

ACCOMMODATIONS TAX ADVISORY COMMITTEE

STAFF REPORT

Department of Finance & Administration



MEETING DATE: August 19, 2025
 SUBJECT: Michael C. Riley High School Alumni Association: Project Face-Lift (Phase III)
 PROJECT MANAGER: Shannon Milroy, Budget & Procurement Manager

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		Budget Items Eligible for ATAF 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		

*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 Requested	Tourist Facilities (15)	Tourism Draw % (5)	Benefit to Tourism (5)	Self-Sufficiency % (5)	Misc. (10)	Total of 40 possible	Comments
\$20,000	4	2	3	4	5	10	

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 funding \$_____ for _____.

TOWN OF BLUFFTON ATAX GRANT APPLICATION SCORING SHEET

Entity: Michael C. Riley High School Alumni Association

Project: Project Face-Life (Phase III)

Attachment 3

AUGUST 19, 2025

Project Type: Facilities

Scoring Category	Points Possible	Points Awarded
ADVERTISING	15	
Part 1: Five (5) points possible. Based on how much of the requested funds go toward advertising.		
0% of funds go toward advertising	0 points	
1% - 20% of funds go toward advertising	1 point	
21% - 40% of funds go toward advertising	2 points	
41% - 60% of funds go toward advertising	3 points	
61% - 80% of funds go toward advertising	4 points	
81% - 100% of funds go toward advertising	5 points	
Part 2: Ten (10) points possible. Based on <u>where</u> the advertising is placed.		
None of the funds go toward advertising	0 points	
Local newspapers/periodicals and electronic advertising (ex. Island Packet, The Bluffton Sun)	2 points	
Local guides/periodicals specifically geared toward tourists with a shelf life of more than 30 days	4 points	
Larger regional publications and electronic marketing within 100 miles (ex. Charleston or Savannah news outlets)	6 points	
Newspapers/periodicals/electronic marketing to large, metropolitan areas outside of 100 miles away (ex. Atlanta, Charlotte, Washington, D.C., Chicago)	8 points	
Nationally distributed newspapers/periodicals/electronic marketing (ex. USA Today, NY Times, Southern Living Magazine)	10 points	
TOURIST FACILITIES	15	
Higher point value given based on anticipated ratio of tourists to locals		
FESTIVAL/EVENT	5	
Higher point value given to requests for festivals or events		
Length of event/festival should be considered. Is it an all-day event versus a two-hour event? Multi-day event?		
BLUFFTON EVENT	5	
Higher point value given to events held within the town limits of Bluffton and/or spanning multiple locations		
TOURISM DRAW	5	
0% of attendees are tourists based on historical or projected information	0 points	
1% - 20% of attendees are tourists based on historical or projected info	1 point	
21% - 40% of attendees are tourists based on historical or projected info	2 points	
41% - 60% of attendees are tourists based on historical or projected info	3 points	
61% - 80% of attendees are tourists based on historical or projected info	4 points	
81% - 100% of attendees are tourists based on historical or projected info	5 points	
BENEFIT TO TOURISM (LOCAL ECONOMY)	5	
Higher point value given to events that encourage overnight stays and/or have local business participation		
SELF SUFFICIENCY	5	
100% of budget from ATAX request	0 points	
80% - 99% of budget from ATAX request	1 point	
60% - 79% of budget from ATAX request	2 points	
40% - 59% of budget from ATAX request	3 points	
20% - 39% of budget from ATAX request	4 points	
1% - 19% of budget from ATAX request	5 points	
MISCELLANEOUS	10	
Only use if applicant does not qualify as a festival/event		
Group Average Point Total (out of a possible 40 points)		
Group Average Percentage		