

**To:** Economic Development Partners

**From:** Nick Wendell, Deputy Mayor, Brookings City Council,  
Tom Fishback, Chair, Brookings Economic Development Corporation

**Date:** 11/26/24

**Re:** Merging Existing Economic Development Agencies

This memo is intended to define an effort to merge the Brookings Area Chamber of Commerce, the Brookings Economic Development Corporation, Downtown Brookings, and Visit Brookings into one organization. The effort will be led by a committee created by the Brookings City Council. The mission, membership, and timeline of the committee are outlined below.

### **Mission**

The primary mission of the committee is to develop an implementation plan to support the merging of the four organizations. The merger aligns with goal seven of the Economic Development Master Plan recommended to the Brookings City Council in 2023.

The work of the committee and the implementation plan should contemplate a variety of topics, including the organizational structure, funding model, and mission of the newly formed organization.

### **Membership**

The committee is populated with individuals familiar with the work of the existing organizations, most have either served or are currently serving on their boards. The committee membership includes:

- Nick Wendell (co-chair)
- Tom Fishback (co-chair)
- Wayne Avery (Council representative)
- Angela Boersma
- Andi Fouberg
- Paul Gilk
- Marcus Heemstra
- Jamison Lamp
- Jacob Meshke
- Daniel Scholl
- Laci Thompson
- Holly Tilton Byrne (Council representative)
- Mike Turnwall

### **Timeline**

The Brookings City Council will consider the creation of the committee during their meeting on **Tuesday, November 26, 2024**. The committee will convene regularly between December 2024 and April 2025. In early April 2025, the committee will present an implementation plan to the council. Once approved, the plan will guide the appointment of a new board to oversee the merged organization and the search process for a CEO/President. The goal is to have the new board and CEO/President in place in fall 2025. This timeline aligns with the City of Brookings FY26 budget cycle.

### **Other Considerations**

This document does not include an exhaustive list of committee activities, but does provide a framework for the work ahead. Other considerations which would be useful to highlight include:

- **Existing Staff** | The intention is not to remove any existing staff, but there may be some transition into new positions to better meet the needs of the merged organization. Elements of

the future staffing plan may be included in the committee's implementation plan and be more fully-executed by the incoming CEO/President and board.

- **Information Sharing** | It is the hope that this work will create a foundation for long-term success. The committee will be best positioned to create a successful implementation plan if the leadership of the existing organizations share requested documents and information (i.e. budget history, job descriptions, strategic plans).
- **FY25 Funding** | The City of Brookings has approved the FY25 budget and funding for the existing organizations will remain in place throughout the entirety of calendar year 2025.
- **Communication** | The committee will be considered by the Brookings City Council in a public meeting. In the coming days, committee leaders are willing to meet in-person with staff and/or the boards of the impacted organizations.

cc: Mayor Ope Niemeyer, City of Brookings  
Paul Briseno, City Manager, City of Brookings

