

January 14, 2026

**Camden County Joint Development Authority (JDA)
Request for Proposals (RFP) - 01.14.2026 LD
Selection of a National Master Land Developer
Former Gilman Paper Property | Camden County, Georgia**

1. Introduction

The Camden County Joint Development Authority (JDA) hereby issues this Request for Proposals (RFP) to solicit proposals from **qualified national master land development companies** to plan, entitle, and develop the **Gilman Paper Property**, a waterfront site consisting of approximately **+/- 620 acres** located in Camden County, Georgia.

The JDA seeks a National Master Land Developer with the financial capacity, technical expertise, and proven experience necessary to deliver a **large-scale, master-planned, mixed-use waterfront development** that provides long-term economic benefit to Camden County while maintaining high standards of design, placemaking, and environmental stewardship.

This RFP will be **managed and evaluated directly by the JDA**. The JDA has engaged, or may engage, professional advisors to assist in market analysis and evaluation; however, all final decisions shall remain with the JDA.

2. Property Overview

The former Gilman Paper Property comprises approximately **+/- 620 acres** of waterfront land with significant development potential. The property presents a unique opportunity for a comprehensive, phased development program that may include residential, commercial, recreational, and marina-related uses.

Additional background information, guiding principles, and constraints are provided in the attached **Camden County JDA Needs Framework**, which should be considered integral to this RFP.

3. Development Objectives & Vision

The JDA's objectives for the former Gilman Paper Property include:

- Creation of a **high-quality, master-planned** mixed-use development with a strong sense of place

- Integration of **waterfront and marina uses**, including wet slips and **dry-stack storage**
- Development of **single-family residential neighborhoods** and **condominiums / attached residential**
- Inclusion of **restaurants, destination retail, and complementary commercial uses**
- Emphasis on **walkability, golf-cart-friendly circulation, trails, and open space**
- Thoughtful phasing aligned with market demand and infrastructure capacity
- Structures that support **public-private partnership**, long-term value creation, and fiscal responsibility

The JDA is open to a range of transaction structures, including **fee-simple sale, phased takedown, ground lease, joint venture, or other negotiated arrangements**, provided risk and reward are appropriately allocated.

4. Scope of Developer Responsibilities

The selected developer will be expected to assume primary responsibility for:

- Master planning and community design
 - Entitlement, zoning, and regulatory approvals
 - Environmental analysis and permitting
 - Design and construction of horizontal infrastructure
 - Phased vertical development and/or coordination with builder partners
 - Marina development and/or partnership with qualified marina operators
 - Financing and capital formation
 - Long-term implementation consistent with the approved master plan
 - Initiate sitework as soon as practical preferable in 2026 – time is of the essence
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5. Minimum Developer Qualifications

Proposers must demonstrate:

- Experience as **lead master developer** on projects of **350 acres or greater**

- Successful delivery of **mixed-use, master-planned communities** including residential and commercial components
- Financial capacity and access to institutional capital sufficient to execute a multi-phase development
- Experience working with **public-sector entities** and complex entitlement processes
- Ability to develop waterfront assets directly or through qualified partners

Joint ventures among developers are permitted, provided a single entity is clearly identified as the **master developer**.

6. Proposal Submission Requirements

Proposals should be concise yet sufficiently detailed and must include the following sections:

A. Developer Profile

- Company overview and history
- Ownership structure and key principals
- Relevant experience and representative projects

B. Relevant Project Experience

- Description of comparable master-planned and/or waterfront developments
- Project size, uses, delivery approach, and outcomes
- References for completed or active projects
- Articulate should a partner is needed to accomplish a portion of the development and provide the qualifications of that partner

C. Conceptual Development Approach

- High-level vision for the former Gilman Paper Property
- Proposed land use mix and phasing philosophy
- Approach to marina development and waterfront activation
- Commitment to walkability, amenities, and placemaking

D. Financial Capacity & Transaction Structure

- Evidence of financial strength and access to capital
- **Proposed transaction structure(s) with the JDA including purchase price**
- High-level discussion of value creation and risk allocation

E. Implementation & Team

- Development team and key consultants
- Anticipated timeline and phasing approach with time is of the essence approach
- Approach to partnering with builders, operators, and the community

F. Public-Sector Experience & Compliance

- Experience with public entities
- Disclosure of any conflicts of interest
- Litigation or bankruptcy history (if any)

7. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated by the JDA and possibly a National Real Estate Broker based on the following criteria:

1. Demonstrated experience with **large-scale master-planned developments**
2. Financial strength and access to capital and **proposed land purchase price**
3. Quality and feasibility of the proposed development approach and timing
4. Experience with waterfront and marina-related projects
5. Alignment with JDA objectives and the Framework Needs Assessment
6. Ability to execute a complex, phased development
7. Track record of working successfully with public-sector partners
8. Proposed purchase price and acquisition schedule

The JDA reserves the right to shortlist proposers, request interviews, seek clarifications, or negotiate with one or more respondents.

8. Procurement Schedule (Anticipated)

- RFP Issued: [January 14, 2026]
- Pre-Proposal Questions Due: [February 28, 2026]
- Responses to Questions Issued: [March 5, 2026]
- Proposals Due: [March 31, 2026 5pm EST]
- Board review of proposals: [April 20, 2026]
- Shortlist & Interviews (if applicable): [April 29, 2026]
- Selection of Preferred Master Developer: [May 14, 2026]

Dates are subject to change at the sole discretion of the JDA.

9. Conditions & Reservations

The JDA reserves the right to:

- Reject any or all proposals
- Modify or withdraw this RFP at any time
- Request additional information or clarification
- Waive informalities or irregularities
- Negotiate with one or more proposers

Issuance of this RFP does not obligate the JDA to select a proposer or enter into any agreement.

10. Submission Instructions & Contact Information

Proposals must be submitted in twelve (12) hard copies and one copy on USB drive.

All communications regarding this RFP shall be directed to:

Camden County Joint Development Authority
Mr. James Coughlin, Executive Director
162 N. Gross Rd
Kingsland, GA 31548
(912) 729.7201

Attachment: Camden County JDA Framework Needs Assessment

ATTACHMENT

Camden County Joint Development Authority (JDA)

Framework Needs Assessment

Master Development of a 50-Acre Waterfront Property with an option on additional acreage

1. Introduction

The Camden County Joint Development Authority (JDA) possibly with a national real estate broker is seeking proposals from qualified, well-capitalized, and visionary master developers to design, plan, and develop +/- 620 acres in a phased approach beginning with a 50 +/- acre waterfront parcel. The Authority envisions a cohesive, phased, mixed-use **Live • Work • Play** destination that activates the waterfront, attracts year-round economic activity, and serves both residents and visitors.

The property in beautiful coastal Georgia was once the site of the former Gilman paper mill that was the economic engine for the region. Now, almost 25 years since the closure of the mill, the Joint Development Authority finally has possession of the property. We hold a permit to construct a marina on the site, issued by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. The city of St. Mary's has zoned the site mixed-use Planned Development and created a Tax Allocation District and a Community Improvement District that cover the property. The mill structures have all been demolished. Much of the concrete rubble remains and could be utilized for roadbed, riprap etc. A great deal of environmental testing and investigation has been performed on the southernmost 50 acres of the site where the marina is permitted and the surrounding residential/commercial areas.

The proposed development is expected to include, at a minimum, a marina with dry stack storage, single-family and condominium residential homes, and supporting commercial, restaurant, recreational, and public infrastructure. The JDA places a strong emphasis on **immediate momentum, timely execution, and demonstrated developer accountability.**

2. Project Vision – Live • Work • Play

The JDA’s goal is to establish a vibrant, walkable, and economically sustainable coastal community that integrates residential living, employment opportunities, recreation, dining, and waterfront activity into a unified environment.

Live

- High-quality coastal residential neighborhoods designed to attract full-time residents and second-home owners
- Neighborhood design that supports walkability, golf cart use, and proximity to daily amenities such as fitness center, pool, tennis, pickleball and others
- A scale and character that promotes long-term community stability rather than seasonal-only occupancy

Work

- Employment-generating uses including marina operations, hospitality, restaurants, retail, marine services, and professional or flex office space
- Commercial activity designed to support daytime and year-round economic vitality
- Opportunities for locally owned businesses while allowing complementary regional or national tenants where appropriate

Play

- An activated waterfront featuring boating, dining, recreation, public gathering spaces, and programmed activity
- Pedestrian- and golf-cart-friendly design encouraging interaction between residents, visitors, and businesses
- Amenities that support tourism, events, and everyday enjoyment of the waterfront

Proposals must demonstrate how these elements are intentionally integrated to create continuous activity throughout the day, evening, and all seasons.

3. Core Components of the Development

3.1 Marina with Dry Stack Storage

- Adequate capacity for dry stack boat storage and related marine services
- Waterfront access with both transient and permanent slips
- Physical and visual integration with restaurants, retail, and public spaces
- Safe pedestrian and golf cart connectivity to residential and commercial areas

3.2 Residential Development (Live)

- Single-family homes with a **minimum of 1,500 square feet / unit**

- Architecture consistent with **Low Country coastal style**
- Lot layout and streetscape design supporting walkability and golf cart access
- Compatibility with adjacent commercial and marina activity

3.3 Golf Cart & Pedestrian Connectivity (Play)

- A comprehensive network of golf cart and pedestrian pathways
- Direct connectivity to **downtown St. Marys, Georgia**
- Clear connections between residential areas, marina facilities, and commercial nodes

3.4 Commercial, Retail & Employment Uses (Work & Play)

- Waterfront and destination dining, cafes, and restaurants
- Small-scale retail and service uses supporting residents and visitors
- Marine-oriented and hospitality-related businesses
- Professional, co-working, or flex commercial space where appropriate

3.5 Master Developer Flexibility

- Remaining acreage may be subdivided and developed at the discretion of the master developer
- All development must remain cohesive with the Live • Work • Play vision and Low Country coastal character
- Creative additions such as boutique lodging, event venues, recreational amenities, or public waterfront features are strongly encouraged

4. Development Schedule & Accountability

Proposers must:

- Demonstrate capital availability, development team readiness, and ability to commence work immediately upon award
- Commit to a defined project start date and first-phase construction schedule
- Identify key milestones for design, permitting, infrastructure, and vertical construction
- Acknowledge that failure to meet agreed-upon milestones may result in renegotiation, reassignment of development rights, or termination of the development agreement

The JDA anticipates entering into a formal **Development Agreement** that will include performance benchmarks and other assurances.

5A. Minimum Developer Qualifications

To be considered responsive, proposers must meet the following minimum qualifications:

- Demonstrated financial capacity to execute a project of comparable scale, supported by balance sheet information or proof of funds
- Proven experience as a master developer or lead developer on at least one comparable waterfront, mixed-use, or marina-oriented development
- Identification of key development team members, including architect, engineer, and marina or hospitality operators where applicable
- Disclosure of equity partners, capital stack structure, and any material contingencies
- Written acknowledgement that speculative, contingent, or land-banking proposals will be rejected at the sole discretion of the JDA

Failure to meet these minimum qualifications may result in disqualification without further evaluation.

6. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on:

- Strength and clarity of Live • Work • Play integration
- Quality, creativity, and feasibility of the master plan
- Developer experience, financial capacity, and past performance
- Commitment to immediate commencement and timely execution
- Alignment with the JDA’s long-term community and economic objectives of job creation, private investment, activation of a stranded asset and bringing a critical mass of residents and visitors to live, work and play in St. Mary’s.
- Overall responsiveness to this Framework Needs Assessment

6A. Scoring & Evaluation Matrix (Exhibit A)

Proposals will be evaluated using a weighted scoring system to ensure transparency and accountability.

The JDA may invite top-ranked proposers for interviews or presentations prior to final selection.

<u>Evaluation Category</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Weight</u>
Financial Capacity & Viability	Capital strength, funding sources, feasibility	25%
Development Timeline & Readiness	Ability to commence immediately and meet milestones	20%
Developer Experience	Comparable waterfront or mixed-use projects	20%

Acquisition Model	Proposed Purchase price and acquisition schedule	15%
Live • Work • Play Vision	Quality of integration, placemaking, and year-round activation	10%
Community & Economic Impact	Jobs, tax base, tourism, public benefit	10%

6B. Mandatory Development Milestones (Exhibit B)

The selected entity will be required to commit to the following baseline milestones, subject to refinement during negotiation of the Development Agreement:

Milestone	Target Timing from Award
Development Agreement Executed	Within 60 days
Concept Refinement & Agency Coordination	Within 90 days
Permitting & Engineering Submittals	Within 120-150 days
Commencement of Infrastructure or Vertical Construction	Within 180 days

Failure to meet agreed milestones without JDA-approved justification may result in renegotiation, reassignment, or termination of development rights.

7. Additional Information

The JDA reserves the right to accept or reject any and all proposals, negotiate with one or more proposers, modify or withdraw this Framework Needs Assessment, or award the project in whole or in part based on the best interests of Camden County.