



**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE MEETING  
MINUTES  
TUESDAY, JUNE 24, 2025**

---

**CALL TO ORDER**

The Columbia Economic Development & Infrastructure Committee conducted a meeting on Tuesday, June 24, 2025 at City Hall (Mayor’s Conference Room), 1737 Main Street, Second Floor, Columbia, South Carolina 29201. The Honorable Peter M. Brown, Chair called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m. and the following members were present:

<b>Attendee Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Status</b>
Peter M. Brown	Chair	Present
Will Brennan	Member	Present
Aditi Bussells	Member	Present

**PRESENTATIONS**

1. DESA, Inc. Update - Ms. Diane Sumpter, President & CEO – *Received as information.*

Ms. Diane Sumpter, President & CEO of DESA, Inc. provided an update on the firm’s work that focuses on being a driver of city growth. She outlined efforts to expand contracting access by streamlining procurement, accelerating business capacity, promoting access to capital, and strengthening the overall business ecosystem. Additional priorities include enhanced transparency and accountability through improved digital tools and an inclusive outreach campaign. She emphasized talent attraction and retention for the next generation. She noted that DESA will provide quarterly performance reports. DESA, Inc. has requested an annual budget of \$250,000 per year over a two-year period to support 2,496 direct labor hours, management and technical training services, and the implementation of a capacity-building, outreach, and equity initiative.

There was discussion about businesses working collaboratively in Columbia; modernizing procurement and payments; helping put Columbia in the forefront; tracking growth of prime subcontractors; and being future oriented.



**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE MEETING  
MINUTES  
TUESDAY, JUNE 24, 2025**

---

2. Boyd Innovation Center Update - Mr. Lanford Holloway, Board Member – *Received as information*

Mr. Lanford Holloway, Board Member for the Boyd Innovation Center outlined their primary goal of fostering entrepreneurship and helping small businesses grow by putting founders first. Key objectives for the fiscal year include creating new founders, supporting existing ones, and expanding the founder pipeline. He reported hosting over 150 events reaching 1,500 individuals and 20 businesses graduated from their six-week ColaStarts program. Boyd Innovation Center currently operates at 75% capacity in their Five Points location and plans to add a new row of office spaces. Challenges include increasing community support and engagement and refining success metrics to better evaluate and improve impact.

There was discussion about looking outside of Columbia for entrepreneurship; talent retention; increasing private sector support; adding Columbia Opportunity Resource to their tour; and working together as economic development partners for the City.

3. Columbia World Affairs Council Update - Mr. Dickson Monk, Executive Director - *Received as information*

Mr. Dickson Monk, Executive Director of the Columbia World Affairs Council highlighted key focus areas including business growth, talent retention, entrepreneurship, and enhancing Columbia's business-friendly environment. He shared recent and upcoming international engagement opportunities with delegations from Egypt and Botswana, as well as connections through sister city and diplomatic relationships with Ghana, the UK, and South Korea. Efforts are underway to establish a new sister city relationship with Naju, Korea, while celebrating 25 years with Kaiserslautern, Germany. Looking ahead to Fiscal Year 2025-2026, the World Affairs Council is prepared to support potential sister city and international network visits.

4. Central SC Alliance Update – Mr. Jason Guilletti, President & CEO – *Received as information*

Mr. Jason Guilletti, President & CEO of Central SC Alliance shared about the organization's shift from building momentum to executing with intention. Central SC Alliance closed the fiscal year with over 100 company leads and 12 marketing missions. He emphasized transparency, collaboration with the City, and a new five-

---



**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE MEETING  
MINUTES  
TUESDAY, JUNE 24, 2025**

---

step lead tracking system. Key focus areas include international outreach, real estate marketing, and targeted industry growth in finance, biotech, and insurance. He urged earlier engagement from the City to improve planning and support, and announced the launch of a regional strategic plan outlining sector-specific goals and key performance indicators.

There was discussion about recruiting associating companies; scheduling a work session; providing lead generation ideas to the committee; and Central SC providing a blueprint.

5. Columbia Opportunity Resource Update – Mr. Lee Goble, Chair – *Received as information*

Mr. Lee Goble, outgoing Board Chair of Columbia Opportunity Resource (COR), shared highlights from the past year, including membership growth, new interest groups, and expanded talent retention programs like *Crash Course Columbia* and *Capture Columbia*. Moving *Capture Columbia* to spring helped engage students from Benedict, Allen, and Columbia International University. COR's goals for Fiscal Year 25-26 include increasing membership, scaling retention programs, and hiring its first full-time staff member to address capacity limits. Performance will be tracked through membership numbers, program participation, and staffing progress. COR is planning for more community partnerships, including a *Table for Six* event with the Columbia World Affairs Council and a new local volunteer management platform.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:03 a.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Erika D. Moore Hammond, CMC, CPM  
City Clerk