



# MUSKEGON COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL SITE ASSESSMENT

## Policies and Procedures

This document will serve to give the applicant a better understanding of the MCESA process.

# Muskegon County Environmental Site Assessment Policies and Procedures

## **Introduction:**

Greater Muskegon Economic Development (GMED) is the countywide economic development agency dedicated to supporting local business. GMED's focus is to leverage public and private investment to accelerate business growth and the creation of high-quality employment opportunities in Muskegon County. Appreciating the importance of our local business community, GMED serves as a clearinghouse of information on programs and incentives available to businesses.

The Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce, who for over a century, has been the enthusiastic voice and supporter of our diverse business community, has been awarded \$500,000 from The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for a Community-Wide Assessment Grant. GMED is serving as the project contractor, and sub grantee for this award, and will oversee all aspects of the site assessment process. The purpose of the Muskegon County Site Plan Assessment is to provide funding for phase I and phase 2 environmental site assessments on awarded projects.

## **Contact Information**

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## **Objectives of the MCESA:**

Development of environmentally-distressed, abandoned and blighted properties is important to Muskegon County in order to eliminate blight, restore taxable value of land, create jobs and economic opportunity, address environmental contamination, advance development patterns and infrastructure investment programs that improve economic development prosperity, and to create healthy, environmentally sustainable communities for all Americans, regardless of race or income.

Muskegon County Environmental Site Assessment will allow for applicants to receive funds that will be used to assess properties for future use and redevelopment. The focus of this assessment will be to support complex redevelopment projects by providing better information to remove uncertainty surrounding site conditions; developing re-use plans that provide direction, detail, and budgets for redeveloping and using sites safely; and aligning resources that carry redevelopment beyond the assessment and planning stages. GMED will support projects that will create new jobs, support the use of existing infrastructure, include plans to resolve environmental and brownfield site conditions, and projects that provide an overall benefit to the community.

#### **Available Incentives:**

The primary incentive offered through the MCESA will include a site plan assessment on the allocated site (final amount to be determined by GMED staff). If applicant is approved, GMED will use the consultant of their choice to conduct the site assessment. GMED staff will review and determine the amount of funds that will be dispersed for each eligible project. GMED will also have the ability to increase the amount of funds per project when deemed necessary.

\*Funds for this assessment will not be dispersed to the applicant. If applicant is selected, GMED will allocate funds directly to the consultant provided by GMED.

#### **MCESA Eligible Locations:**

MCESA may be used only to pay the costs of **eligible activities** on **eligible property** that is located within Muskegon County. GMED will disperse 80% of funds for site assessments to projects that are located in the City of Muskegon and the City of Muskegon Heights. The remainder 20% of funds for site assessments will be dispersed to the remaining projects located in other governmental entities outside of the two mentioned above.

An eligible property may include the following:

- Property must be contaminated or suspected of being contaminated.

Eligible projects may be prioritized based on the following considerations:

- Significant brownfield conditions, i.e. environmental, blight, public health;
- GMED prioritization list;
- Marginalized communities, i.e. lower income, economically and socially underserved populations;
- GMED looks to support projects that have the backing of the local unit of government;
- Attraction of new businesses to the county;
- Increasing number of new jobs in the county;
- Supports talent attraction and retention.

#### **Eligible Activities/Eligible Uses of MCESA**

The primary eligible activities may include:

- Phase I ESA
- Phase II ESA
- Remedial Action Plan, Work Plan, and other technical support.
- Baseline Environmental Assessment (BEA)
- Due Care Plan
- Clean Up Plan

**Eligible Applicant:**

GMED staff will evaluate project proposals through an application process. Be advised that final results will be sent to EGLE. GMED will consider the following when evaluating an applicant:

- May be governmental, non-profit or a private developer;
- Applicant must have control over the property (either ownership or purchase option), and if not owned must have a signed access agreement;
- Liable status of applicant;
- Project and applicant must be financially viable to be reasonably determined by GMED;
- Available project overview plan and budget;
- Determining factors may include requested funding amount, and the amount of private investment.

\*The Phase I environmental site assessment will only be active for 180 days from the time research begins on the property. After 180 days, no later than, the applicant will be responsible for a Phase I Update and associated costs. The BEA must be prepared 45 days after becoming the owner or operator of the property, with the BEA submitted to EGLE within 6 months.

**Project Requirements:**

GMED recognizes the impact that can be made when sites are redeveloped bringing new investment, jobs and improved conditions to a community or neighborhood. However, the resources to address all sites are limited requiring strategic deployment of the funds ensuring maximum results for the community.

*Minimum Requirements:*

- Must be on eligible property included in Muskegon County;
- Property must be contaminated or suspected of being contaminated;
- Applicant must be able to demonstrate financial viability of the project;
- All costs associated with the MCESA application fee, if required, must be paid prior to proceeding the application is due;
- An overall project plan must be turned in along with the application.

*Desired Outcomes:*

GMED has developed a list of desired outcomes for projects that receive support which, if included in the project design, may improve the likelihood of support:

- Project will proceed and/or property purchased within 145 days of completion of the phase 1 or phase 2 site assessment;
- Project will create jobs;
- Project will improve infrastructure and/or reuse existing infrastructure;
- Reuse/redevelopment of an historic building.

**Application Process and Associated Fees:**

GMED has an Application for Proposed Project(s) (see GMED’s website) for interested parties to request an environmental site assessment. The following information outlines the process for use of MCESA regarding project consideration by GMED, including use of the application.

*MCESA Project Process:*

Projects that are presented to GMED for consideration of MCESA funds will follow the procedure below:

- Applicant submits Application and project overview to GMED Staff and includes the application fee;
- Staff will request a meeting and/or site visit for further determination;
- Once a complete application is received, with applicable fees, GMED staff will review the application;
- A recommendation to support or not support the application for use of MCESA funds will be made by GMED staff;
- Once an environmental site assessment request is approved, GMED staff will coordinate with the consultant group and the awarded applicant to map out next steps.

\*GMED reserves the right to accept or reject any applications for assistance under this program. Application fee is due after applicant has been approved by GMED staff and receives an approval email/ letter.

**Amendments and Modifications:**

GMED reserves the right to amend this policy for different purposes which may include but are not limited to: improvements which serve to benefit the brownfield redevelopment process; or changes in law and other applicable regulation on a local, state, or federal level.

Changes to the policy will be approved by GMED and made available to the community at large through its website and other mechanisms available to GMED.