

Ecosystem FAQ

- What is the purpose of the merger?

The purpose of the merger is to bring the entities together to enhance their collective impact in the community, while streamlining operations to focus more resources and energy on serving residents, supporting businesses, and advancing local + regional efforts in business, community and destination development.

- How will this impact staff?

While roles and responsibilities will shift as the four entities come together, our plan is to retain current staff who wish to be part of the new organization. They will be supported through the transition and invited to help shape the new roles by assessing and aligning duties, all while staying focused on the shared missions that guide our work.

- Is the long-term intent for this new entity to be part of the City of Brookings?

This organization is intended to operate independently and is not part of the City of Brookings' organizational structure.

- Where will the new entity be located?

We are exploring a new location that will bring our entire team together under one roof and create an inspiring space for community members and innovators to collaborate and be a welcome center for guests. This vision is still in progress, with a careful assessment of potential locations currently underway to ensure it best serves our shared goals.

- How will this new entity be funded?

Funding sources will remain the same as the existing organizations. The organization will be funded through a combination of membership contributions, community member investment and support from the City of Brookings and our local and regional partners (i.e. Brookings County, Brookings Health, BMU, SDSU).

- Will this entity include cities outside of Brookings?

The organization will work with people and communities both in Brookings and beyond, continuing the outreach and connections the original entities have built over time.

- Who will set economic development priorities?

Decisions on economic development opportunities will be made collaboratively by the CEO and Business Development Team, with guidance from the Board, to ensure they align with the community's needs and priorities.

- What happens to the Farmers Market and Downtown activities?

Current activities in Downtown Brookings will continue, while the Community Development Team will explore opportunities to enhance and elevate events and programming, adding value and enriching the community's quality of life.

- Do you have to be a member to get services from the new entity?

Certain services will be offered specifically to members, while a broader range of programs will remain accessible to the wider community. This approach is designed to strengthen the community, support local businesses, and expand economic opportunities for all.

- What happens to existing committees under the four entities once they are consolidated?

Existing committees and resources will continue to be regularly evaluated to ensure they deliver meaningful value and benefits to the community, local businesses, and regional partners. Changes to existing committees will not be made due to the merger but due to their impact.

- What will happen to Small Business Development Center ("SBDC") services?

The intent is for those services to remain in Brookings with current staff continuing to lead SBDC efforts.

- Will there still be collaboration with the Research Park?

There are valuable synergies between the mission and work of the Research Park and the merged organization. The nature of that collaboration is still being discussed.

- How will the entity take stances when said stance is inverse to what the City things?

As this organization is funded through member contributions, community investment and City support, it will prioritize engaging members to gather their input, similar to how the Chamber conducts surveys today. The entity will operate independently from the City and it will remain accountable to its stakeholders and guided by its own governance structure.

- What is the expected timeline?

The new entity will be in operation as of January 1, 2026.

FAQ updated: September 12, 2025