



**VIRGINIA BUSINESS READY SITES PROGRAM
SITE CHARACTERIZATION
GUIDELINES AND APPLICATION**

Virginia Economic Development Partnership

July 2016

Virginia Business Ready Sites Program (VBRSP) Site Characterization

Purpose

The Virginia Business Ready Sites Program (VBRSP) was established pursuant to § 2.2-2238 C. of the Code of Virginia of 1950, as amended (the Code), to identify and assess the readiness of potential industrial or commercial sites in the Commonwealth of Virginia (the Commonwealth) for marketing for industrial or commercial economic development purposes, thereby enhancing the Commonwealth's infrastructure and promoting the Commonwealth's competitive business environment.

The initial step under the VBRSP will be to obtain Site Characterization for a potential site. A licensed civil engineer or equivalent (Site Development Professional) will provide Site Characterization by:

- (i) assessing the site to quantify the level of existing development at such site and the additional development required to bring the site to a level that will enable the site to be marketed for industrial or commercial economic development purposes; and
- (ii) designating to such site one of the Site Characterization Tier Levels set forth in these Guidelines.

The Virginia General Assembly has allocated \$750,000 from the general fund for Fiscal Year 2017 (FY17) and \$1,250,000 from the general fund for Fiscal Year 2018 (FY18) to support the development of sites identified by the VBRSP as suitable for development. Up to \$250,000 of the FY17 appropriation will be available as Site Characterization Grants to help pay or reimburse the cost of Site Characterization.

Eligible Applicant

An applicant for a Site Characterization Grant must be:

- (i) a political subdivision of the Commonwealth, including a county, city, town, industrial/economic development authority, redevelopment and housing authority, or regional industrial facility authority; or
- (ii) a public-private partnership that includes among its members at least one political subdivision of the Commonwealth.

Applications may be made individually, or where an agreement to partner on a site exists, may be made jointly.

An applicant will be required to demonstrate a commitment to bringing the site to a level of development that will enable the site to be marketed for industrial or commercial economic development purposes.

Eligible Site

An applicant may apply for a Site Characterization Grant for a site that:

- (i) is listed in VirginiaScan; and
- (ii) meets or will be able to meet the following minimum criteria of a site suitable for marketing for industrial or commercial economic development purposes:
 - Acreage: At least 250 acres with a minimum of 100 contiguous, developable acres.
 - Zoning: Appropriate for industrial and/or commercial development and use.
 - Ownership: Public, public/private, or private. If the site is under private ownership, there must be an option agreement or other documentation of a commitment by the private owner(s) to a competitive sales price, to permit access to the site for site assessment, and to market the site for industrial or commercial economic development purposes.
 - Electrical capacity: 10MW deliverable, or deliverable capacity within 9-12 months or has a letter from the electrical utility stating that this capacity can be made available and is feasible.
 - Water: 250,000 gallons/day on site, or deliverable within 3-9 months (industrial) or has a letter from the utility stating that this capacity can be made available and is feasible.
 - Sewer: 250,000 gallons/day on site, or deliverable within 3-9 months (industrial) or has a letter from the utility stating that this capacity can be made available and is feasible.
 - Telecommunications: Telecom fiber to the site, or deliverable within 3-9 months or has a letter from the provider stating that this capacity can be made available and is feasible.

Site Characterization Tier Levels

An applicant will retain a Site Development Professional to assess a site and to designate one of the following Site Characterization Tier Levels to such site:

- (i) **Tier 1:** Site under (a) public ownership, (b) public/private ownership, or (c) private ownership which such private owner(s) agreeable to marketing the site for economic development purposes and to allowing access to the property for site assessment and marketing purposes, but at no established sales price. Comprehensive plan reflects site as appropriate for industrial or commercial development and use, but site is not zoned as such. Site has minimal or no infrastructure. Minimal or no due diligence has been performed.
- (ii) **Tier 2:** Site under (a) public ownership, (b) public/private ownership, or (c) private ownership with an option agreement or other documentation of a commitment by the private owner(s) to a competitive sales price, to permit access to the site for site assessment, construction, and marketing, and to market the site for industrial or commercial economic development purposes. Comprehensive Plan reflects site intended for industrial or commercial development and use, but site is not zoned as such and a rezoning hearing needs to be scheduled. Site has minimal or no infrastructure. Minimal or no due diligence has been performed.
- (iii) **Tier 3:** Site is zoned for industrial or commercial development and use. Site has minimal or no infrastructure. Due diligence including, among other things, a wetlands survey with Army Corps of Engineers approval within the last five years, geotechnical borings, boundary and topographical survey, cultural resources review, an Endangered Species review, and a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment, has been completed. Estimated costs of development have been quantified.
- (iv) **Tier 4:** All infrastructure is in place or will be deliverable within 12 months. All permit issues have been identified and quantified.
- (v) **Tier 5:** All permits are in place and the site is ready for a site disturbance permit from the locality in which the site is located.

Application

An applicant must submit a VBRSP Site Characterization Grant Application (Attachment A to these Guidelines) for evaluation by a committee of the VBRSP Working Group members (Review Committee).

The VBRSP Working Group is a team of state, regional, and local stakeholders including the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP), the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, railroad representatives, utility representatives, civil engineers, and other government, business and industry representatives, convened to develop the VBRSP.

The Review Committee will accept VBRSP Site Characterization Grant Applications beginning July 1, 2016, and ending at the close of business September 1, 2016.

An applicant may apply for a Site Characterization Grant:

- (i) to pay for retaining a Site Development Professional and Site Characterization; or
- (ii) to reimburse itself for Site Characterization, having already retained a Site Development Professional and receiving a designated Site Characterization Tier Level.

To be eligible for a Site Characterization Grant, a Site Characterization must be made after July 1.

When a Site Characterization Grant is to be used to pay for Site Characterization, rather than reimbursement, the Site Characterization must be completed within 90 days of the award of the Site Characterization Grant.

An applicant will be required to (i) provide specific information detailing site ownership and the physical and infrastructure characteristics of the site, (ii) describe the cost associated with the site assessment and the source of funds and include invoices or estimates, and (iii) demonstrate the connection between the potential site and the local/regional industrial or commercial economic development targets, strategies, complementary assets, and workforce availability.

Site Characterization Grant

VBRSP Site Characterization Grant Applications will be considered on a competitive basis.

The maximum Site Characterization Grant awarded to an applicant will be 50% of the cost of site assessment, up to \$5,000. An applicant will be responsible for a match covering the remaining amount of the cost of site assessment. Such match must be in cash and may be funded from public and/or private sources. Funds previously expended on other work related to the site will not be considered a part of the match.

The Review Committee has the sole discretion to award a Site Characterization Grant.

All Site Characterization Grants will be awarded by November 1, 2016.

Performance Agreement

The recipient of a Site Characterization Grant will be required to enter into a performance agreement with VEDP setting forth the terms and conditions of such grant. The performance agreement will be subject to negotiation with VEDP.

It is expected that the performance agreement will contain provisions for, among other things, disbursement of the Site Characterization Grant, use of the proceeds, reporting, and any repayment.

The performance agreement must be executed before any Site Characterization Grant proceeds will be disbursed to the recipient.

ATTACHMENT A
VBRSP Site Characterization Application
Application Instructions

Carefully review the VBRSP Site Characterization Guidelines and the application requirements before completing and submitting an application.

Applications will be accepted beginning July 1, 2016 and ending at the close of business September 1, 2016. Only timely-filed, complete applications will be considered.

Use the Provided Format: Applicants must use the format provided and respond using a font size of no less than 12.

Use the Space Provided: All questions should be answered within the space provided. The following **List of Attachments*** are required, as applicable, and must be placed at the end of the application, and listed in order:

- Attachment A - Documentation of Ownership
- Attachment B - Option Agreement or Equivalent
- Attachment C - Detailed Site Plan
- Attachment D - Utility Infrastructure Map
- Attachment E - Transportation Infrastructure Map
- Attachment F - Site Characterization Documentation
- Attachment G - Assessment Invoice or Estimate
- Attachment H - Existing Site Inventory List

* In some cases, more than one document may be needed to for a particular attachment. For example, the site description documents may include an aerial image and a topographic map. In this instance, please label the documents A-1, A-2, and so forth.

Application Questions and Submittal: Specific questions may be addressed as set forth below. Applications must be submitted **electronically** by close of business on September 1, 2016.

Submit questions and applications to:

John Loftus
Sites and Building Manager
Virginia Economic Development Partnership
(804) 545-5786
jloftus@yesvirginia.org

Part I – Summary

Applicant:

Provide the name of applicant. If this is a joint application, name all participating entities and describe the level of participation by each. Provide the applicable federal taxpayer identification number.

Primary Contact:

Provide the name of the primary contact for purposes of application and administration of the Site Characterization Grant and all relevant contact information, including physical and email addresses and contact numbers.

Site Identification:

Identify the name, address, and location of the site, including the locality in which it is located. The site must be listed in VirginiaScan.

Site Ownership:

Provide the name of the property owner. Indicate whether property is public, public/private or privately owned.

Site Assessment Firm:

Provide the name of the Site Development Professional that will assess the site.

Site Characterization Tier Level:

To be eligible for a Site Characterization Grant, a Site Characterization must be made after July 1, 2016. If the site has already been assessed, please provide the applicable Site Characterization Tier Level. If the site has not yet been assessed, indicate the anticipated Site Characterization Tier Level.

Site Assessment Cost and Grant Request

Provide the invoice or the estimated cost of the site assessment. Indicate the amount of the VBRSP Site Characterization Grant requested.

Part II – Site Description (50 pts)

1. Clearly identify the site and provide documentation of ownership. (Attachment A) If privately owned, indicate whether there is an option agreement or some other documentation between the applicant and the private owner(s) of a commitment by the private owner(s) to a competitive sale price, to permit access for site assessment, construction, and marketing, and to market the property for industrial and/or commercial economic development purposes. (Attachment B)

2. Provide a physical description of the site. Describe how the site meets or will be able to meet the requirements for a site to be marketed for industrial and/or commercial economic development purposes. Include any detailed site plan. (Attachment C)

3. Provide a summary and the basic findings of all planning, engineering and construction studies that have been performed at the site. Indicate costs incurred with this work. Copies of studies or invoices may be requested. Describe any studies that are planned for the site.

4. (a) Provide the current zoning of the property. Describe any changes in zoning that may be required or planned for the site.

(b) Describe how the locality's comprehensive plan matches the vision for the site.

5. (a) Describe existing utility infrastructure serving the property. Provide details on location, capacities, and line sizes. Include map(s) that shows the utility infrastructure in relation to the property. (Attachment D) If the property is not currently served by a particular utility infrastructure, describe the nearest infrastructure. Describe any utility infrastructure improvements planned for the site.

(b) Describe existing transportation infrastructure serving the site (roads, rail and airport). Include map(s) that provides the location of the transportation infrastructure in relation to the property. (Attachment E). Describe any transportation improvements planned for the site.

Budget (5 pts)

3. Detail the cost of the site assessment. Include an invoice for, or an estimate of, the cost. (Attachment G)

4. Identify each source of the funds, including a Site Characterization Grant, to pay for the cost of the Site Characterization. Indicate the amount provided by each source as a share of the total cost.

3. Describe any unique assets on or near the site.

4. Describe the workforce, associated training and recruiting programs, and infrastructure that will support this site.

5. Describe the commitment to marketing the site to prospects that would meet the economic vision of the locality/region.

Economic Impact (5pts)

Describe how the development of this site for industrial and/or commercial economic development purposes would positively impact the locality/region.

Existing Sites (5 pts)

1. Provide a list of all existing local/regional sites that could be competitive with the site. (Attachment H)

2. Discuss the need for the site to meet targeted industrial and/or commercial needs. Describe the existing local/regional site deficiencies.

Additional Considerations (5 pts)

Describe any other factors that would make this site attractive for industrial and/or commercial economic development purposes.