



Policy Opportunity for Clean Energy Development: House Bill 15 and Priority Investment Areas (PIAs)

Climate, City Services, & Infrastructure Committee Presentation

4.28.26





Green Cincinnati Plan: Clean Energy Goals



FOCUS AREA

Buildings & Energy

Clean Energy

Obtain 40% of electricity load from clean energy sources by 2030.

Provide residents and businesses with continual access to power from clean energy sources

VISION

Adoption of clean energy sources and energy efficiency measures by 2050 that result in net-zero emissions from buildings, contributing to a healthy, equitable, and resilient future for our City.

- Support programs like Solarize that encourage adoption of rooftop solar
- Partner with local organizations to offer financing tools such as a loan fund, Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE), or Green Bank to support investment in renewable energy
- Continue to pursue wind and solar power purchase agreements (PPAs) to secure enough electricity to support City operations and the City's aggregation program
- Identify energy storage options like batteries, pumped storage, or hydrogen storage to maximize utilization of clean energy and improve grid reliability



FOCUS AREA

City Operations

Energy

100% Renewable Energy for city operations by 2035.

30% energy efficiency improvements by 2030.

Invest in high-performance and resilient city facilities

VISION

A City that leads by example, centering community voice in the inter-departmental design and implementation of programs and policies.

- Establish prioritized facilities as "Resilience Hubs"—centers for community gathering during emergency, equipped with solar and backup power to provide relief during emergencies
- Pursue additional utility-scale clean energy with requests for proposal (RFP)
- Organize facility managers to create a sustainable facility policy for new city buildings
- Continue to strategically pursue energy efficiency for city facilities
- Convert streetlights to LED including electrifying gas lights
- Publish energy benchmarking data for city facilities on Cincy Insights

Municipal Investment Fund (MIF), Phase 1



- 49 Communities, \$250,000 each
- Grant: Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) National Clean Investment Fund (NCIF)
- Market-building activities for Clean Energy, Zero-Emissions Buildings, and Zero-Emissions Transportation (not tied to specific projects)
- Deliverables: Public/Private Partnership Plan & Project Pipeline
- November 1, 2025 to May 1, 2026



Grantor



Grantee



Sub-Grantee

HB 15 Overview

House Bill 15 is an Ohio state energy law that passed in August 2025

Provisions include:

- "Priority Investment Area" (PIA) designation for Brownfields
- Clarified and expanded rules for self-generation of energy
- Accelerated State permitting for large clean energy projects
- Tax incentives, School Energy Loan Fund for Public Schools
- Requires utility-generated capacity maps for interconnection



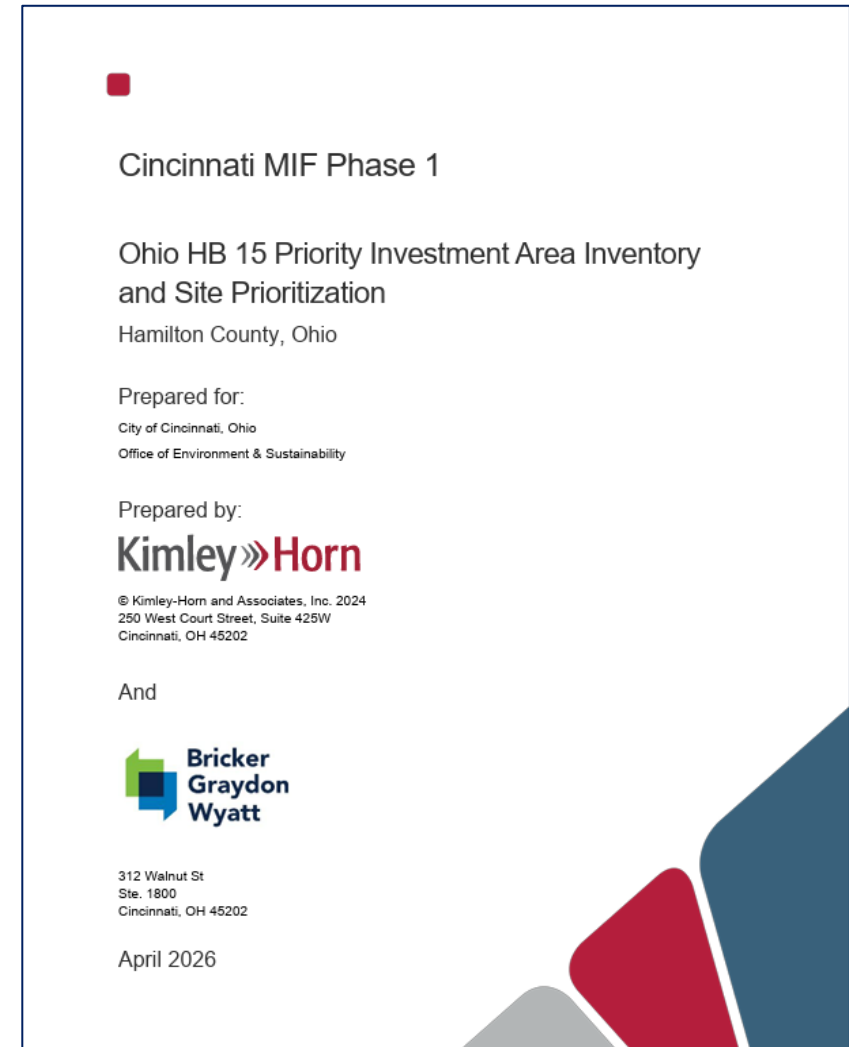
How Cincinnati Can Leverage HB 15

MIF Phase 1 funded report on HB 15,
prepared by local experts:

- Kimley-Horn and Associates
- Bricker Graydon Wyatt

Report includes:

- Evaluation of the clean energy provisions of HB 15
- Site Suitability Evaluation for "Priority Investment Area" (PIA) designation for Brownfields





How HB 15 Promotes Generation & Battery Storage Project Development

- Expansion of self-generation and behind the meter arrangements
 - Generation does not have to be located onsite with customer
 - Large customers may form microgrids (shared generation and storage)
- Significantly reduced tangible personal property taxes
- Expedited permitting, tax abatements, and funding for Priority Investment Areas

HB 15: Priority Investment Areas

Brownfields and former coal mine sites can be designated as PIAs. This designation enables:

- Expedited permitting at the Ohio Power Siting Board (generation projects >50 MW)
- 5 year property tax abatement for gas & electric transmission infrastructure
- Eligible to receive a Brownfield Remediation Program grant of up to \$10 million for site assessments, monitoring, remediation, clean-up, grading, and site work necessary to make site usable for economic development



HB 15: Priority Investment Areas

PIAs are established by the political subdivision (city, county, or township) passing an ordinance or resolution requesting the Ohio Department of Development to designate the site as a PIA.

The Ohio Department of Development then reviews and certifies.

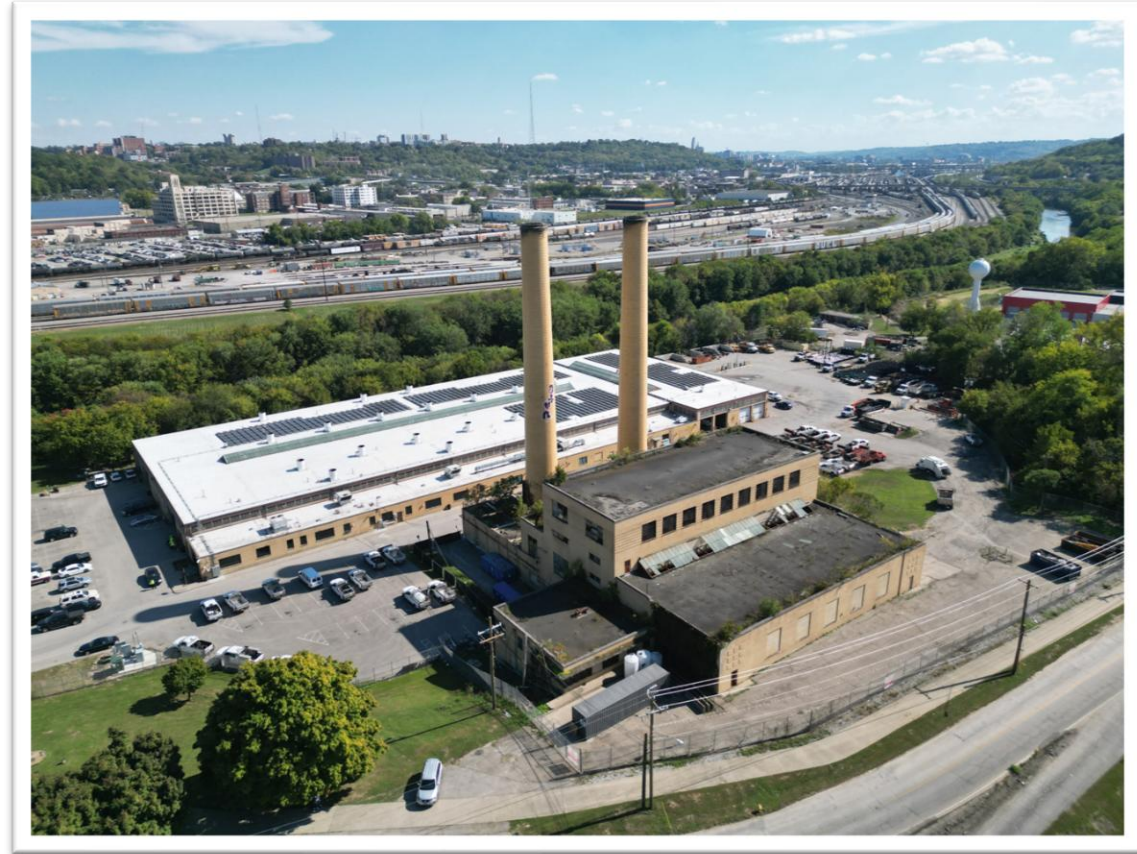


Priority Investment Areas – Suitability Analysis

PIAs can only be designated on brownfield or former coal mine sites.

Only potential sites located within Hamilton County, Ohio and listed on the USEPA or OEPA brownfield inventory were considered.

The analysis does not include potential brownfields or sites that are likely brownfields but are not listed on either of these databases (e.g., landfills).



Priority Investment Areas – Suitability Analysis

Purpose: identify potentially suitable PIA sites for clean energy or battery storage development that would leverage multiple incentives from HB 15.

Sites were scored higher if they met at least one of the following criteria (beyond brownfield or former coal mine status):

- Current or potential future ownership of site by a mercantile customer to create behind-the-meter energy generation.
- Potential to generate or store at least 5 MW of power from wind or at least 50 MW of energy generation or storage from solar or batteries.

Sites were prioritized (i.e., ranked) into low, moderate, and high suitability categories based on their potential for energy generation capacity, energy type suitability, and meeting the criteria above.



Priority Investment Areas – Suitability Analysis

Four-Tiered Analysis:

Sites within Hamilton County were assessed through each tier, narrowing the pool of suitable sites recommended for consideration.

Tier 1: Initial Site Qualifications (PIA Designation)

- Site is a brownfield or formal coal mine
- Site has been redeveloped

Tier 2: Energy Infrastructure Potential

Tier 3: OPSB & Permitting Suitability

Tier 4: HB 15 Suitability



Priority Investment Areas – Suitability Analysis

Tier 2: Energy Infrastructure Potential

- Energy Types (solar, wind, BESS)
- General Suitability (proximity to substations, transmission lines, etc.)

| | | |
|---|----------------|---|
| Solar Specific Suitability Factors | Acreage | 0-5 acres (1 pt) |
| | | 5-35 ac (3 pt) |
| | | 35+ acres (5 pt) |
| | Irradiance | <3.9 kWh/m ² /day (1 pt) |
| | | 4.0-4.5 kWh/m ² /day (3 pt) |
| | | 4.5-5.0 kWh/m ² /day (5 pts) |
| | Solar Capacity | 0-5 MW (Distributed solar) (1 pt) |
| | | 5-50MW (Utility solar) (3 pt) |
| | | 50MW (OPSB site) (5 pt) |

| | | |
|--|------------------|-----------------------------|
| BESS Specific Suitability Factors | Acreage | 0-0.1 acre (1 pt) |
| | | 0.1-5 acres (3 pt) |
| | | 5+ acres (OPSB site) (5 pt) |
| | Storage capacity | <50MW (0 pt) |
| >50MW (5 pt) | | |

| | | |
|--|--------------------------------|--|
| Wind Specific Suitability Factors | Acreage | 0.5-40 acres (Facility scale) (1 pt) |
| | | 40-1,200 acres (Community scale) (3 pt) |
| | | 1,200+ acres (Utility scale) (5pt) |
| | Estimated Wind Energy Capacity | Less than 1.5 MW (Facility scale) (1 pt) |
| | | 1.5-5 MW (utility scale) (3 pt) |
| | | 5 MW (utility scale & OPSB site) (5 pt) |
| Average Windspeed at 80 m | 0-5 m/s (1 pt) | |
| | 5-6 m/s (3 pt) | |
| | 6+ (5 pt) | |

Priority Investment Areas – Suitability Analysis

Tier 3: OPSB & Permitting Suitability

- if a site would need to go through OPSB review,
- is documented by the USEPA brownfields program or the OEPA Targeted Brownfield Assessment Program Sites as needing cleaned-up,
- if the site is in either the 100 or 500-year floodplain, and
- the surrounding land use.

Tier 4: HB 15 Suitability

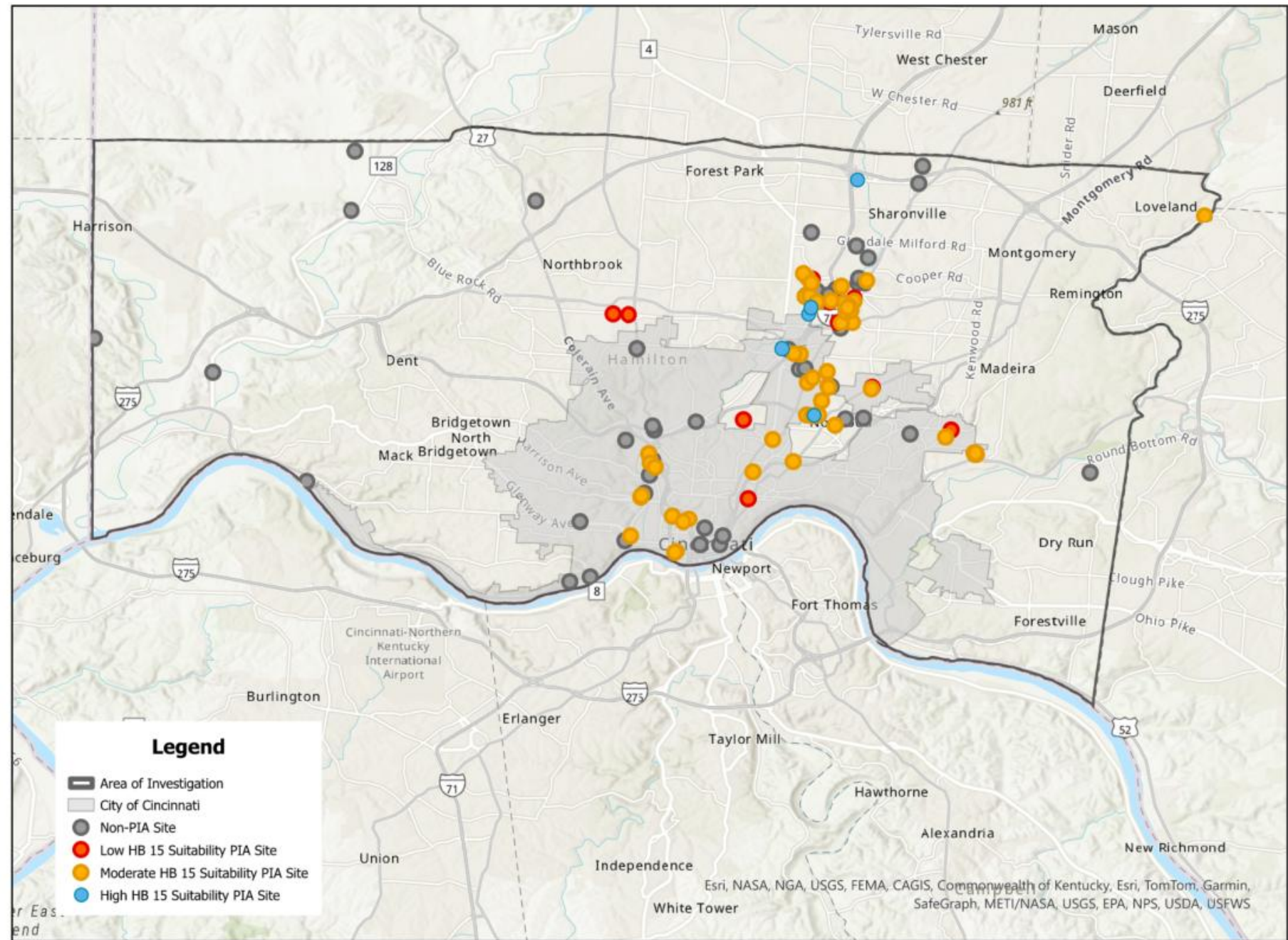
- qualify as a PIA,
- be currently owned by a Mercantile Customer, or
- qualify as an OPSB-Permitted Major Utility Facility.



Results

66 applicable sites identified within **Hamilton County** recommended for consideration of PIA designation by benefitting from HB15:

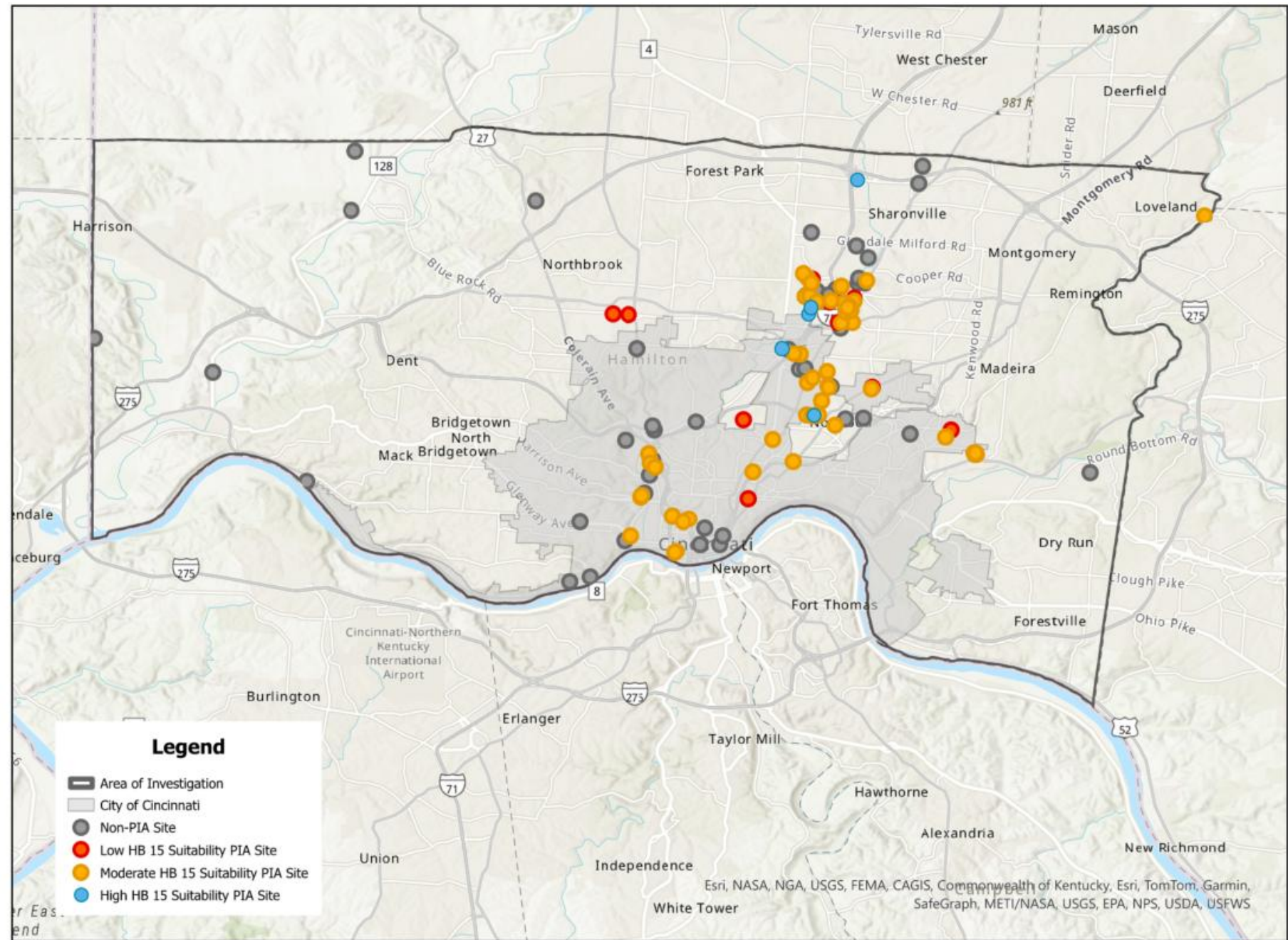
- **8** High Suitability
- **47** Moderate Suitability
- **11** Low suitability



Results

23 applicable sites identified within the **City of Cincinnati** recommended for consideration of PIA designation by benefitting from HB15:

- **1** High Suitability
- **20** Moderate Suitability
- **2** Low Suitability





Next Steps

-
- Review and consider potential PIA sites in City limits
 - Share data with Hamilton County for potential PIA sites in the County
 - Outreach to potential sites for discussion
 - Develop roadmap for designation of PIAs with property owners





Questions

