



May 5, 2025

Greenville County Council Finance Committee
Greenville County Council
301 University Ridge
Greenville, SC 29601

Re: FY2025/2026 Accommodations Tax Recommendations

Honorable Members of Council:

I'm pleased to report that Greenville County hotels continue to maintain strong occupancy thanks to the efforts of VisitGreenvilleSC and the area events and organizations that are represented here. Based on the information on current year occupancy at the time of our meeting, we have projected a gross budget in the amount of \$1,395,000. Note that this projected revenue is derived from hotels outside the city limits.

Following SC Legislation and Greenville County Guidelines, the budget breaks down as follows:

Projected Budget	\$ 1,395,000
County General Fund Lump Sum	<u>\$ 25,000</u>
	\$ 1,370,000
County General Fund 5%	\$ 68,500
VisitGreenvilleSC 30%	<u>\$ 411,000</u>
	\$ 890,500
VisitGreenvilleSC 40%	<u>\$ 356,200</u>
Remaining for Grants	\$ 534,300
Funds Carried Forward from prior year	<u>\$ 100,000</u>
Total for Tourism Related Projects:	\$ 634,300

The Committee met on Monday, March 10 to establish a budget and receive the applications. Prior to the in-person interviews, each application is reviewed by the Committee based on State (Tourism Expenditure Review Committee – TERC) and County guidelines and their project's impact on tourism and occupancy in County hotels.

Interviews were held on Tuesday, April 29. As mandated, applicants were graded with an A, B, C or D. Those applicants who receive a Grade A have the most *direct* and significant impact on occupancy in County hotels outside the city limits. Those who receive a Grade B demonstrate strong occupancy potential or provide a permanent and ongoing attraction for tourists who visit Greenville. It follows that Grade C applicants have lesser direct hotel impact but serve as important mainstays in Greenville's cultural and entertainment offerings to tourists, often providing visitors with an incentive to extend their stays, *or* the applicant is requesting money for a new project or event that the Committee feels has growth potential.

Of the 37 total applicants, 8 received a Grade A, 11 received a Grade B, 13 received a Grade of C, and 5 received a D. As mandated, Grade C applicants as a group are to receive no more than 10% of the total net budget. Those with Grades A and B receive the balance. Note that funds are not disbursed to the grantees until receipts are submitted and reviewed by the County.

Each of the applicants receiving a grade of A continue to demonstrate significant impact on County hotel occupancy. In fact, projected total room nights for FY25/26 for this group alone is estimated to be between 38,750 and 45,250.

The following applicants received a Grade D: The Arthritis Foundation for its Carolina Hills Classic Bike Tour demonstrated no impact at all on County hotels, nor do they have a proven track record of success in this area, as it is their first time to apply. Clemson University's Department of Automotive Engineering applied for an event that takes place in this fiscal year and was, therefore, ineligible. Mill Village Markets is a strictly local community outreach event. The SC African American Tourism Council appears to be a strictly local event, booking no hotel rooms. Finally, Varna International Music Academy's Muzika Festival and Varna International Music Academy is a series of events taking place in Myrtle Beach, Columbia and Greenville. They failed to provide any details on the events taking place in Greenville and what portion of their budget would be applied to Greenville.

A recent State rule requires that Accommodations Tax Committees review and approve the budgets for local tourism offices that are recipients of the 30% and 40% automatic funding allocation. In a separate vote, our committee voted to approve the budget submitted by VisitGreenvilleSC.

On behalf of the Advisory Committee, I wish to thank Council for the opportunity to serve on this important committee. We appreciate the work of each applicant and consider each of them to be of value to Greenville County. We understand that Council may have questions regarding these recommendations and welcome the opportunity to address them.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "BJ Koonce". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

BJ Koonce, Chair

cc: Lyndsey C. Sloan, Director of Grants and Special Projects, Greenville County
Nicole B. Wood, Assistant County Administrator, General Services, Greenville, County

Committee Members: Christina Zolli (Vice Chair) – VGSC and Small Hotel; David Edwards – GSP and VGSC Chair; Danielle Nance – Large Hotel; Jake O'Dare – Large Hotel; Joyce McCarrell – Restaurants; Penny Cooper – At Large; BJ Koonce – Arts and Culture

Grade	FY26 Amount	FY26 Requested	Name of Organization	Project Name
A	\$50,000	\$75,000	Carolina Elite Soccer Academy (CESA)	Tournaments
A	\$30,000	\$50,000	Fall for Greenville	Fall for Greenville Promotional Campaign
A	\$80,000	\$100,000	Greater Greenville Scottish Games and Highland Fe	Greenville Scottish Games
A	\$50,000	\$72,160	Greenville Arts Festival	Artisphere 2026 Tourism Marketing Campaign
A	\$50,870	\$75,000	Local Boys Do Good DBA Euphoria Greenville	euphoria2025 & euphoria Spring Fest 2026
A	\$35,000	\$40,000	NOTUS Sports - Gran Fondo	2025 Gran Fondo Hincapie
A	\$80,000	\$110,000	South Carolina Charities, Inc.	BMW Charity Pro-Am presented by TD SYNEX
A	\$15,000	\$20,000	Ville to Ville Foundation	Ville to Ville Relay & Ville to Ville Sprint Relay
B	\$35,000	\$70,000	Discover Upcountry Carolina Association	Upcountry Advertising and Marketing
B	\$7,500	\$35,000	Everything Outdoor Fest	Everything Outdoor Fest
B	\$10,000	\$20,000	Greenville Chapter of the SC Restaurant and Lodging	Restaurant Week Greenville
B	\$7,500	\$35,000	Greenville Symphony Association	Regional Digital Marketing Campaign
B	\$15,000	\$35,000	Metropolitan Arts Council	Greenville Open Studios 2025
B	\$20,000	\$30,000	NOTUS Sports - Cycling Classic	2026 Greenville Cycling Classic
B	\$7,500	\$10,000	Roper Mountain Science Center Association	2026 Summer Adventure
B	\$15,000	\$30,000	Sigal Music Museum	American Voices: Lost and Found
B	\$7,500	\$15,000	South Carolina Children's Theatre	2025-2026 Productions Strategic Marketing Plan
B	\$30,000	\$54,623	The Children's Museum of the Upstate	TCMU's Strategic Marketing Plan
B	\$25,000	\$50,000	Upcountry History Museum	Avengers: Endgame - The Exhibition and Beyond Halloween Land: Tim Burton's Nightmare Before Christmas Exhibition
C	\$5,000	\$30,000	Bob Jones University	Living Gallery Presentation
C	\$5,000	\$10,000	Centre Stage	2025-2026 Season Regional Marketing Campaign
C	\$5,000	\$75,000	Cultural Arts Foundation Fountain Inn	Advertising for Theatrical Performances and Outside Performers
C	\$2,500	\$4,500	Foothills Philharmonic	Music Concert Series: "Classically Casual Concerts"
C	\$5,000	\$10,000	Greenville Center for Creative Arts (GCCA)	GCCA Targeted Regional Marketing Plan
C	\$5,430	\$10,000	Greenville Chautauqua	Greenville Chautauqua's 28th Season's History Comes Alive Festival
C	\$5,000	\$7,000	Greenville Chorale	Regional Marketing for a Grand Finale and a New Era
C	\$5,000	\$20,000	Greenville Theatre	Greenville Theatre 2025-2026 Tourist Attraction & Cultural Center
C	\$5,500	\$25,000	IDefine Inc	Southern Roots, A BBQ Reunion
C	\$5,000	\$25,000	Makers Collective	Indie Craft Parade
C	\$5,000	\$20,000	Rotary Club of Greenville / Rotary Charities	Holiday Fair and Kringle Village (event name may change slightly in 2025)
C	\$5,000	\$25,000	South Carolina New Play Festival	SC New Play Fest 2025
C	\$5,000	\$5,000	The Warehouse Theatre	The Warehouse Theatre Main Stage Season Marketing Assistance
D	\$0	\$20,000	Arthritis Foundation	Carolina Hills Classic Bike Tour
D	\$0	\$93,900	Clemson University, Dept of Automotive Engineering	53rd North American Manufacturing Research Conf. & ASME International Conf.
D	\$0	\$6,250	Mill Village Ministries	Village Launch Markets
D	\$0	\$7,500	SC African American Tourism Council	African American Tourism Upstate Summit
D	\$0	\$50,000	Varna International Music Academy	Muzika Festival and Varna International Music Academy 2026
	\$634,300	\$1,370,933		

Greenville County Accommodations Tax FY25	FY26 Proposed Budget
ACCOMODATIONS TAX ANTICIPATED FROM STATE	\$1,395,000.00
Greenville County General Fund Lump sum	\$25,000.00
Balance:	\$1,370,000.00
GC General Fund (5%)	\$68,500.00
Visitgreenvillesc (30%)	\$411,000.00
148 River Street, Suite 100, Greenville, SC 29601	
Balance:	\$890,500.00
Visitgreenvillesc (40%)	\$356,200.00
Balance for FY25 Proposed Budget for Tourism Related Projects:	\$534,300.00
Funds Carried Forward from Prior Years:	\$100,000.00
Total for Tourism Related Projects:	\$634,300.00
Project Grantees	FY26 Proposed Budget
Bob Jones University	\$5,000
Carolina Elite Soccer Academy (CESA)	\$50,000
Centre Stage	\$5,000
Cultural Arts Foundation Fountain Inn	\$5,000
Discover Upcountry Carolina Association	\$35,000
Everything Outdoor Fest	\$7,500
Fall for Greenville	\$30,000
Foothills Philharmonic	\$2,500
Greater Greenville Scottish Games and Highland Festival	\$80,000
Greenville Arts Festival	\$50,000
Greenville Center for Creative Arts (GCCA)	\$5,000
Greenville Chapter of the SC Restaurant and Lodging Assoc	\$10,000
Greenville Chautauqua	\$5,430
Greenville Chorale	\$5,000
Greenville Symphony Association	\$7,500
Greenville Theatre	\$5,000
IDefine Inc	\$5,500
Local Boys Do Good DBA Euphoria Greenville	\$50,870
Makers Collective	\$5,000
Metropolitan Arts Council	\$15,000
NOTUS Sports - Cycling Classic	\$20,000
NOTUS Sports - Gran Fondo	\$35,000
Roper Mountain Science Center Association	\$7,500
Rotary Club of Greenville / Rotary Charities	\$5,000
Sigal Music Museum	\$15,000
South Carolina Charities, Inc.	\$80,000
South Carolina Children's Theatre	\$7,500
South Carolina New Play Festival	\$5,000
The Children's Museum of the Upstate	\$30,000
The Warehouse Theatre	\$5,000
Upcountry History Museum	\$25,000
Ville to Ville Foundation	\$15,000