting was the first meeting of the Drexel Project Steering Committee. The Committee was established for oversight of the Drexel Cleanup project, a project to address a previously contaminated site in downtown Marion. The discussion covered the naming of the Drexel Village at Marion Station project, the potential for redevelopment, the EPA grant worth \$500,000, the cleanup planning process, the project's timeline, the budget, and the upcoming cleanup and site remediation phase.

### **Discussion Topics**

#### Introductions and Collaborations in EPA Meeting

The meeting was largely about introductions and acknowledgments. Brian Gross and Aditi Chakravarty introduced themselves from EPA. Chris Harrell introduced himself as a representative from ICMA, offering technical assistance to Brownfield communities. Heather stated that Jocelyn Herring and Jordan Thompson from NC DEQ could not be present but praised their contributions and support to the community including their assistance with an environmental assessment of the Mtn. View School located adjacent to the Drexel Site.

Heather Cotton introduced the internal team working on the project. Finance Director Dawn Penland expressed her excitement to be part of the project, and described her role as grant administrator for the project. Sarah, a North Carolina LFNC Fellow, introduced herself and described her support with grant administration. Heather introduced Vance McNees, the city planner and assistant project manager.

Ashley Wooten, the county manager, thanked everyone and outlined the county's supportive role in the project. Paula Swepson, the executive director of West Marion Incorporated, introduced herself and her excitement for the Mt. View School Property being donated to her organization, which is adjacent to the Drexel site. Alan Toney, the Community and Economic Development Director at Foothills Regional Commission, shared his enthusiasm for the project. Emma Mathews, the Marketing Coordinator for the

McDowell Chamber of Commerce, expressed her excitement to learn more about the project. Lastly, Chuck Abernathy, Executive Director for MEDA expressed his willingness to provide support for the project.

Bob Boyette, Marion City Manager and Ashley Wooten McDowell County Manager rounded off the introductions, emphasizing the significance of the Drexel project for the city and the county.

#### Drexel Cleanup Project Kickoff Meeting

Heather Cotton led the discussion. She shared the meeting agenda which included a project overview, discussion of tasks, timeline, development goals, project resources, and project contacts. Heather also invited Brian Gross, an environmental scientist and program analyst from the EPA, to share his remarks. Brian congratulated the team for their successful grant application and highlighted the challenges they overcame, such as ownership issues and logistics.

#### Drexel Village Project: Honoring History, Envisioning Future

Heather discussed the naming of the Drexel village at Marion Station project. She explained that they aimed to create a brand that honors the community's history but also looks ahead to future redevelopment. Heather highlighted the potential redevelopment of the site, which is near a historic train depot. She also mentioned ongoing efforts to engage the community in envisioning the future of the site. Heather then went on to discuss the size and potential of the project site, emphasizing its central location and significant redevelopment potential. She noted ongoing projects related to transportation corridors and the potential for improved passenger rail coming back to the area.

#### EPA Grant and Brownfield Agreement for Contaminated Site Cleanup

Heather said that the City had been awarded \$500,000 from the EPA for the cleanup of the contaminated site. The grant will be used for the removal of underground storage tanks, soil sampling. Community engagement meetings are planned for the next three to four years. A Brownfield Agreement with the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality is also planned. Furthermore, Heather touched upon the cleanup planning process which involves drafting a QWAP, overseeing cleanup efforts, evaluating and modifying the ABCA, finalizing the CIP, and hiring a remediation contractor for underground storage tanks removal and soil sampling.

#### Project Timeline and Community Engagement Strategy

Heather discussed the project's timeline, which started on July 1st, and the reasons for the slight delay in progress. She highlighted the key tasks and sub-tasks that were to be

completed in the third and fourth quarters of the first year. Heather also addressed the development of a branding strategy, the creation of a website, and the establishment of a Facebook page for community engagement. She mentioned the budget allocated for print materials and the plan to hold community engagement meetings. Heather also discussed the cleanup planning process, which includes drafting an RFP for the QEP and contracting with the QEP. Brian reassured the team that they had four years to complete the grant, emphasizing that the remediation phase tends to progress quickly.

#### Project Cleanup and Remediation Phase Discussed

Heather discussed the upcoming cleanup and site remediation phase of the project, with significant contributions from the QEP and a remediation contractor under their oversight. She stressed the importance of community engagement and project management and expressed a hope to initiate the master planning process during the cleanup phase. Heather mentioned the need for workforce housing, commercial and destination development, tourism and outdoor recreation, and passenger rail service. She also highlighted common themes from community discussions about their goals and needs, such as workforce development, childcare, mixed-use development, and the importance of destination-oriented development.

#### Brownfield Program and Grant Discussion

Heather discussed the Brownfield program and the city of Marion's project page on their website. She shared resources including web links to additional resources and a recording for those unable to attend the monthly steering committee meetings. Heather highlighted the website and the availability of an aerial map, site plan of the Drexel site, and a calendar for project-related meetings.

#### Steering Committee Update: April Meeting Agenda

Heather announced that the next steering committee meeting will be held on the first Tuesday of April at 2:00pm. During this meeting, Paula will give an update on Mountain View School, and Vance will provide information to the team about the DBE Report what it is and why it is required by the EPA. Heather also mentioned that by the meeting date, the RFP process will have closed and the number of proposals received will be known. A question about the environmental parameters of the property led Heather to clarify that while they are in the Brownfield program, they are not yet ready to finalize a Brownfield Agreement with NCDEQ because they are still determining the best use for the property.

#### **Next Steps**

- Heather will submit the DBE Report by the end of the fiscal year.

- Heather will provide updates on the Drexel Project at the next steering committee meeting on April 2, 2024.
- Paula Swepson will present an update on the Mt View School Project at the April 2, 2024 meeting.
- Vance McNees will present information on the DBE Report at the April 2, 2024 meeting.
- Freddie Killough will present information on the WNC Passenger Rail initiative at the May 7, 2024 meeting.