

# **City Council Agenda Item Memo**

**From:** Council Member Nick Wendell and Tom Fishback

**Council Meeting:** May 13, 2025

**Subject:** Economic Development Merger

**Presenter(s):** Council Member Nick Wendell and Tom Fishback

## **Summary and Recommended Action:**

The Economic Development Merger Committee was formed in November 2024 with the intention of developing an implementation plan to guide the merger of the Brookings Area Chamber of Commerce, the Brookings Economic Development Corporation, Downtown Brookings, and Visit Brookings. A merged organization will preserve the existing mission of the existing entities, maximize available resources, and better position the Brookings region to take advantage of opportunities and meet challenges now and into the future.

By approving the implementation plan, the council affirms its support to consider funding a merged organization in 2026. Staff recommends approval.

## **Item Details:**

In the process of developing the implementation plan, the merger committee has gathered information from the existing organizations, conducted an analysis of multiple peer communities, and solicited staff feedback through in-person interviews, forums, and electronic surveys. The committee also held a forum for board members and key stakeholders, presented preliminary information at the April 22, 2025 Brookings City Council meeting, and hosted a public open house on April 30, 2025.

The implementation plan includes a recommended organizational structure, potential staff positions, the membership and selection process for a new Board of Directors, and the hiring process and job responsibilities of new President/CEO to lead the merged organization.

A brief timeline of intended future milestones is outlined below:

- **May 13** – Council Approves the Implementation Plan
- **June 16** – Selection Committee Appoints New Board of Directors
- **June 30** – Four Existing Organizations Determine Participation in Merger
- **July/August** – Conduct Search Process for President/CEO
- **Fall** – President/CEO Begins Tenure
- **January 2026** – Launch of the Merged Organization

**Legal Consideration:**

None

**Strategic Plan Consideration:**

- Fiscal Responsibility – The City of Brookings will responsibly manage resources through transparency, efficiency, equity, and exceptional customer service.
- Safe, Inclusive, Connected Community – The City of Brookings will create an environment for inclusive programs, gathering places, and events where the community can safely live, work and come together to participate in opportunities for learning, recreation and enjoyment.
- Service and Innovation Excellence – The City of Brookings will provide an accessible environment committed to ongoing innovation and outstanding service through listening and engagement.
- Sustainability – The City of Brookings will meet environmental, community and economic desires and needs without compromising future generations' quality of life by strategically planning, implementing and maintaining infrastructure and facilities.
- Economic Growth – The City of Brookings will support effective diversified community investment and equitable opportunities for prosperity.

**Financial Consideration:**

The merger committee is requesting up to \$250,000 from the Economic Development Reserves Fund to support transition activities.

**Supporting Documentation:**

Draft Implementation Plan