



# PROGRAM MANUAL

2023 Manual



**South Carolina**  
Department of Commerce

Just right for business.



**SITE SELECTION GROUP**  
strategic location solutions



**South Carolina**  
Department of Commerce

Just right for business.

## **PALMETTO SITES: PRIMED FOR INDUSTRY**

Team S.C. is committed to being 'Just right' for business. Part of that commitment is being prepared as companies look to locate and grow in South Carolina.

From workforce to infrastructure, being on the forefront of economic development takes a multi-faceted approach. And, having sites ready for business is not only part of this approach, it is imperative. To ensure the Palmetto State maintains its competitive edge and is ready to recruit new businesses and support existing ones, we took a step back to reevaluate our site certification program.

Based on community feedback and a realignment of goals, we have shifted our focus. We recognize that one size – or set of criteria – does not fit every project. Our new approach evaluates how the existing technical site components layer with the available workforce and target industry data. Utilizing the corporate “lens” of our partner, Site Selection Group, this analysis will result in a customized plan that best positions each individual property for success. The Palmetto Site designation will signify to potential prospects that the property has been “Checked for Readiness” and has all the information necessary to meet a project's needs.

We are confident the Palmetto Sites program gives us the opportunity to showcase to the world that we're ready. After all, access to an inventory of marketable sites is just one more reason why choosing S.C. is just right.

Harry M. Lightsey III  
Secretary of Commerce



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- PROGRAM OVERVIEW
- SITE & COMMUNITY READINESS INSTRUCTIONS
- MAPS & DOCUMENTATION
- DUE DILIGENCE PHASE OVERVIEW
- FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



AN EXIS PARTNER

---

#### HEADQUARTERS

8235 Douglas Avenue  
Suite 500  
Dallas, Tx 75225

**GREENVILLE, SC OFFICE**  
201 RiverPlace, Suite 500  
Greenville, SC 29605

[siteselectiongroup.com](http://siteselectiongroup.com)

The background features a white field with a light gray halftone dot pattern. On the left side, there are two overlapping triangular shapes: a dark blue one on top and a medium blue one below it. Two parallel orange lines run diagonally from the left edge towards the bottom right, passing over the blue shapes.

# **PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

# OVERVIEW OF PALMETTO SITES PROGRAM



The South Carolina Department of Commerce (“Commerce”) has engaged Site Selection Group, LLC (“SSG”) to develop and manage a new readiness program designed to assist communities and economic developers with their product development and community preparedness efforts. The program was designed to be simple to complete, and use site-specific workforce and target industry analytics to create customized strategic development plans.

The objective of the program is to increase the inventory of quality industrial sites throughout the state that have the necessary due diligence completed, and to prepare communities to attract prospects. The Palmetto Sites program has shifted the goal from certifying properties based on a set criteria, to a customized approach which takes the following into consideration:

- **HOLISTIC APPROACH:** Employs a comprehensive and common-sense approach to product development, and is not limited to just site characteristics. This evaluation includes a workforce analysis, target industry assessment, community preparedness assessment, as well as a detailed review of site characteristics.
- **RETURN ON INVESTMENT:** Strategic recommendations for participants will be prioritized based on a philosophy measured by the probability of capturing new jobs and capital investment.
- **NO RIGID CRITERIA:** Anyone can participate and there are no set criteria that participants or properties must meet! To participate and become designated as a Palmetto Site, applicants will submit a request for information (RFI), host the team for a site and community tour and complete the recommended due diligence studies necessary, based on the customized plan that SSG develops for that particular property.



**No rigid or burdensome criteria to meet**



**Leverages key workforce and target industry data**



**Customized strategic development plans**



**Comprehensive site and community analysis**



**Marketing support to attract potential new industry**



## SITE AND COMMUNITY READINESS EVALUATION PHASE

## DUE DILIGENCE PHASE

### Request for Information

SSG will issue a request for information to gather pertinent information on the property. There are no criteria that need to be met to participate. RFI includes:

- County project pipeline data to inform ROI
- Workforce/Training Info
- Property availability & price
- Buildability/ Impediments
- Zoning
- Topography
- Transportation infrastructure
- Utility availability

### Site & Community Visit

SSG will conduct:

- 1) Comprehensive site visits including:
  - Meeting with key property stakeholders (property ownership, utility providers, workforce training representatives, etc.)
- 2) Property and Community Windshield Tour
- 3) Site evaluation
- 3) Workforce assessment
- 4) Target industry analysis

### Strategic Development Plan

Based on information gathered during the RFI, Site Visit, and analysis of relevant labor and target industry data, SSG will deliver to applicants a Strategic Development Plan for the property, taking into consideration the context in which the property operates. This plan will prioritize action items for developing the property, including due diligence.

### Due Diligence

SSG will work applicants to create a customized due diligence plan. This plan will cover the basic requirements that a typical prospect will need, and be based on a common sense approach. Those properties that complete due diligence will be designated as a Palmetto Site.

The background features a white field with a light gray halftone dot pattern. On the left side, there are two overlapping geometric shapes: a dark blue triangle pointing downwards and a medium blue triangle pointing upwards. Two parallel orange lines run diagonally across the page, starting from the left edge and extending towards the bottom right.

# **SITE & COMMUNITY READINESS INSTRUCTIONS**



# SCHEDULE & INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMISSION



## ROUND 1 2023 SCHEDULE

Dates	
Program Materials Distributed	February 1, 2023
Deadline for RFI Submission	<b>March 1, 2023</b>
Site Visit	March 2023 – April 2023
Due Diligence Phase	Accepted on a rolling basis

## Round 2 2023 SCHEDULE

Dates	
Program Materials Distributed	August 18, 2023
Deadline for RFI Submission	<b>September 15, 2023</b>
Site Visit	October 2023
Due Diligence Phase	Accepted on a rolling basis

- Submit an email outlining the applicants intent to participate in the program, along with the property's LocateSC brochure to program contacts by the 'Program Materials Distributed' deadline. Upon approval, SSG will provide the applicant with the excel RFI Questionnaire.
- Submit an **electronic copy** of the completed *RFI Questionnaire* (excel file, please do not pdf) and provide all of the *Maps and Documentation*, listed in this document beginning on page 10. These can be uploaded to Dropbox (or similar FTP site) and SSG will download the files – please do not send hard copies!
- Submit all items in the order requested in separate files, with the appropriate file names (see page 10).
- Send the electronic submission *no later than 5:00pm on the RFI Deadline Submission to:*

**Beth Land**  
[bland@siteselectiongroup.com](mailto:bland@siteselectiongroup.com)  
214-271-0623

**Chris Schwinden**  
[cschwinden@siteselectiongroup.com](mailto:cschwinden@siteselectiongroup.com)  
214-271-0576

**Dewey Evans**  
[devans@siteselectiongroup.com](mailto:devans@siteselectiongroup.com)  
214-271-0569

**Michela Martin**  
[mmartin@siteselectiongroup.com](mailto:mmartin@siteselectiongroup.com)  
214-271-0583

**Elijah Moore**  
[emoore@siteselectiongroup.com](mailto:emoore@siteselectiongroup.com)  
214-271-0607

**Jennifer Druce**  
[jdruce@sccommerce.com](mailto:jdruce@sccommerce.com)  
803-348-1810

- SSG will conduct a desktop evaluation of the *RFI Questionnaire* and *Maps and Documentation* and schedule site visits with communities. SSG will also clearly outline expectations for the site visit (attendees, agenda, schedule, etc.).
- Please also submit any relevant past work completed on the property or community (e.g. target industry analyses, workforce analyses, due diligence reports, etc.). SSG will incorporate existing work and consider the property in the broader context of the ED organization's goals and strategies.





# **MAPS & DOCUMENTATION**



To assist SSG in efficiently reviewing all the critical materials, please submit items in the order listed below. Attachments should be separate files, clearly labeling each file with the attachment number and title listed below. For example, the first attachment should be named “1 – RFI Questionnaire”, and the second attachment “2 – Aerial”. All maps should show a scale, a directional arrow, clear boundaries of the site (boundaries should clearly show only the property being proposed for evaluation), and a date.

1. **RFI Questionnaire** – *(please complete and submit this excel file that includes several tabs as one collated excel file – please do not PDF.)*
2. **Aerial** - with property boundaries clearly identified.
3. **Map of adjoining and nearby businesses** - with businesses identified (if applicable).
4. **Topographic map** - with property boundaries identified (if available).
5. **Property availability and price** - Documentation that ensures that the property is available and has a documented price.
6. **Copy of the present deed(s)** - indicating the current ownership of the property.
7. **County tax parcel map** - with tax parcel identification numbers depicting the location and property boundaries.
8. **Zoning map and description** - Map illustrating the current zoning for the property and surrounding area with property boundaries identified. If there is no zoning in the jurisdiction, attach a comprehensive or long-range plan and/or map. Please also include a description of the zoning designation of the property.
9. **Rail provider letter** - Letter from the rail provider indicating its feasibility and willingness to provide rail service to the property (if property is marketed as rail-served). If available, also provide an estimated cost and schedule for extending rail to the property (if applicable).
10. **Infrastructure map(s)** - Infrastructure map(s) with property boundaries identified indicating the following:
  - The location and voltage of the nearest electric infrastructure serving the property.
  - The location and size of the nearest natural gas distribution line(s) serving the property.
  - The location and size of the nearest water line(s) serving the property.
  - The location and size of the nearest wastewater line(s) serving the property.
  - The location of the nearest telecommunication infrastructure serving the property.

*Please note that Attachment 1 – RFI Questionnaire has several tabs that include Electric, Natural Gas, Water, Wastewater, and Telecomm Questionnaires, that should be completed by the utility providers to ensure accurate information.*
11. **FEMA Map** – *Please provide a copy of the FEMA Flood Zone Map of the property.*
12. **NWI Map** – Please provide a copy of the National Wetlands Inventory Map with property boundaries identified.



In addition to the below optional documentation, SSG welcomes the community/applicant to submit any other maps and documentation that will add to the property review process.

## **Optional Documentation (if available)**

13. Copy of the industrial park covenants, conditions, and restrictions.
14. Provide a copy of all the due diligence that has been completed on the property. This includes but is not limited to:
  - Phase I ESA
  - Wetlands Delineation
  - Threatened and Endangered Species Survey
  - Archaeological and Historical Investigation
  - Geotechnical Assessment
15. Provide a copy of any documentation that has been completed and would be helpful in the evaluation on the property. This includes, but is not limited to:
  - Master Conceptual Plan
  - Property Marketing Materials
  - Boundary Survey
  - Title Search
  - Previous Labor Reports Completed
  - Strategic Plans

The background features a white field with a light gray halftone dot pattern. On the left, there are two overlapping triangular shapes: a dark blue one on top and a medium blue one below it. Two parallel orange diagonal lines cross the lower half of the image from left to right.

# **DUE DILIGENCE PHASE OVERVIEW**





While the *Site and Community Readiness Evaluation Phase* provides tremendous value to the applicant, the Palmetto Site designation is reserved for properties that have completed and current due diligence. The list below is a snapshot of the potential due diligence requirements that may be required in order to complete the *Due Diligence Phase* and receive the Palmetto Site designation.

**SSG will work with the community to create a customized Due Diligence Plan for each property. The list below includes items that will most likely be required, but will be based on specific property needs.**

- Documentation of control and ownership
- Phase I Environmental Site Assessment
- Wetlands Delineation and Jurisdictional Determination letter from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Threatened and Endangered Species Survey
- Archaeological and Historical Investigation
- Geotechnical Assessment
- Buildable Conceptual Plan
- Boundary Survey (current)
- Title Abstract



# **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



## **1. Is there any funding assistance available for the Palmetto Sites program?**

Yes. Commerce will cover the cost of the *Site and Community Readiness Evaluation Phase* for publicly owned or controlled properties. This also includes properties that the public is interested in gaining control of and would like to utilize this evaluation as a tool to determine the property's viability for industrial development. Additionally, based on the feedback from SSG, Commerce will award grants to assist with the completion of the *Due Diligence Phase* and the fee associated with it. Grants are competitive, require public control/ownership, and will also consider recommendations for grant funding from the Strategic Development Plan provided by SSG at the conclusion of the evaluation phase.

## **2. My community would like to utilize this program as a tool to evaluate new properties before we acquire control. What availability documentation must I provide in order to participate?**

If a public entity would like to utilize the *Site and Community Readiness Evaluation Phase* as tool to determine a property's industrial feasibility, two letters must be provided: first, a letter from the public entity documenting their intent and willingness to acquire control; second, a letter from the property owner describing their intent to develop the property for industrial development and willingness to negotiate control. Property owners must also indicate a price, or price range.

## **3. My property is already certified under Commerce's former program; what happens to my property's current designation?**

Properties that are currently designated as a SC Certified Site under SCDOC's previous program will transition to a Palmetto Site designation and will maintain the designation until the expiration date noted on the certification letter.

## **4. My property already completed Commerce's previous certification program and has either expired or will be expiring. How do I maintain my Palmetto Site designation?**

Commerce encourages properties to participate in the full scope of the Palmetto Sites program to capture the value that the *Site and Community Readiness Evaluation Phase* adds to the program. However, for well-established properties that have received a certification designation since 2011, an *Expedited Review* process is available. The review includes an abbreviated version of the evaluation phase, aimed mainly to capture updates to the property, as well as the completion of the *Due Diligence Phase*; there is no community visit included in this process. Applicants are allowed 6-9 months to complete the process, but materials will be reviewed upon submission and designations will be awarded as soon as the requirements are met.

## **5. My property was certified prior to 2011, can I go through the Expedited Review?**

While we certainly appreciate the urgency to receive the designation, both Commerce and SSG believe that the value provided by the completion for the full Palmetto Sites program is necessary for properties that have not completed a formal program since 2010.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



## **6. My property is designated as a Palmetto Site under the former program, but never completed the full certification program; what are my options?**

In order to receive the Palmetto Site designation, the full Palmetto Sites program will need to be completed. The great news is that most of the information needed to complete the *Site and Community Readiness Evaluation* has already been collected and, for properties that are submitted by the County, Commerce will cover the cost to participate!

## **7. My property has completed other readiness programs (utility, rail, industry specific, etc.); what are my options?**

In order to receive the Palmetto Site designation, the full Palmetto Sites program will need to be completed. The great news is that most of the information needed to complete the *Site and Community Readiness Evaluation Phase* has already been collected!

## **8. How long does it take to complete the Palmetto Sites program?**

The *Site and Community Readiness Evaluation Phase* takes approximately 3-4 months and includes a community visit. Additionally, applicants are allowed 6-9 months to complete the *Due Diligence Phase*, but materials will be reviewed upon submission and designations will be awarded as soon as the requirements are met.

## **9. How many properties can I submit?**

Each County is allotted one submission per year. This ensures each that submissions are strategic and well supported through the process. Exceptions may be available for properties that qualify for the Expedited Review process based on workload capacity in a particular round. If this is of interest, please contact Commerce to discuss.

## **10. How long does my Palmetto Sites designation last?**

The Palmetto Site designation addresses a number of important factors to a potential prospect. Most crucial is that the information known about the site is up-to-date and accurate. Two important components of this program include property control and maintaining an active Jurisdictional Determination letter from the US Army Corps of Engineers. Therefore, once one of these two items expire, the designation is no longer valid. It is possible to update specific items in order to maximize the term of the designation; however, over time, information becomes outdated and it's beneficial to revisit. On average most designations will be valid for approximately five years. At that time, applicants can pursue the *Expedited Review* process to maintain the designation.





**HEADQUARTERS**

8235 Douglas Avenue  
Suite 500  
Dallas, TX 75225

**GREENVILLE, SC OFFICE**

201 RiverPlace, Suite 500  
Greenville, SC 29601

[siteselectiongroup.com](http://siteselectiongroup.com)