

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)

RFQ #2026 – 18

Greenbelt Program Manager



Advertised: June 18, 2026

RFQ Due: July 15, 2026

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS
RFQ #2026-18
GREENBELT PROGRAM MANAGER
JASPER COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA
JUNE 18, 2026

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

Jasper County, SC, is soliciting responses from qualified personnel (“Submitter”) who wish to provide Greenbelt Program Manager services to Jasper County.

THE RFQ MUST BE PHYSICALLY RECEIVED **NO LATER THAN 1:30PM ON WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 2026.**

Issue Request for Qualifications (RFQ)	June 18, 2026
Pre-Submittal Conference	June 30, 2026, 1:00 pm
Deadline for Inquires	July 6, 2026, 5:00 pm
Response to Inquiries	July 8, 2026, EOD
Deadline for Submitting Qualifications	July 15, 2026, 1:30 pm

II. INSTRUCTIONS TO SUBMITTERS

1. Pre-Submittal Meeting

The County will conduct a virtual Non-Mandatory Pre-Submittal meeting as part of this process to provide additional project information and expound upon potential questions. This meeting will be held on **Tuesday, June 30, 2026, at 1:00 PM** via Teams. If interested in attending, please contact Eric Larson at ewlarson@jaspercountysc.gov to request an invite.

Attendance is not mandatory, but all interested firms are strongly encouraged to attend.

Any questions regarding this RFQ must be submitted in writing via email to ewlarson@jaspercountysc.gov or through the vendor registration page, BidNet Direct, located on Jasper County’s Bids and Solicitations webpage, <https://www.jaspercountysc.gov/services/bids-and-solicitations/> **NO LATER** than **Monday, July 6, 2026, by 5:00 pm.**

All submitted questions will be addressed and posted as an addendum on Jasper County’s Bids and Solicitations web page <https://www.jaspercountysc.gov/services/bids-and-solicitations/> and on the Jasper County vendor registry website, BidNet Direct, no later than end of day **Wednesday, July 8, 2026.**

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2. Submitter Reading Location

The names of the Submitters will be publicly read at the Jasper County, Clementa Pinckney Government Building, County Council Chambers, Third Floor, 358 Third Avenue, Ridgeland, SC 29936 on **Wednesday, July 15, 2026, at 1:30 pm. *The Submittals will not be opened, and no other information about the Submittals will be provided at that time.***

All Submitters or their representatives are invited to attend the submittal reading.

3. Submittals

Jasper County is hereby issuing this Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to firms that have the capability and interest in undertaking and performing the scope of work described in this RFQ. The RFQ is being publicly advertised in accordance with Jasper County procurement guidelines. Each firm responding to this solicitation is officially a SUBMITTER.

Each respondent must submit a sealed package containing **original and four (4) copies** of the RFQ.

In a separate sealed package, include an **original and four (4) copies** of the Fee Schedule.

All submissions will be logged in and date and time stamped when received.

Printed submittals must be clearly labeled on the outside of the envelope with the following wording:

- a. For the RFQ:
JASPER COUNTY RFQ #2026-18 JULY 15, 2026, Greenbelt Program Manager DOCUMENTS
- b. For the Fee Schedule:
JASPER COUNTY RFQ #2026-18 JULY 15, 2026, Greenbelt Program FEE SCHEDULE

All late submittals will be rejected. Jasper County is not responsible for late submissions caused by delays in mail delivery or a delay in any other method of delivery.

Print size shall be 12 pt. font minimum, on 8½ by 11 paper, double-sided and must include all the information required in this RFQ.

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Provide a cover page that includes Company Name, Address, Point of Contact (Email Address and Phone Number), and Date of Submission.

SUBMITTALS SHALL NOT EXCEED A TOTAL OF 50 PAGES. A PAGE IS CONSIDERED TO BE ONE SIDE OF A SHEET OF PAPER IF PRINTED. EXCEEDING THE PAGE LIMIT IS GROUNDS FOR REJECTION OF THE SUBMITTAL. The following **WILL NOT** be counted as pages:

- a. Front and/or back cover pages of your Qualifications document
- b. Table of Contents for your Qualifications document
- c. Section Dividers for your Qualifications document
- d. AFFIDAVIT OF COMPLIANCE document
- e. Fee Schedule/Submitter - Submitted Separately from the Qualifications

If you have any questions on the above page limit information email ewlarson@jaspercountysc.gov.

4. Proposed Procurement Timeline

Release date for RFQ	June 18, 2026
Pre-submittal Conference	June 30, 2026, 1:00 pm
Final Date to Receive Written Questions	July 6, 2026, 5:00 pm
Addenda to Answer Questions	July 8, 2026, EOD
RFQ Closing Date	July 15, 2026, 1:30 pm
Completion of Selection Committee Review and Recommendation	July 30, 2026
Finalize Contract Terms	August 13, 2026
Jasper County Council	September 8, 2026
Execution of Contract	September 10, 2026

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5. Sealed and Marked

If sent by mail, or hand-delivered, original signed Submittals shall be submitted in a sealed package, clearly marked on the outside of the package with “**RFQ #2026-18 GREENBELT PROGRAM MANAGER**” and addressed to:

Kimberly Burgess, Procurement Officer
Director, Administrative Services Division Jasper County
358 Third Avenue, Suite 304
P.O. Box 1149
Ridgeland, SC 29936

It is Submitter’s sole responsibility to deliver the Submittal to the Jasper County Government Building reception desk for receipt on or before **July 15, 2026, 1:30 pm.**

If a Submittal is delivered by U.S. Mail, the Submitter shall be responsible for its timely delivery to the Jasper County Government Building. Submittals delayed by mail shall not be considered and shall be rejected.

Submittals submitted via email will not be accepted.

All submissions will be logged in and date and time stamped. ***Any submissions received after the date and specified time will be logged and date and time stamped as "late" and will remain unopened.***

6. Legal Name and Signature

Submittals shall clearly indicate the legal name, address, and telephone number of the Submitter. Submitters shall be wet signed above the printed name and title of signer on the Affidavit of Compliance page. The signer shall have the authority to submit Submittals on behalf of the Submitter. Failure to properly sign the Submittals form shall invalidate the Submittals and it shall not be considered for award.

7. Clarification and Addenda

Each Submitter shall examine REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS documents. The Administrative Services Division Procurement Officer shall not be responsible for interpretations or clarifications of **Project Scope**.

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All inquiries or suggestions, concerning interpretation, clarification, or additional information pertaining to the **Project Scope** shall be made in writing or through email to:

Eric W. Larson, Development Services Director
Jasper County
358 Third Avenue
P.O. Box 1149
Ridgeland, SC 29936
ewlarson@jaspercountysc.gov

Any inquiries or suggestions concerning clarification of the REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (**excluding Project Scope**) shall be made through the Procurement Officer in writing or through email to:

Kimberly Burgess, Procurement Officer
Director, Administrative Services
Jasper County
358 Third Avenue, Suite 304
P.O. Box 1149
Ridgeland, SC 29936
kburgess@jaspercountysc.gov

8. Responsive and Responsible Submitters

To be responsive, the Submittal shall conform in all material respects to the requirements set forth in the REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS. To be responsible, the Submitter shall perform fully the requirements, experience, reliability, capacity, and equipment that will ensure good faith performance.

9. Reserved Rights

Jasper County reserves the right to conduct such investigations as it is deemed necessary to make the determination of the Submitter's responsiveness and responsibility.

10. Applicable Law

All applicable laws and regulations of the United States of America, the State of South Carolina and Jasper County will apply to any resulting agreement, contract, or purchase.

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11. Right to Protest

Appeals and remedies are provided for in the Jasper County Purchasing and Contracting Ordinance, Article V, Jasper County Code of Ordinances.

12. Contract Forms

Any agreement, contract, or purchase order resulting from the acceptance of a Submittal shall be on forms either supplied by or approved by the Jasper County Procurement Officer.

13. Forms, Alternates, Variances

Submittals must be submitted on the attached REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS forms, although additional information may be attached. The Submitters must indicate any variance from the requested scope of services and/or terms and conditions, on the RFQ Affidavit of Compliance. Otherwise, Submitters must fully comply with the requested Scope of Services, terms and conditions. Alternate Submittals may or may not be considered at the sole discretion of Jasper County.

14. Submitter Prices

Provide an Hourly Rate Schedule for each billable title within the firm, mark-up costs for subconsultants, vendors, and suppliers, etc., and a schedule of reimbursable costs and rates. Each item must be submitted separately, and no attempt is to be made to tie any item(s) in with any other item or items.

15. Descriptive Information

All equipment, materials, and articles incorporated in the product/work covered by this REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS are to be new and of suitable grade for the purpose intended.

16. Deviations to Scope of Work and Requirements

Any deviation from the scope of work as written and accepted by the County may be grounds for termination of the Contract.

17. Quality

If any work product delivered does not meet applicable scope of work, or if the work product does not meet industry standard performance and professionalism, the Contractor shall redo the work at no expense to Jasper County. Contractor shall refund to the County any money which has been paid to the Contractor for any work not redone to meet industry standards and professionalism. The Contractor shall be

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responsible for attorney fees in the event the Contractor defaults and court action is required.

The County reserves the right to reject any or all materials/equipment if, in its judgement, the item reflects unsatisfactory workmanship, manufacturing, or shipping damages.

18. Regulations

It shall be the responsibility of the Consultant to ensure compliance with Federal, State of South Carolina, and County laws, rules, regulations, or other requirements, as may apply.

19. Termination of Award

Failure of the Consultant to satisfy the requirements of Jasper County shall be reason for termination of the award. Any Submitter may be rejected in whole or in part for good cause when in the best interest of the County.

20. Royalties and Patents

Not Applicable.

21. Inspection and Acceptance

Not Applicable.

III. GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. Exceptions to Specification

Submitters taking exception to any part or section of the specifications shall indicate such exceptions on the Affidavit of Compliance Form and continuation page(s), if necessary. Failure to indicate exceptions shall be interpreted as the Submitter's intent to fully comply with the specifications as written.

2. Evaluation of Submittals

Any Purchase Order or Purchase Sales Agreement resulting from this REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS shall be awarded to the SUBMITTER providing the best Submittal as determined by Jasper County, South Carolina.

AWARD WILL NOT BE MADE ON THE BASIS OF PRICE.

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Responses will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- A. **Personnel Technical Competence/Qualifications (20%)** - Each firm will be evaluated in terms of the experience and qualifications of the key personnel that will be assigned to contracts.
- B. **Background, Capabilities, and Succession Planning (20%)** - Each firm will be evaluated in terms of the firm's capabilities and unique qualifications.
- C. **Projects and Past Performance (20%)** - Each firm will be evaluated on familiarity with municipal projects. The firm's past performance will be evaluated in terms of meeting project schedules and the ability to meet design and construction budgets.
- D. **References (10%)** - Each firm shall be evaluated on the references provided.
- E. **Scope of Work Approach (25%)** – Offerors approach to Project Management, Program and Financial Management, and Greenbelt Study.
- F. **Submittal Quality (5%)** - Each firm will be evaluated on how the RFQ was put together and the readability of the document.

After initial scoring of the above criteria, the County reserves the right to select a short list of finalists for a presentation/interview. Results of the interview process shall factor in the final scoring for contract award.

3. Award

Each factor of the evaluation will be considered relative to obtaining the most effective plan consistent with the needs of the County.

4. Product Liability Insurance

The successful submitter will supply proof of professional liability insurance and workers' compensation.

IV. SCOPE OF SERVICES

1. Project Purpose

Jasper County voters passed a transportation sales tax referendum in November 2024. The County seeks Submittals from firms qualified to provide program and financial management, project management, and due diligence for **Greenbelt Projects** for the proposed 2024 1% Transportation Sales and Use Tax as identified in this RFQ. The Greenbelt Program Ordinance is included as an attachment.

Greenbelt Initiatives: The 1% Transportation Sales and Use Tax has allocated approximately \$94,000,000 for financing greenbelt initiatives (including but not limited to purchasing property for conservation, purchasing conservation easements, creating passive green space, creating active green space, protecting

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natural resources, protecting agricultural or heritage landscapes, and protecting scenic corridors).

Responses to the solicitation for Program Management should consider the following:

- The firm selected for Program Management will be excluded from projects submitted and awarded through the sales tax program.

2. Scope of Work

Task 1 – Project Management Services

- Act as an extension of County staff and provide all the needed services to the County to comply with Greenbelt Program requirements.
- Shall assist the County by making recommendations regarding the establishment, development and operation of the Greenbelt Projects in the County.
- Conduct meetings, monitor project progress, and keep the County informed of each project's status.
- Ensure compliance with procedures for projects involving state and/or federal funds.
- Ensure that all necessary permits and environmental approvals are obtained.
- Ensure that all rights and easements necessary for the project are acquired. Leverage federal, state, local, and private conservation efforts.
- Provide guidance for the purchase of Fee Simple interests in Properties deemed critical to provide for the protection of natural resources, creation of Passive Greenspace, creation of Active Greenspace, protection of agricultural or Heritage Landscapes, and Scenic Corridors.
- Review and maintain project related correspondence and files.
- Provide implementation for Conservation Easements and Fee Simple procurement of Real Property threatened by development
- Encourage cooperation and innovative partnerships among Owners, State agencies, municipalities, and non-profit organizations, which must work together to meet these objectives
- Coordinate with municipalities, environmental agencies, and other project stakeholders as applicable to secure necessary approvals and permits.
- Perform public outreach activities including public meeting facilitation, mailer and handout design, coordinate response to public comments and meetings, or as required.

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Task 2 – Program & Financial Management

- Provide a written monthly Program Status Report for County staff and Council due 12:01 p.m. local time on the 15th of each month.
- Attend all meetings associated with the program as directed by the County.
- Provide quarterly financial reports to include revenues, encumbrances, and expenditures.
- Develop and maintain a Program Financial Plan to forecast Program revenues, project expenditures, and cash balances. The financial plan shall be in accordance with the Greenbelt Plan, and the Consultant will participate in the County's annual planning process. Revenue and cash reports will be County driven and maintained.
- Provide the County with recommendations for the timing and amount of bond issuances based upon the Program Financial Plan.
- Develop and maintain cost-loaded schedules for the acquisition and permitting for all projects within the program.
- Develop and implement a project filing system that provides readily accessible, complete, and well-organized files.
- Review and recommend methods to maximize efficiency and achieve economies of scale for projects.
- Develop consistent design criteria, standards, and specifications for use on projects developed by the Program.
- Investigate and pursue available grant opportunities on behalf of the County.
- Develop and implement a public involvement program which should include, at a minimum, a Program website hosted and maintained by the Consultant with a link to the County's web site, and use of social media to provide accurate, up to date project information to the citizens of Jasper County.
- Assist with document production related to Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests and other requests for information as applicable.
- Assist with the development of encroachment permits, intergovernmental agreements (IGA), memorandums of understanding (MOU), memorandums of agreement (MOA) and financial participation agreement (FPA) to facilitate coordination with the applicable parties as needed.
- Determine a method to evaluate project benefit and cost, conduct risk analysis as needed, and make recommendations based on analysis.
- Other items assigned by Jasper County.

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Task 3 – Greenbelt Study

A comprehensive Greenbelt Study shall be undertaken by a selected party, and a recommended Greenbelt Plan issued to County Council, which shall include the following elements, and any other elements requested by County Council, including: (1) Feedback and priorities from local conservation and historic resource partners, stakeholders; (2) an inventory of potential priority greenbelt Properties in the County; (3) a forecast of greenbelt needs over the next twenty-five (25) years in the County; and (4) Greenbelt Property Selection Criteria, with consideration given to the System employed by the South Carolina Conservation Bank.

V. SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS AND FORMATTING

Submitters are REQUIRED to submit all requested information and/or documentation outlined in this section of the solicitation. Any Submitter failing to do so may have their response rejected as being non-responsive and making them ineligible for contract award. Submitters shall submit their responses in a format and sequence that follows the section numbering and layout provided in this solicitation to assist the County in its evaluation of responses.

Submitters shall submit written qualifications which clearly demonstrate their ability to provide quality services in an effective manner.

The County desires a firm with a history of meeting or exceeding client expectations, providing effective communication between the client and the firm, a record of meeting schedules and deadlines, distinct knowledge of local sales tax programs, permitting requirements, a reputation as an effective steward of natural resources and the environment, prudent contract administration and project accounting, and a quality presentation of project deliverables.

Submittals shall include the following information, and should be arranged in labeled sections as follows:

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QUALIFICATIONS:

Section A: Personnel Technical Competence/Qualifications

1. Project Team Organizational Chart:

Provide an organizational chart identifying team members who might be assigned to this contract (including sub-consultants). The organizational chart must include the name, role/position, and office location of each team member and subconsultant. A project team member may be responsible for more than one area.

The offeror shall identify the following, at a minimum:

- Overall Project Manager(s)
- Key Financial Management Team Members
- Communication/Public Engagement Team Members
- Environmental Team Members
- Land and Easement Acquisition Team Members

2. Professional Resumes: Provide professional resumes of key project personnel proposed for this contract and detailed background information including:

- Education;
- Professional registrations and certifications, applicable to South Carolina;
- Experience;
- Years with firm;
- Office location;
- Specific role and responsibilities on past projects of this type;
- Hourly billing rates (in a separate sealed envelope).

3. Workload / Firm Reserves: Provide a summary of current workload and workload projections. Present an anticipated workload of project team (please show in tabular format with each team member's anticipated obligations depicted over the life of the project). Also provide a description of available backup personnel, resources and their location if available to work on these services.

4. Primary Point of Contact: Identify the Firm's Primary Point of Contact.

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5. Organization of sub-consultants and personnel: Provide the name of any firm(s) and their personnel that will be providing sub-consulting services to your firm. Also include the services they will provide, their office location, and a contact name and phone number.

Section B: Background, Capabilities, and Succession Planning

1. Range of Services: Provide a description of the full range of services the Firm provides. Provide the number of years in business and the location of the main office that will service the County's account including the location of any sub-consultants.
2. Capabilities: Discuss the firm's and subconsultants' unique qualifications, capabilities and methodologies that will be used for the As Needed Engineering Services.
3. Unique Qualifications: Provide a description of any unique qualifications or services that set your firm apart from others.
4. Succession Planning: Describe how the firm will address internal succession planning so that as key personnel retire or move on from the company the County's Program is not negatively affected. Also list any long-term municipal clients that have used the firm consistently (5 or more contracts) between January 1, 2014, and today. Include the number of contracts and a contact name phone number and email. Please note Division VII which states that if key team members identified in this RFQ are no longer available and/or not being used on this project the County reserves the right to terminate the contract.

Section C: Projects and Past Performance

1. Prior Experience: Provide a complete list of the firm's experience of other Sales tax Programs services over the last 10 years.
2. Prior Projects: Provide at least three (3) Greenbelt / Greenspace Program Projects with detailed descriptions including dollar value and time frame within the past 10 years. Specify the type of work performed, the Firm's Project Manager and personnel that worked on the referenced projects including their role. Include project photos, budget and schedule. Identify if the project was completed on time and on budget.
3. List of litigation history of the firm and all subconsultants for the past 5 years.

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Section D: References

1. Project References: Provide at least three (3) written references from Projects listed in Section B.4 above. Each reference shall provide a signed (electronic signatures are acceptable) written reference from the client contact. The reference shall include a short statement of satisfaction with the Offerors' services as well as why, in their opinion, the project(s) were successful. The references shall include current e-mail and current phone number. The references shall come from sources outside Jasper County.

Section E: Scope of Work Approach

Discuss and provide insight into the Offerors approach to accomplish the Scope of Work. Please make sure to identify what would set the Offerors approach apart from others in the industry.

1. Project Management
2. Program and Financial Management
3. Greenbelt Study

Section F: Forms and Information

AFFIDAVIT OF COMPLIANCE must be submitted.

Section G: Costs (Submitted as a Separate Document)

THIS SHALL BE SUBMITTED AS A SEPARATE DOCUMENT AND NOT INCLUDED WITH THE OTHER MATERIAL REQUESTED. Hourly rates will not be used in the evaluation of submittals but instead will form the basis for contract negotiations with the selected firm.

1. The Submitter shall submit a Billable Costs Document for their firm and all other firms listed in the RFQ. At a minimum the document shall have the following:
 - a. An Hourly Rate Schedule for each billable title within the firm.
 - b. Mark Up Costs for subconsultants, vendors, and suppliers, etc.
 - c. A schedule of reimbursable costs and rates. (i.e. travel, copies, mailing, etc.)

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2. Once an initial hourly rate schedule is agreed upon, rates shall remain fixed for the first year of the resulting contract.

After the first year, Contractor may request one (1) annual adjustment to the hourly rates to be effective on each anniversary of the contract, but such increase shall not exceed the most recently published Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U), before seasonal adjustment as of sixty (60) days prior to the contract anniversary date. Any rate increase shall require a written contract amendment signed by both parties to become effective.

If Contractor's request for an increase is made after the applicable contract anniversary date, such increase shall not be retroactive to the anniversary date and instead shall be effective as of the date of the signed contract amendment. Mark up cost and reimbursable cost once established shall not be changed for the life of the contract.

VI. CONTRACT AWARD

Contract award, as well as contract continuation of the contract in subsequent fiscal periods, is subject to availability of County funds. In the event that contract negotiations with the highest rated Offeror are unsuccessful, the County reserves the right to begin contract negotiations with next highest rated Offeror.

If a contract is awarded as result of this solicitation, such award shall be made to the most qualified respondent(s). In the event that contract negotiations with the most qualified respondent(s) are unsuccessful, the County reserves the right to begin contract negotiations with the next most qualified respondent(s).

VII. STANDARD CONTRACT TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Submitter acknowledges that a contract will need to be executed with terms and conditions acceptable to the County and the Submitter.

The Submitter agrees that terms and conditions provided in this RFQ, and in their response to the RFQ either in their entirety or relevant portions thereof, should be included and become part of any resulting contract.

Please note that if the County determines that key team members identified in this RFQ are no longer available and/or not being used on this project the County reserves the right to terminate the contract.

The anticipated term of the resulting contract shall be five (5) years.

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AFFIDAVIT OF COMPLIANCE (continued)

Telephone Number _____

Email _____

Federal Tax ID No. _____

DBE Vendor (Yes/No)

Minority Owned: _____

Women Owned: _____

Veteran Owned: _____

Date _____

ADDENDA

Submitter acknowledges receipt of the following addendum:

Addendum No. _____

Addendum No. _____

Addendum No. _____

Addendum No. _____

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STATEMENT OF “NO SUBMITTER”

Return this page only if your company provides the products/services being requested and DECLINES to do so.

We, the undersigned, have declined to respond to the above REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS for Greenbelt Program Manager for the following reasons:

- _____ Specifications too “Narrow”, geared to one brand or manufacturer (Please explain below).
- _____ Insufficient Time to Respond to REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS
- _____ Unable to Meet Specifications
- _____ Specifications Unclear (Please explain below)
- _____ Other (Please explain below)

Remarks

Company Name _____

Address _____

Name and Title _____

Date _____

Signature _____

Telephone Number _____

Email Address _____

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APPENDIX 1- Ordinance #O-2026-13

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STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF JASPER

ORDINANCE #O-2026 -13

AN ORDINANCE
OF JASPER COUNTY COUNCIL

ESTABLISHING THE JASPER COUNTY GREENBELT PROGRAM AS MANDATED
IN THE 2024 REFERENDUM ON TRANSPORTATION SALES AND USE TAX WITHIN
JASPER COUNTY; AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO.

WHEREAS, the County Council of Jasper County (“County Council”), as the governing body of Jasper County, South Carolina (the “County”) recognizes that the County is experiencing rapid land development and economic growth. While this growth has benefited the County’s citizens and economy, it also led to the loss of forestlands, farmlands, wildlife habitats, natural areas, and public spaces for outdoor recreation, which impacts the health of streams, rivers, wetlands, estuaries, and bays, all of which impacts the quality of life and may jeopardize the well-being of the County’s environment and economy.

WHEREAS, protected lands provide natural absorption of storm and rainwater. In this regard, protecting greenspace and other development buffers helps keep pollution out of the County’s rivers, lakes and streams and generally protects the quality of our drinking water supplies.

WHEREAS, pursuant to Title 4, Chapter 37 of the Code of Laws of South Carolina 1976, as amended, Ordinance No. 2024-16 enacted by County Council on July 24, 2024 (“Ordinance 2024-16”), and a successful referendum on November 5, 2024, the County is authorized to impose a one percent (1%) sales and use tax (the “Sales Tax”).

WHEREAS, under Ordinance 2024-16, the Sales Tax receipts (and bond monies associated therewith) can be utilized to finance the costs of transportation related facilities and improvements, including those items listed and described as the “Projects” in Ordinance 2024-16.

WHEREAS, a portion of the Projects, and including up to 20% of the Sales Tax revenues and bond proceeds are allocated and authorized for greenbelt initiatives, including but not limited to purchasing property-related improvements in the County, including purchasing property for conservation, purchasing conservation easements, creating passive greenspace, creating active greenspace, protecting natural resources, protecting agricultural or heritage landscapes, and protecting scenic corridors (collectively, “Greenbelt Projects”).

WHEREAS, while the funding for the Greenbelt Projects has been determined, the County Council has determined that certain protocols and procedures for the implementation and administration of the Greenbelt Projects are needed.

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WHEREAS, by and through the enactment of this ordinance, the County Council has determined to establish the “Jasper County Greenbelt Program”, which shall be codified in the Jasper County code of ordinances.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED by the Jasper County Council in council duly assembled and by the authority of the same:

SECTION 1. Recitals. Each finding or statement of fact set forth in the recitals hereto has been carefully examined and has been found to be in all respects true and correct.

Section 2. Approval.

A. In keeping with the foregoing findings, County Council authorizes the creation and development of the Jasper County Greenbelt Program.

B. The County Council further authorizes, ratifies and confirms the engagement of all professionals and consultants as necessary to develop and implement the Jasper County Greenbelt Program.

SECTION 1. TITLE

This article shall be known as the "Jasper County Greenbelt Program Ordinance."

SECTION 2. JASPER COUNTY GREENBELT PROGRAM ESTABLISHED

The County Council does hereby establish the Jasper County Greenbelt Program (JCGP).

Section 3. Addition of Chapter 25, Article IV – “Jasper County Greenbelt Program” to the County’s Code of Ordinances. Consistent with Ordinance 2024-16, the following section shall be added to the County’s code of ordinances at Chapter 25, Article IV, as follows:

Sec. 25-141. TITLE

As an incident to the enactment of this Chapter, Jasper County, South Carolina (the “County”), acting through the County Council of Jasper County as its governing body (the “County Council”), finds that there shall be created the Jasper County Greenbelt Program. Under the terms hereof, the Jasper County Greenbelt Program shall assist the County by making recommendations regarding the establishment, development and operation of the Greenbelt Projects in the County. Words or pronouns of the masculine gender used herein shall be deemed and construed to include correlative words of the feminine and neuter genders. Terms using initial capitals and not otherwise defined shall have the meanings defined in Sec. 25-143.

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Sec. 25-142. PURPOSE

It is the purpose of this Ordinance to:

- a. Provide a means by which Real Property may be protected as economic and environmental resources of major importance; and
- b. Encourage Owners to make a voluntary long-term commitment to conservation by offering owners financial incentives and security of land use; and
- c. Preserve open space; protect critical and natural resources; and/or provide land for recreation; and
- d. Leverage federal, state, local, and private conservation efforts; and
- e. Provide a means whereby Owners can maintain and preserve the rural character of their Real Property through land conservation; and
- f. Provide compensation to Owners in exchange for relinquishment, in part or in whole, of their right to develop their private property; and
- g. Reduce and defer the need for major public infrastructure improvements in the County when the expenditure of public funds is the requirement for such improvements; and
- h. Provide for the purchase of Fee Simple interests in Properties deemed critical to provide for the protection of natural resources, creation of Passive Greenspace, creation of Active Greenspace, protection of agricultural or Heritage Landscapes, and Scenic Corridors; and
- i. Provide for Conservation Easements and Fee Simple procurement of Real Property threatened by development, which if it occurs will have detrimental effects on land use patterns, traffic, public safety, stormwater runoff, water quality or other conservation objectives; and
- j. Provide for conservation of rural lands, which provide protection of natural resources and stability of agricultural, timber, and other open space uses; and
- k. Protect and preserve watersheds including the lower

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Savannah River and Port Royal Sound watersheds; and

1. Encourage cooperation and innovative partnerships among Owners, State agencies, municipalities, and non-profit organizations, which must work together in order to meet these objectives.

Sec. 25-143. DEFINITIONS:

“Application” means the request of the Owner to the Jasper County Greenbelt Committee for consideration of the Conservation Easement or sale of Land.

“Active Greenspace” means greenspace designed and intended for structured or unstructured recreational activities that involve a higher level of physical exertion and the use of improved or constructed recreational facilities. Notwithstanding the foregoing, Active Greenspace does not include traditional active recreation amenities like include stripped athletic fields, ballparks, playgrounds, courts (including tennis, basketball, or pickleball), skate parks, fitness stations, swimming facilities, or similar recreational amenities.

“Conservation Easement” means a nonpossessory interest of a holder in Real Property imposing limitations or affirmative obligations, as defined in S.C. Code § 27-8-20, as amended, or as defined in 26 U.S. Code Section 170(h). Purposes may include one or more of the following: (a) retaining or protecting natural, scenic, or open-space aspects of Real Property; (b) ensuring the availability of real property for agricultural, forest, recreational, educational, or open-space use; (c) protecting natural resources; (d) maintaining or enhancing air or water quality; and (e) preserving the historical, architectural, archaeological, or cultural aspects of real property. Each Conservation Easement will be the controlling legal document regarding what is and what is not permitted upon the Real Property, how the Real Property, will be preserved, and what rights are vested with the eligible trust Fund Recipient or its assigns which hold the Conservation Easement.

“Due Diligence” means research and legal descriptions prepared by the Owner of the Real Property for consideration of a Conservation Easement or Fee Simple purchase, including but not limited to an Appraisal, Boundary Survey, Phase I and II Environmental Assessment, Title Search, Title Opinion, and/or Title Insurance.

“Eligible Applicant ” means: (a) the following state agencies, which own and manage land for the land's natural resource, historical, and outdoor recreation values: (i) South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, (ii) South Carolina Forestry Commission, and (iii) South Carolina Department

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of Parks, Recreation and Tourism; (b) a municipality of the County and any agency, commission, or instrumentality of such a municipality; (c) the County, including any agency, commission, or instrumentality of the County; or (d) an Eligible Trust Fund Recipient.

“Eligible Trust Fund Recipient” means a governmental entity or a nonprofit organization that is qualified under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, whose primary purpose includes the acquisition, protection, stewardship, and enforcement of Interests in Land, that has the legal authority, capacity, and commitment to hold and enforce a conservation easement in perpetuity, and that meets any applicable requirements of state law and the applicable trust fund governing documents for receipt of conservation easement interests or related funding.

“Fee Simple” means purchase of Real Property in which Eligible Applicant becomes the Owner.

“Greenbelt Projects” means a portion of the Projects, to be funded with up to 20% of the Sales Tax revenues and bond proceeds, as allocated and authorized for greenbelt initiatives, including but not limited to purchasing property related improvements in the County, including purchasing property for conservation, purchasing conservation easements, creating Passive Greenspace, creating Active Greenspace, protecting natural resources, protecting agricultural or heritage landscapes, and protecting scenic corridors.

“Heritage Landscapes” means landscapes with cultural and historical value including SC250 designated areas, Gullah Geechee National Heritage Corridor landscapes, local overlay districts, properties on the national register of historic places and similar.

“Interests in Lands” means Fee Simple titles to lands or Conservation Easements.

“Land” means undeveloped Real Property, including highlands and wetlands of any description.

“Landowner” means the record Owner of the Land or the authorized contract purchaser of the Land.

“Owner” means an owner of Real Property.

“Passive Greenspace” means recreation focusing on the enjoyment of one's natural surroundings and may include natural resource-based activities such as fishing, camping, hunting, boating, gardening, bicycling, nature studies, horseback riding, visiting historic sites, and or hiking.

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“Projects” means the projects and improvements authorized for funding with the Sales Tax.

“Personal Property” means all property other than Real Property, whether tangible or intangible, and whether now owned or hereafter acquired, including, without limitation, equipment, machinery, tools, vehicles, furniture, fixtures (to the extent deemed personal property), inventory, supplies, accounts, contract rights, intellectual property, licenses, permits, records, data, and all proceeds and replacements thereof.

“Preservation Procurements” means acquisition of (i) Fee Simple titles to Real Property; (ii) Conservation Easements in perpetuity; and (iii) perpetual easements for portions/purposes of Passive Greenspace, Active Greenspace Heritage Landscapes, Scenic Corridors and boat landings.

“Property” means Personal Property or Real Property.

“Real Property” means land, together with all buildings, structures, and other improvements located thereon, and all rights, privileges, and appurtenances belonging thereto, including, without limitation, easements, rights-of-way, hereditaments, tenements, mineral rights, air rights, water rights, and all other Interests in Land, whether now owned or hereafter acquired.

“Review Body” means the County staff, or any third-party consultant designated by County Council to review applications and administer the daily functions of the Program for the County and the Greenbelt Committee.

“Sales Tax” means the transportation sales tax imposed by the County as a result a successful referendum on November 5, 2024.

“Scenic Corridors” may include locations along rivers, tidally influenced waterways/wetlands, public road rights-of-way, other roads with public benefits, and/or areas with wildlife habitat, including boat landings.

Sec. 25-144. GREENBELT BANK FUND ESTABLISHED.

The Jasper County shall establish an account separate and distinct from all other funds appropriated by County Council, called the Jasper County Greenbelt Bank Fund (the “Bank”). The Bank shall receive, maintain and distribute 20% of the funding from the Sales Tax to be utilized toward Greenbelt Projects. Revenues in the Bank are restricted solely for financing the cost of Greenbelt Projects. Upon an authorized appropriation therefor by the County Council, money in the Bank may

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be applied to provide pay-as you-go funding or bond payments for Greenbelt Projects.

The Bank may not hold or possess any Interests in Lands or other interest in Real Property.

Sec. 25-145. GREENBELT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP, TERMS, ORGANIZATION

A. To facilitate Preservation Procurement purchases and the implementation of the Greenbelt Program, County Council shall establish the following Jasper County Greenbelt Advisory Committee (“Greenbelt Committee”, or the “Committee”) as set forth herein.

B. The Greenbelt Committee shall initially consist of four (4) members, each appointed by County Council as follows: one (1) one person who is a member of the County Council; (2) one person who is a member of the City of Hardeeville City Council; (3) one person who is a member of the Town of Ridgeland Town Council; and (4) one person who is a member of the Jasper County School Board. Notwithstanding the foregoing, in the absence or unavailability of a member of the Jasper County School Board, an employee of the Jasper County School Board may be appointed. County Council, by resolution, may appoint additional members to the Greenbelt Committee who are Jasper County residents, and in the discretion of County Council are (i) knowledgeable about the geography and condition of the County’s landscape and natural resources; and (ii) have relevant experience and qualifications in matters such as estate law, finance, rural land ownership, agriculture, or conservation. In no event shall more than seven (7) total members be appointed to the Greenbelt Committee. Membership on the Greenbelt Committee shall not be considered a position of honor or profit under the South Carolina Constitution.

C. All members are for four (4) years and until their successors are appointed and qualify, except that the initial terms of the appointed members from City of Hardeeville City Council and Jasper County Council will serve an initial term of 2 years in order to create a staggered board. Absent a resignation by a member, all members shall serve a complete term, regardless of the continued service as a member of the applicable elected body from which they were appointed. Members may serve successive terms.

D. A member may resign, at any time, by delivering written notice to the County Council or the Chair (as described below), as the presiding officer of the Committee. Vacancies, for any reason, on the Committee for service of an unexpired term of an appointed member shall

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be filled in the same manner as original appointment.

E. Members of the Committee shall serve without pay; however reasonable travel and other incidental expenses may be provided upon approval of the County finance department. Written documentation of any and expenses and reimbursement shall be submitted on forms provided by the County finance department. Further any expenses and reimbursement shall be subject to compliance with the statutes, ordinances, policies and procedures established by the County Council for reimbursement of expenses for county boards, agencies and commissions.

F. The Committee is subject to and governed by the provisions of the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act, as codified at S.C. Code Ann 30-4-10 et seq., as amended (the "Freedom of Information Act"). The Committee expects and intends to comply with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act in all of its actions and activities. The public shall be notified of meetings of the Committee and all meetings shall be conducted in every respect in the manner required Freedom of Information Act. The records of the Committee, except as the Freedom of Information Act or any other laws or provisions of State of South Carolina or federal law otherwise permit, shall be open to the public in the manner required by the Freedom of Information Act.

G. The County Council authorizes the County Administrator to provide the Committee with appropriate county staff to support the functions of the Committee. Additionally, and as approved by County Council, consultants and other professionals may be assigned by the County to work with the Committee, expressly including the Review Body.

Sec. 25-146. Bylaws, Policies and Procedures

A. As necessary for the efficient operation of the Committee and subject to the approval of the County Council by resolution, the Committee may establish separate bylaws, procedural rules and policies to govern its operations.

B. The following provisions shall apply with respect to the meetings and actions of the Committee:

(1) The Committee shall meet at regular intervals, but not less frequently than once each [quarter]. However, during the initial year of creation, the Committee shall meet at least once per month.

(2) The presiding officer, or a majority of the members may call special meetings of the Committee at any time.

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(3) A simple majority of the full membership of the Committee then in office shall constitute a quorum. If a quorum is present when a vote is taken, unless otherwise specifically provided herein, the affirmative vote of a majority of members present shall constitute the act of the committee.

C. The Committee is authorized to conduct all meetings, regular meetings and specially-called meetings exclusively in electronic form (or a hybrid-thereof wherein some members are physically present in a location and others are participating electronically), provided the medium for such meeting, whether telephonic, broadcast video, computer-based, or other electronic media, or any combination of these, and the conduct of the electronic meeting, complies with the Freedom of Information Act and allows for the capability for all members to be heard at all times by any other members and by the general public (excepting executive sessions or other periods closed to public by law). All electronic meetings are subject to the applicable notice requirements of the Freedom of Information Act. Participation by electronic means shall constitute presence for the purpose of establishing a quorum.

D. No votes by proxy shall be permitted under any circumstances.

Sec. 25-147. Officers

The following provisions shall apply with respect to officers of the Committee:

A. The officers of the Committee shall be a Chair, a Vice-Chair, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. The Chair and the Vice-Chair shall be elected for a one-year term by a majority of the members then in office; provided that if an officer's term expires, he shall continue to serve until his successor is elected and qualified. Officers may succeed themselves through re-election. The Committee may elect such other officers as it shall deem desirable such officers to have the authority and to perform the duties prescribed, from time to time, by the Committee. The same individual may simultaneously hold more than one office in the Committee.

B. Any officer may resign at any time by delivering written notice to the Chair, or in the event the Chair seeks resignation, to the Secretary. A resignation is effective when the notice is received unless the notice states a later effective date. If a resignation is made effective at a later date, the Committee may fill the pending vacancy before the effective date if the Committee provides that the successor shall not take office until the effective date of the resignation.

C. Any officer may be removed by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members then in office, at any time during a duly called meeting, for any reason.

D. In the case of absence or inability to act of any officer of the

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Committee or any person duly authorized to act in his place, the Committee may delegate the powers and duties of such individual to any other officer, to any Member, or to any other person whom it may select. Vacancies in any office may be filled by the Committee at any regular or special meeting.

E. The Chair shall be the principal executive officer of the Committee and, subject to the control of the Committee, shall in general supervise and control all of the business and affairs of the Committee. The Chair shall, when present, preside at all meetings of the Committee. The Chair may sign, with the Secretary attesting (as applicable given the circumstances) documents, certifications, agreements and letters which the Committee has authorized to be executed, except in cases where the signing and execution thereof shall be expressly delegated by the Committee to some other officer or agent of the Committee, or shall be required by law to be otherwise signed or executed; and in general shall perform all duties incident to the office of Chair and such other duties as may be prescribed by the Committee from time to time. In the absence of the Chair for any reason, the Vice-Chair may fulfill the functions, duties and responsibilities of the Chair.

F. The Secretary of the Committee shall be an appointee from the County's Development Services Division, as determined by the County Administrator. The Secretary shall keep the minutes and records of the Committee, see that all notices are duly given in accordance with the provisions of this code of ordinances or as required by law and in general perform all duties incident to the office of Secretary and such other duties as from time to time may be assigned to such officer by the Chair or by the Committee.

G. The Treasurer of the Committee shall be an appointee from the County's Administrative Services Division, as determined by the County Administrator. The Treasurer shall perform all of the duties incident to the office of Treasurer and such other duties as from time to time may be assigned to such officer by the Chair or by the Committee. The Treasurer shall work with the County as necessary to support the Bank and ensure the propriety and distribution of funds therein.

H. Officers (in fulfilling their duties to the Committee) shall serve without compensation but shall be reimbursed for all reasonable expenses incurred on behalf of the Committee consistent with the other reimbursement provisions herein.

Sec. 25-148. GREENBELT COMMITTEE DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A. The duties and responsibilities of the Committee are to:

1. Identify stakeholder groups with extensive knowledge

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of and experience in land preservation to assist with recommendations to the advisory committee on Interests in Land.

2. Develop and recommend to County Council for consideration and adoption program criteria to guide the identification and prioritization of Interests in Lands to be acquired through the Greenbelt Program. The basic criteria shall include: (a) *Transparency and Equity*. The Program shall operate in a transparent manner, with clearly articulated evaluation standards, and shall seek to promote an equitable distribution of Greenbelt Program funds throughout the County over time, recognizing that funding decisions shall be based on merit, conservation value, and available opportunities; (b) *Opportunity to Leverage Funds*. The criteria shall identify additional considerations applicable to Lands of Interest located outside the County, including the extent to which such projects advance County conservation objectives, provide a demonstrable public benefit to County residents, and leverage Greenbelt Program funds through required matching funds or other financial contributions from public or private sources; (c) *Development-Related Acquisitions*. The criteria shall provide that acquisitions of development rights or conservation interests associated with annexations, rezonings, density increases, or other land use entitlements granted after the adoption of this ordinance shall be subject to heightened scrutiny. The use of Greenbelt Program funds for such acquisitions may be limited or prohibited where the conservation interest is determined to be primarily mitigation for, or directly attributable to, such development approvals; and (d) *Intergovernmental Coordination*. For projects located within the jurisdiction of another governmental entity, the criteria shall require consideration of written letters of support or opposition from the affected local government(s) and shall evaluate the extent to which the proposed acquisition is consistent with applicable comprehensive plans, conservation priorities, and intergovernmental agreements.

3. Develop and recommend to County Council, for consideration and adoption, a standardized application process that includes a measurable and transparent scoring system based on the adopted program criteria (see Sec. 25-147 below). When applicable, the scoring system shall, at a minimum, evaluate the following factors: (a) *Natural Resource Protection*. The extent to which the proposed acquisition protects or enhances significant natural resources, wildlife habitat, wetlands, floodplains, and water quality, including particularly, Passive Greenspace, Active Greenspace Heritage Landscapes, and Scenic Corridors; (b) *Plan Consistency*. The degree of consistency with adopted plans and

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policies, including the Jasper County Comprehensive Plan and any Greenbelt plans; (c) *Transportation and Infrastructure Impacts*. The extent to which the acquisition is expected to reduce vehicle miles traveled, limit traffic generation, lessen the need for future roadway or related public infrastructure improvements and improve boat landings; (d) *Leveraging of Funds*. The availability, amount, and reliability of matching funds or other financial contributions that leverage Greenbelt Program funds; and (e) *Development Entitlements*. For acquisitions involving existing development rights, the recency and scope of any zoning, annexation, or other development entitlements granted for the property.

4. Work with County Council and the South Carolina Department of Revenue to confirm and finalize Program criteria and application process.

5. Review and recommend to County Council Interests in Lands to be acquired based on the adopted program criteria and scoring system (subsections (2) and (3) above).

6. Perform such other duties as may be assigned by County Council.

B. In fulfilling their duties and responsibilities to the Greenbelt Committee, Committee members must recuse themselves from any vote in which they have a conflict of interest including, but not limited to, any vote affecting or providing funding for the acquisition of interests in land: (1) on land owned or controlled by the Committee member, the Committee member's immediate family, or an entity the Committee member represents, works for, in which the member has a voting or ownership interest, or to which the Committee member is associated; (2) on land contiguous to land described in item (1) of this subsection; and (3) by an Eligible Trust Fund Recipient that the Committee member represents, works for, or in which the member has a voting or ownership interest.

C. In keeping with the foregoing, the Committee is an agent of the County, and all members are subject to the South Carolina Ethics Act, as amended, and must perform their duties in accordance with its provisions, including written recusal in the event of any conflict of interest under the Ethics Act of subsection B hereinabove.

Sec. 25-149. PROCUREMENT TYPES; REQUIRED APPLICATION CRITERIA

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A. The Greenbelt Program will focus its efforts on the following conservation procurement types: (1) purchasing Fee Simple interest in Real Property and/or (2) purchasing Conservation Easements, each to further the goals of creating passive greenspace, creating Active Greenspace; protecting natural resources, protecting or promoting Passive Greenspace, Active Greenspace, Heritage Landscapes, and Scenic Corridors.

B. If a Conservation Easement is proposed by an Application, the following criteria shall apply to an Application: (1) identification and description of conservation values in or on the Property to be preserved; (2) evidence that development of the Property would result in adverse impacts to the environment or public infrastructure serving the Property; (3) information that the character of the Property and its surrounding area would be threatened by proposed or possible future development; (4) written confirmation that the Owner wishes to retain ownership of the Property; (5) confirmation that public access to the Property is not required or desirable; (6) the type of land designation; (7) evidence of contribution of a minimum 25% match; and (8) demonstration how Eligible Recipient will provide both the expertise and financial resources to manage the Property for the purposes set forth in its Application.

C. If Fee Simple title purchase is proposed by an Application, the following criteria shall apply to an Application: (1) written confirmation or evidence of the written consent of the Owner of the Property in question is required as a part of the Application; (2) identification and description of conservation values in or on the Property to be acquired; (3) confirmation that public access to the Property is practicable, but not later than (5) five years after acquisition; (4) evidence that development of the Property for public access, Active Greenspace and/or Passive Greenspace use is desirable; (5) information that development of the Property would result in adverse impacts to the environment or public infrastructure serving the Property; (6) any amounts to be contributed as matching funds; and (7) demonstration how Eligible Recipient will provide both the expertise and financial resources to manage the Property for the purposes set forth in its Application.

**Sec. 25-150. FURTHER APPLICATION CONSIDERATIONS;
APPLICATION SUBMITTALS**

A. Once the Application form and terms are approved by County Council, the Greenbelt Committee will process Applications from Eligible Applicants on a quarterly cycle basis. The quarterly application deadlines are as follows: (1) January 31; (2) April 30; (3) July 30; and October 31.

B. After the Application cycle has closed, all Applications will be initially reviewed by the Review Body for timely submission and

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completion. Best efforts will be made by the Review Body within ten (10) business days to determine if a filed application is complete. If an Application is not complete, the Review Body will timely advise the applicant, and the applicant will have ten (10) business days to provide the additional information to be considered for that Application cycle. If the Application is still incomplete after resubmittal, it will be rejected by the Review Body, and the applicant must resubmit the Application in a subsequent Application cycle for consideration. After the initial review of Applications by the Review Body is complete, all completed Applications will be submitted to the Committee for review. The Committee will make best efforts to consider completed applications by *no later* than 45 days after each quarterly deadline. The Committee reserves the right to amend the quarterly deadlines at the beginning of each year to best meet the requirements of the Greenbelt Program, however, the quarterly Application deadlines shall not be changed without the approval of County Council.

C. A special meeting under Sec. 25-145(B)(2) may be called to consider an Application, however, such action shall be reserved to situations where "time is of the extreme essence" and documented as such.

Sec. 25-151. REQUIRED APPLICATION TYPES, COMPONENTS, AND SCORING SYSTEM RUBRIC.

A. Each procurement type (Conservation Easement v. Fee Simple) shall have a separate application and scoring rubric. Each Application, including the rubric shall be approved by County Council prior to usage by the Committee. Thereafter, the Applications shall be made publicly available, and shall include the applicable scoring rubric.

B. The scoring rubric for each form of Application shall be based on the following components (1) numerical values from defined conservation and financial criteria for each Application, as further set forth in subsection C below; (2) the narrative provided by the Applicant, and compliance with minimum requirements; and (3) consistency with relevant overarching master plans (e.g., Comprehensive Plans, State Wildlife Action Plan, Natural Resources plan, etc.) which governmental jurisdictions have adopted.

C. The conservation and financial criteria associated with the rubric will be reviewed and analyzed based on the following: (1) public access and/or public benefit; (2) proximity and/or connectivity to existing protected Properties; (3) Proximity and/or connectivity to potential future protected Properties; (4) conservation and/or expansion of intact natural habitats, agricultural and/or heritage landscapes, scenic corridors; (5) consistency with adopted plans including the Comprehensive Plans and existing zoning; (6) degree of

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urgency for the Greenbelt Project in terms of protection of resources and/or real estate market; (7) the extent to which the acquisition will result in the reduction of vehicle miles traveled and reduce the need for future roadway improvements; (8) importance of the Greenbelt Project in achieving multiple local, state and/or federal environmental goals and objectives; and (9) the extent to which matching funds will be available or committed;

D. State and Federally protected wetlands may be included in Properties being considered, but Bank funding shall not be used to purchase standalone wetlands or properties with a majority of wetlands area that do not otherwise have potential for development/utilization.

E. Additional consideration shall be given to Fee Simple Property acquisitions to which the County has identified a park, boat ramps and piers, or other public access to natural resources.

F. Funding will be rewarded to approved projects that represent (1) geographical dispersion of previous green space funds that aligns with the priority map attached hereto as Exhibit A; (2) environmental benefits; (3) avoidance of adverse regional, economic, environmental and service demand impacts; (4) proximity, connectivity, adjacency to and impact of previous counties and regional conservation investments; (5) proportional leveraging of funds and align with the South Carolina State Conservation Bank, or similar greenspace funding initiatives.

G. These components shall remain intact unless amended by the County Council.

Sec. 25-152. METHOD OF PROGRAM AND PROCEDURES

The following procedures shall be followed in evaluating applications procurements:

A. Complete Applications shall be initially reviewed, allocated based on preferred procurement, and ranked in accordance with the scoring rubric by the Review Body. All Applications shall then be collated based on rankings (highest to lowest) and given a positive, negative or neutral recommendation for funding. The Applications, ranking and rubric and recommendations shall be timely presented to the Committee.

B. Review, recommendation, and action to proceed with Due Diligence and acquisition negotiations: Committee shall review and make recommendations whether to engage in Due Diligence and acquisition negotiations based upon scoring and recommendation of the Review Body.

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C. The Committee will meet to review and consider the recommendations. Based on such review, the Committee will further recommend action or inaction on each Application. Additionally, the Committee may revise and edit any scoring rubric or recommendations from the initial Review Body.

D. The Committee recommendations will be presented to County Council for final review and consideration. Approval will be made by resolution of County Council.

Sec. 25-153. DUE DILIGENCE

A. All proposed acquisitions will be subject to due diligence being satisfactorily completed, reviewed, and approved by the County. All due diligence shall be initiated and reviewed by appropriate Review Body before being sent to County Council for final action. Due diligence shall include, but may not be limited to: (1) an appraisal of the value of the interest being acquired prepared by a member of the Appraisal Institute (MAI), with preference for appraisers with certified training by the South Carolina State Conservation Bank; (2) a boundary survey completed by a South Carolina Registered Land Surveyor suitable for describing the property. For purchase of fee simple interests, a topographic survey, tree survey, archaeological survey, or other due diligence items shall/may also be obtained when appropriate; (3) Phase I Environmental Assessment by a qualified environmental consulting firm. In instances where the Phase I Report so indicates, a Phase II Environmental Assessment including a Plan for any Remediation, by the Seller or Purchaser, is required for the Property to address the concerns to the satisfaction of the Committee or County Council.; and (4) when warranted, a title search, title opinion, and/or title insurance commitment, with only normal title exceptions.

B. Subject to the prior approval of County Council or within certain funding thresholds as may be approved by County Council, the County may reimburse or directly pay reasonable and customary costs incurred in connection with the Due Diligence activities described in subsection (A) above. Such reimbursement or payment may be authorized either (i) on a project-specific basis in amounts expressly approved by County Council, or (ii) pursuant to aggregate and per-project expenditure thresholds established by County Council through the County's annual budget or other duly adopted fiscal policies. In no event shall reimbursement for Due Diligence costs exceed the applicable aggregate or per-project limits approved by County Council, and any amounts in excess thereof shall require separate County Council approval.

Sec. 25-154. MISCELLANEOUS

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS
RFQ #2026-18
GREENBELT PROGRAM MANAGER
JASPER COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA
JUNE 18, 2026

A. No interest in Property acquired by an Eligible Applicant with the Sales Tax may be extinguished, sold, transferred, assigned, alienated, or converted to a purpose or use other than that set forth in the grant award, without securing: (1) a certificate of the Review Body that the Property no longer exhibits the characteristics that qualified it for acquisition with funds from the Bank; and (2) super majority vote (at least 66.66%) of the County Council.

B. Funds from the Bank may not be used to acquire interests in Properties or other interests in Property through the exercise of any power of eminent domain or condemnation proceeding; provided, however, that such funds may be used when the use of eminent domain is limited solely to the consolidation of existing greenbelt land holdings.

C. The provisions of this Article must not be construed to eliminate or unreasonably restrict hunting, fishing, farming, forestry, timber management, or wildlife-habitat management, as regulated by the laws of this State, upon lands for which interests in Property are obtained pursuant to this Ordinance. These and other traditional and compatible activities may be conducted, where appropriate, upon Property preserved with Sales Tax funds.

D. In order to ensure proper planning and efficiency in Greenbelt Projects funded through the proceeds of the Program, and to provide that these Greenbelt Projects bring the greatest benefit to the County, a comprehensive Greenbelt Study shall be undertaken by a selected party, and a recommended Greenbelt Plan issued to County Council, which shall include the following elements, and any other elements requested by County Council, including: (1) Feedback and priorities from local conservation and historic resource partners, stakeholders; (2) an inventory of potential priority greenbelt Properties in the County; (3) a forecast of greenbelt needs over the next twenty-five (25) years in the County; and (4) Greenbelt Property Selection Criteria, with consideration given to the System employed by the South Carolina Conservation Bank.

E. Once completed, the comprehensive Greenbelt Plan should be reviewed and revised every five (5) years.

F. The Bank and Eligible Applicants receiving monies from the Sales Tax funds shall retain all records of acquisition of interests in Property with such funds including, but not limited to deeds, title documents, contracts, surveys, inventories, appraisals, title insurance policies, environmental assessments, and closing documents.

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Section 4. Public Hearing. Prior to the date of enactment of this Ordinance, the County did hold a public hearing on March 16, 2026 regarding the terms hereof and the enactment of this Ordinance.

Section 5. Further Action. The County staff, acting through the County Administrator and the County Treasurer are authorized, as required or necessary, to undertake any supplemental, follow-up and/or final actions following the enactment of this Ordinance and the imposition of its terms.

Section 6. Severability. If any section, subsection, sentence, clause or phrase of this Ordinance is, for any reason, held or determined to be invalid, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this Ordinance.

Section 7. Limitation of Rights. That nothing in this Ordinance shall be construed to affect any suit or proceeding pending in any court, or any rights acquired, or liability incurred, or any cause(s) of action acquired or existing, under any act or ordinance hereby repealed; nor shall any just or legal right or remedy of any character be lost, impaired or affected by this Ordinance.

Section 8. Inconsistency. All ordinances or parts of ordinances inconsistent or in conflict with the provisions of this Ordinance are hereby repealed to the extent of the conflict or inconsistency.

Section 9. Effective Date. This Ordinance shall take effect upon third reading and enactment of this Ordinance.

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**REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS
RFQ #2026-18
GREENBELT PROGRAM MANAGER
JASPER COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA
JUNE 18, 2026**

Jasper County Council

BY: _____

W. J. Rowell, III
Chairman

ATTEST: _____


BY: _____

Wanda Simmons-Giles
Clerk to Council

ORDINANCE: #2026-13

First Reading: February 17, 2026
Public Hearing: March 16, 2026
Second Reading: March 16, 2026
Enactment: April 6, 2026

Reviewed for form and draftsmanship by the interim Jasper County Attorney.


Pope Flynn, LLC

Date 4/13/26

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EXHIBIT A

CONSERVATION BANK PRIORITY MAP

