

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MERGER COMMITTEE

Brookings City Council | Tuesday, April 22, 2025

TONIGHT'S KEY TOPICS

- 1** Provide an update on merger committee activity
- 2** Highlight the proposed organizational and staff structure
- 3** Forecast the remainder of the process

MERGER COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Name	Business/Organization	Representation
Wayne Avery	Brookings City Council	Brookings City Council
Angela Boersma	ID8 Architecture	BEDC
Tom Fishback*	First Bank & Trust	BEDC, Downtown
Andi Fouberg	SDSU Alumni Association	former BEDC, Chamber
Paul Gilk	Daktronics	Chamber
Marcus Heemstra	Millborn Seeds	BEDC
Shawn Hostler	Brookings County Commission	Brookings County Commission
Jamison Lamp	SDSU Office of the President	Visit, former staff
Jacob Meshke	City of Brookings	Visit, Chamber
Daniel Scholl	SDSU Research & Economic Development	BEDC
Michael Schulte	City of Volga	Chamber
Laci Thompson	Pasque, The Nook	Visit, Downtown
Holly Tilton Byrne	Brookings City Council	Brookings City Council
Mike Turnwall	First Bank & Trust	Chamber
Nick Wendell*	Brookings City Council	Brookings City Council

INTENTION

The Economic Development Merger Committee was formed in November 2024.

The primary intention of the committee is to develop an implementation plan to guide the merger of the **Brookings Area Chamber of Commerce**, the **Brookings Economic Development Corporation**, **Downtown Brookings**, and **Visit Brookings**.

The newly-formed organization endeavors to preserve the existing missions of the merging entities, maximize available resources, and best position the Brookings region to meet challenges and opportunities now and into the future.

WHY PURSUE A MERGER?

Some stakeholders have asked this question, seeking further clarity on why merging the four existing economic development agencies will be positive for the Brookings region.

- ☐ There has been transition and some volatility within the ecosystem in recent years. A larger, merged organization will be able to absorb unpredictability and maintain the mission.
- ☐ A merged organization is an opportunity to maximize available resources.
- ☐ A larger dynamic organization best positions the Brookings region to build a unified brand and a team ready to take advantage of opportunities now and into the future.

PHASES OF THE COMMITTEE'S WORK

The committee has worked to build the elements of an implementation plan and the overall merger effort in three phases.

November 2024

GATHERING PHASE

Documents from Organizations
Considering Existing Budgets, Bylaws, Structures
Feedback from Organization Boards
Director and Staff Interviews
Peer Community Interviews

BY THE NUMBERS

The four existing organizations shared a variety of documents, including budgets, bylaws, and organizational structures with the merger committee. The totals below are based on submitted FY25 budget data.

\$858,000

in overall funding provided to the four organizations from the City of Brookings, the single largest funding source in the ecosystem.

Of that total, **\$263,000** comes from revenue generated through the pillow tax and directed to Visit Brookings.

\$1,100,000

in salary and benefits costs for the four organizations, supporting **13** full-time positions.

\$138,000

in rent, lease, and office related expenses for the four organizations.

\$135,000

in marketing and communications related expenses for the four organizations.

\$540,000

in revenue generated from memberships and sponsorships.

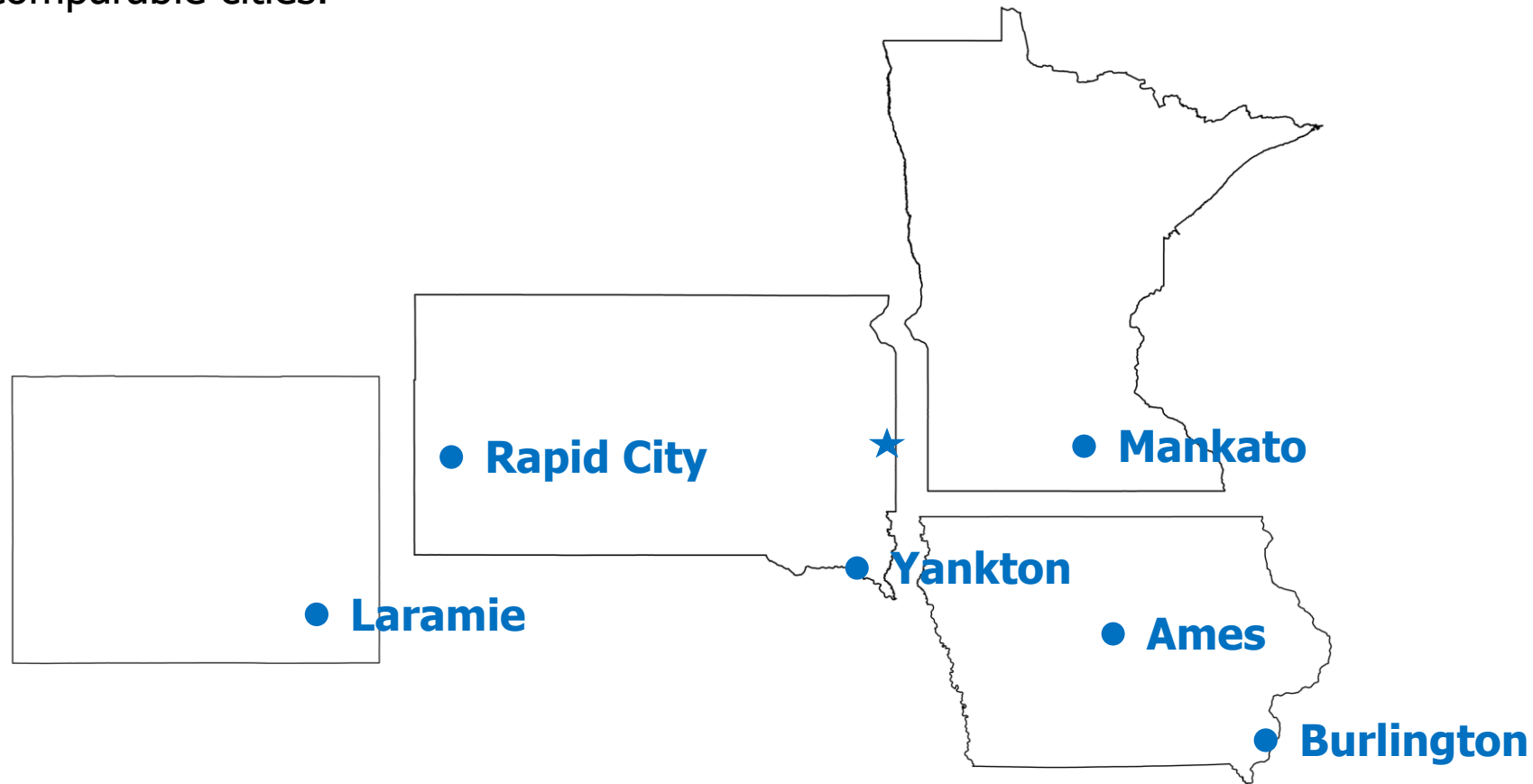
GATHERING INFORMATION AND FEEDBACK

An important part of the **gathering phase** was interaction with the existing organizations.

- ☐ Early in the process, committee co-chairs met with the staff and board members.
- ☐ The committee created a website at **growtogetherbrookings.com** to serve as a central hub of information and meeting takeaways.
- ☐ Each of the organizations submitted letters to the committee highlighting potential opportunities and concerns.
- ☐ Committee members met in two-on-one interviews with each director and all staff.
- ☐ In March, the committee hosted two forums – one for staff and the other for board members and key stakeholders.

PEER COMMUNITY INTERVIEWS

Several mid-sized cities throughout the region have shifted to merged and/or partner organizations over the past two decades. The committee conducted interviews with six comparable cities.



PEER COMMUNITY INTERVIEWS

The peer communities define their merged organizations in a variety of ways and include a variety of functions.

City	Chamber	Downtown	EDC	Visit	Public \$	Model
Ames	X	X	X		X	Pillars
Burlington	X	X	X	X	X	Pillars
Laramie	X		X			Central
Mankato	X	X	X	X	X	Pillars
Rapid City	X		X		X	Central
Yankton	X		X	X	X	Pillars

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SYNTHESIZING PHASE

Building the Draft Organizational Structure
Developing the President/CEO Job Description
Defining the Role of the Board
Affirming Implementation Plan and Timeline
Establishing Launch Budget

BUILDING AN ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The merger committee gathered information and considered potential pathways before building consensus around a draft organizational structure in the **synthesizing phase**.

- ☐ Staff and Director Feedback
- ☐ Peer Community Interviews and Analysis
- ☐ Compare and Contrast Draft Versions
- ☐ Staff and Board Member/Stakeholder Forums
- ☐ Workgroup to Dig Deeper

DRAFT ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The structure will include a President/CEO reporting to a newly-formed Board of Directors.



DRAFT ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The structure will include a President/CEO reporting to a newly-formed Board of Directors.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The committee identified a workgroup to define the high-level role of a newly-formed board, along with the selection process and potential membership, officer positions, and terms.

Membership

The board will include **11** voting members and the President/CEO (non-voting)

- Five at-large members
- Three advisory council representatives
- Three partner designees (City of Brookings, Brookings County, SDSU)

Officers

The board officer team will likely include a Chair, Vice Chair, and Past Chair.

Term Limits

Two four-year terms, with a maximum of ten total years (officer roles not included)

Selection Process

Initial members will be selected by a seven-person committee, comprised of three members of the merger committee and four representatives identified by the existing organizations.

PRESIDENT/CEO

A new President/CEO will oversee all aspects of the merged organization.

Primary Function

- Provide oversight to the organization, including direct supervision of multiple directors
- Maintain authority to make all budgetary and personnel decisions
- Serve as the key advocate and public face of the organization, particularly with members, elected officials, and other stakeholders

Hiring Process

Prior to Summer 2025

Search Plan Developed
Job Description Drafted

June & July 2025

Search Process Conducted
(including stakeholder groups)

August 2025

President/CEO Selected

Fall 2025

President/CEO Tenure Begins



Candidate Engagement

The newly-appointed Board of Directors will lead the search process, but the interview days will include in-person opportunities for staff, board member, and public engagement.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT/CEO

*official position titles and job descriptions yet to be finalized

OPERATIONS

Internal Functions
2.0 FTE

Office Manager

Finance/Controller

Human Resources
(Contracted)

Legal
(Contracted)

Audit
(Contracted)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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***BUSINESS
DEVELOPMENT***

2.0 FTE

Business
Development
Director

Business
Development
Specialist

Advisory Council

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

In a newly defined structure, one of the pillars will focus on Business Development.

Primary Function

Staff in this pillar will support programs and services related to:

- Advocacy for the Business Community
- Entrepreneurship and Innovation
- Support for Small and Growing Businesses
- Workforce Development, Recruitment, and Training

Reporting Structure

The Business Development Director will likely report to the President/CEO.

Advisory Council

The Advisory Council will support staff through the creation of measurable goals and serve as advocates and volunteers for the organization. A member of the Advisory Council will also serve on the Board of Directors.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Specialist

Advisory Council

***COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT***

2.0 FTE

Community
Development
Director

Community
Development
Specialist

Advisory Council

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

In a newly defined structure, one of the pillars will focus on Community Development.

Primary Function

Staff in this pillar will support a wide variety of quality-of-life initiatives, including:

- Childcare
- Education and Training
- New Resident Experience
- Placement and District Development
- Workforce Housing

Reporting Structure

The Community Development Director will likely report to the President/CEO.

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DEVELOPMENT***

2.0 FTE

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***COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT***

2.0 FTE

Community
Development
Director

Community
Development
Specialist

Advisory Council

***DESTINATION
DEVELOPMENT***

2.0 FTE

Destination
Development
Director

Destination
Development
Specialist

Advisory Council

DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

In a newly defined structure, one of the pillars will focus on Destination Development.

Primary Function

Staff in this pillar will support programs and services related to:

- Conference, Convention, and Event Recruitment
- Downtown and Community Events and Promotions
- Management of the Visit Brookings brand
- Support for Tourism-Related Businesses and Attractions

Reporting Structure

The Destination Development Director will likely report to the President/CEO.

Advisory Council

The Advisory Council will support staff through the creation of measurable goals and serve as advocates and volunteers for the organization. A member of the Advisory Council will also serve on the Board of Directors.

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PRESIDENT/CEO

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OPERATIONS

Internal Functions
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***BUSINESS
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***COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT***

2.0 FTE

Community
Development
Director

Community
Development
Specialist

Advisory Council

***DESTINATION
DEVELOPMENT***

2.0 FTE

Destination
Development
Director

Destination
Development
Specialist

Advisory Council

***SALES, DATA,
& MARKETING***

5.0 FTE

Director of Sales

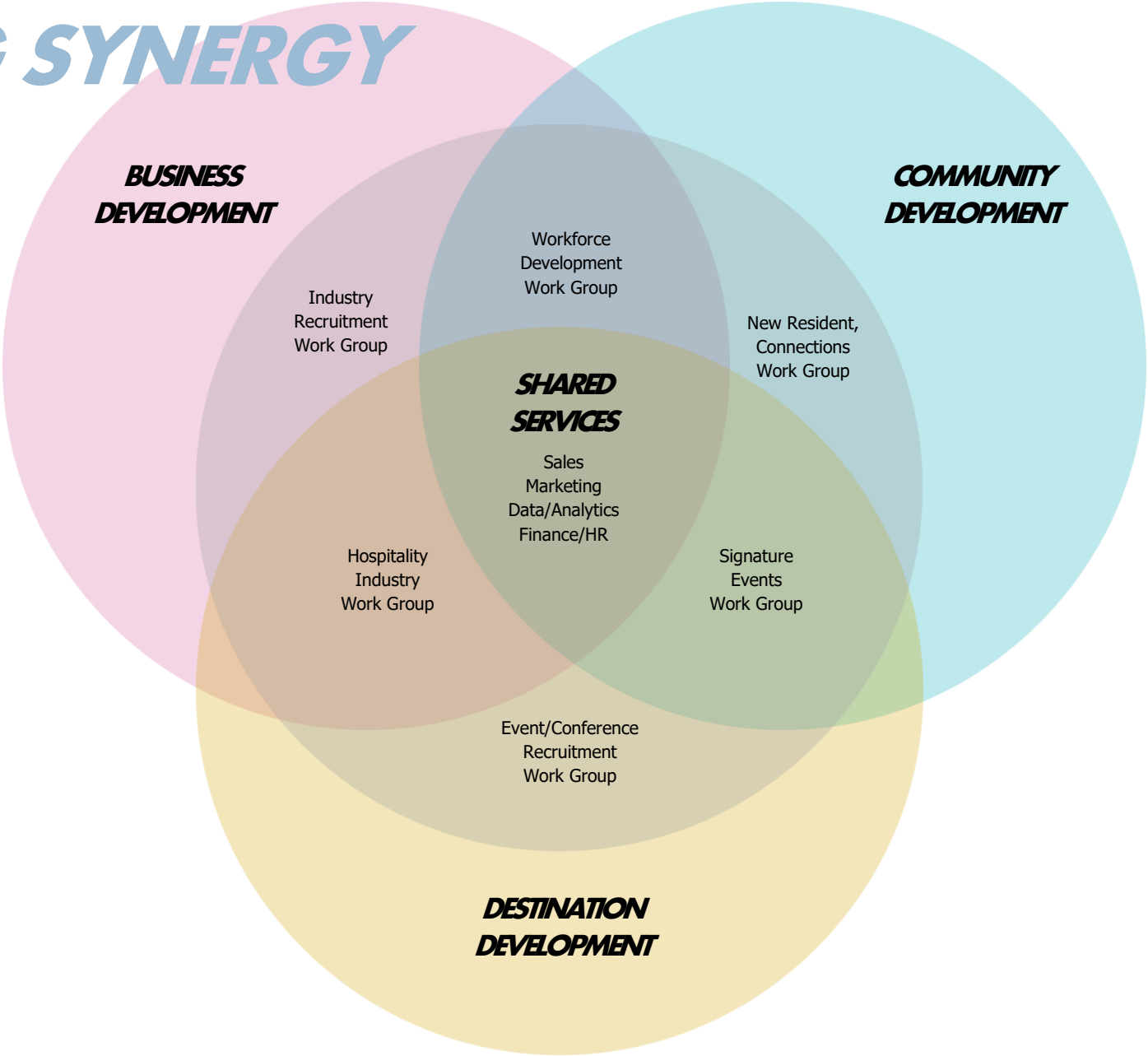
Membership
Specialist

Data & Analytics
Specialist

Marketing Specialist

Marketing Specialist

CREATING SYNERGY



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IMPLEMENTING PHASE

Hiring a President/CEO
Finalizing the 2026 Budget and Funding Needs
Developing the Staff Structure
Appointing a New Board
Creating Unified Bylaws, Policies, & Procedures

November 2024

December 2025

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

As our work matures into the **implementation phase**, we anticipate hitting some key milestones in the spring and summer.

Public Open House

McCrory Gardens

5:00–6:30pm

April 30

PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE

Wednesday, April 30, 2025

5:00 to 6:30pm

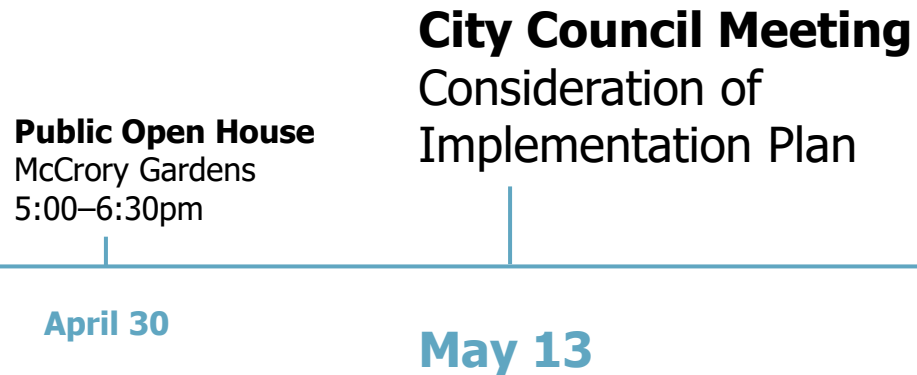
McCrory Gardens Visitors Center

The intent of the open house is to offer an opportunity for the community (the general membership of the existing organizations, in particular) to learn more about the merger.

The event will feature multiple stations/topics throughout the space, rather than a central program or presentation.

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April 30

City Council Meeting
Consideration of
Implementation Plan

May 13

Board of Directors
Slate Determined by
Committee

June 16

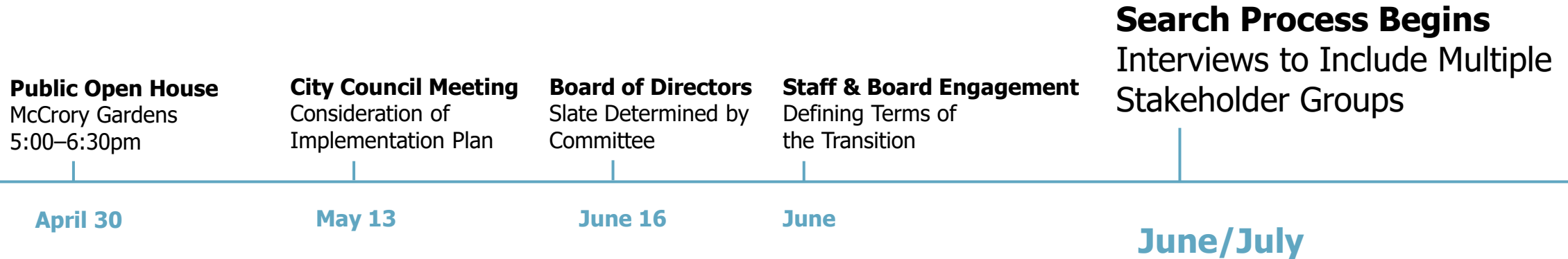
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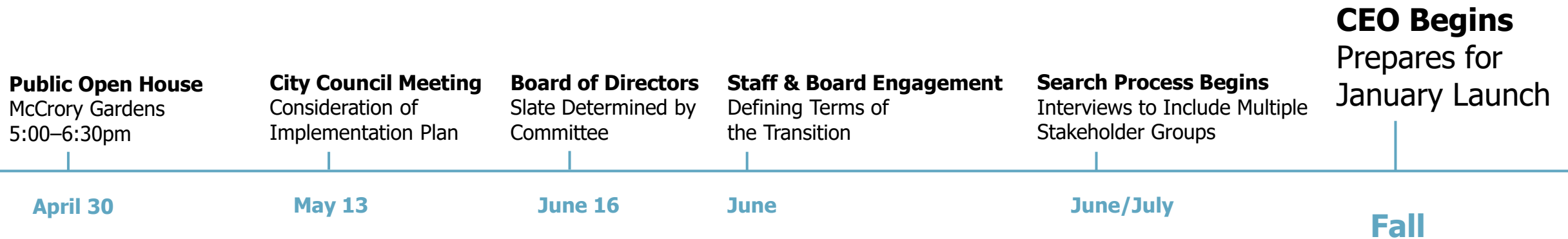
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THANK YOU

Thank you to the members of the merger committee for your continued commitment to this effort and to getting it right.

Thank you to the staff and boards of the existing organizations for your willingness to share information, have honest conversations, and position the future organization to be successful.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MERGER COMMITTEE

Brookings City Council | Tuesday, April 22, 2025