

ACCOMMODATIONS TAX ADVISORY COMMITTEE

STAFF REPORT

Department of Finance & Administration



MEETING DATE: May 20, 2025
 SUBJECT: Michael C. Riley High School Alumni Association: Project Face-Lift (Phase III)
 PROJECT MANAGER: Shannon Milroy, Budget, Grants & Procurement Administrator

Summarized below is the application from the Michael C. Riley High School Alumni Association for Accommodations Tax grant dollars in support of Phase III of the refurbishing of the MC Riley Commemorative Garden and Wall.

Total Budget, per application: \$72,000

Requested Amount: \$20,000

Percentage of Request^: 27.8%

^Includes up to 100% for Advertising & Promotion plus up to 50% of remaining expenses

Eligible Tourism-Related Expense Categories (per SC Code of Laws)	Total Budget for Category, per budget form		ATAC Recommended ATAX Funds
Advertising & Promotion of Tourism or Arts and Cultural Events	\$3,500		
Facilities for Civic and Cultural Events	27,710		
Public Facilities		*	
Municipality and County Services		*	
Tourist Transportation		*	
Other/Ineligible Project Expenses	23,900		
Total	\$55,110		Tabled

*Reimbursement will be based on the estimated percentage of tourists provided for

Budgeted Expenses Summary:

Advertising & Promotion:

Total Budget: \$3,500

- Plans for the revitalization of the facility were broadcast over regional radio and communicated via letters/mailers to former students, teachers, staff, friends and patrons; circulars were issued at churches and businesses.

Facilities for Civic and Cultural Events:

Total Budget \$27,710

- Phase III of the project encompasses adding a back entrance to the facility that includes additional flag poles, wrought iron fencing, extended oyster tabby concrete flooring, a bronze cast iron plate with the names of all MC Riley graduates and a lighting system to allow for nighttime illumination of the entire facility.

Other/Ineligible Expenses:

Total Budget: \$23,900

- Fundraising expenses, 2026 commemorative calendar, mementos and office supplies

Table Rating (Scores 0-5 with 5 satisfying the qualifications best, exception Advertising 0-15)

Amount Recommended	Tourist Facilities (15)	Tourism Draw % (5)	Benefit to Tourism (5)	Self-Sufficiency % (5)	Misc. (10)	Total of 40 possible	Comments
Tabled							

Tourist Facilities: The MC Riley Commemorative Garden and Wall facility and SC Historical Roadside Marker, originally erected in 2002 at the former Black High School site, serves as tribute to graduates, attendees, teachers and staff of the former school and became an “immediate tourist attraction”. Due to deterioration over the years, the MC Riley High School Alumni Association reconvened to refurbish, revitalize, and expand the structure. Phases I (planning, fundraising, site prep) and II (front of structure rehab) are complete; funds are requested to assist with Phase III which will conclude this revitalization project.

Tourism Draw %: The below mentioned alumni events typically attract a 25% tourist attendance.

Benefit to Tourism: Every year, the Alumni Association hosts a Blue and Gold Dinner Banquet or an All-Classes Reunion Tailgate Picnic, which is held at MC Riley Park where the commemorative garden and wall is located; both events bring in alumni and their families who usually arrive on Thursday and stay for at least four days, staying in local hotels and eating in local restaurants.

Self-Sufficiency % (Financial Need): The request is approximately 28% of Phase III’s construction budget of \$72,000. The remainder will come from donations, fundraising, and calendar sales.

Previous Funding Amounts						
Fiscal Year	Requested Amount	% of Budget	Advisory Committee Recommendation	Town Council Approved	Expended	Comments
n/a						

Accommodations Tax Committee Recommendations and Comments:

The Committee recommends tabling.