



Economic Development and Infrastructure Committee Meeting Agenda

Tuesday, September 8, 2026 at 11:00 AM

City Hall • Mayor's Conference Room

1737 Main Street, 2nd Floor, Columbia, SC 29201

City Clerk's Office: (803)545-3045 or cityclerk@columbiasc.gov

The Honorable Peter M. Brown, District IV, Chair
The Honorable William Brennan, District III • The Honorable Tyler Bailey, At-Large

Call to Order

Approval of Minutes

1. August 25, 2026 Economic Development and Infrastructure Committee Meeting Minutes

Presentations from Economic Development Partners

2. Boyd Innovation Center Update – Mr. Sam Herskovitz, Executive Director
3. Greater Columbia Chamber of Commerce Update — Ms. Susan McPherson, Vice President, Small Business and Military Affairs
4. USC/Columbia Technology Incubator / The MIX Update – Mr. Rick Finch, Executive Director, The Midlands Innovation X-Change
5. Hardball Capital and Capital Improvements to Segra Park - Mr. Jason Frier, Chief Executive Officer / Hardball Capital and Mr. Brand Shank, Team President / Columbia Fireflies

Executive Session

6. Discussion of matters relating to the proposed location, expansion, or provision of services encouraging location or expansion of industries or other businesses in the area served by the public body pursuant to S.C. Code §30-4-70(a)(5)
 - *Project Kick*

Adjournment



Meeting Date: September 8, 2026

Department: City Clerk's Office

From:

August 25, 2026 Economic Development and Infrastructure Committee Meeting Minutes

Background Summary:

Attachments:

1. August 25, 2026 Economic Development and Infrastructure Committee Meeting Minutes



Economic Development and Infrastructure Committee Meeting Minutes Tuesday, August 25, 2026

Call to Order

The Columbia Economic Development and Infrastructure Committee conducted a meeting on Tuesday, August 25, 2026 at City Hall (Mayor's Conference Room), 1737 Main Street, Columbia, South Carolina 29201. The Honorable Peter M. Brown, Chair called the meeting to order at 11:05 a.m. and The Honorable Will Brennan was present. The Honorable Tyler D. Bailey participated remotely.

Approval of Minutes

1. August 4, 2026 Economic Development and Infrastructure Committee Meeting

Upon a motion made by Mr. Brennan and seconded by Mr. Bailey, the committee voted unanimously to approve the August 4, 2026 Economic Development and Infrastructure Committee Meeting Minutes.

Presentations from Economic Development Partners

2. City Center Partnership Update – Mr. Matt Kennell, President & CEO and Ms. Heather Spires, Vice President of Development & Administration

Mr. Matt Kennell, President and CEO presented the district's mission as creating a vibrant destination connecting downtown's offices, residents, students, and arts venues. He reported strong restaurant performance amid some retail decline and noted that downtown property values now exceed \$700 million. The resident population is projected to surpass 5,000 by 2028, which is expected to strengthen the retail environment. Key priorities include improvements within the Vista Business Improvement District, pedestrian enhancements, corridor connectivity, mixed-use development, and access to Finlay Park and addressing homelessness. He also announced the district's 25th Anniversary / Annual Meeting will be November 2026 and that they will be hosting the upcoming International Downtown Association (IDA) conference in May 2027.

There was discussion about strengthening communication between the City's outreach program with the Rapid Shelter and the Yellow Shirt Ambassadors to ensure effective engagement with unsheltered individuals.

3. Columbia World Affairs Council Update – Mr. Dickson Monk, Executive Director

Mr. Dickson Monk, Executive Director reported ongoing efforts to strengthen international connections and foster dialogue on global issues. He noted growth in the Sister Cities network and emphasized the role of subnational diplomacy in positioning Columbia as globally competitive and welcoming to businesses. He highlighted recent engagements with international partners and participation in regional alliances and global forums. He also described cultural and artistic exchanges, upcoming international events, and continued

collaboration opportunities. He acknowledged challenges related to funding and staffing as the organization expands its global work.

There was discussion about the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP); relationship building with the University of South Carolina; funding streams; additional grant opportunities; and the shift in State Department priorities.

4. DESA, Inc. Update - Ms. Diane Sumpter, President & CEO

Ms. Diane Sumpter, President and CEO reported receiving a City grant to expand small business capacity and entrepreneurial opportunities. She highlighted outcomes including \$4.5 million in awarded contracts, \$405,000 in capital improvements, one-on-one consulting for 43 businesses, and workshops reaching 187 participants. She highlighted M.E. Contracting and MSI Construction as success stories that demonstrate the program's impact. She emphasized the importance of supporting the next generation of businesses and fostering collaboration between established and emerging firms. She also summarized recent outreach and procurement forums, underscoring the value of mentorship and strategic partnerships despite funding and staffing challenges.

There was discussion about determining whether the City can track total contracted business activity within the City of Columbia, Richland County, and the State of South Carolina as a measurable data metric.

Committee Discussion

5. Commercial Development Incentive Program — Mr. Ryan Coleman, Director of Economic Development

Mr. Ryan Coleman, Director of Economic Development reported on the history and evolution of the Commercial Development Incentive Program, originally focused on student housing with a \$30 million minimum investment. He noted that the program was expanded in 2019 to support general commercial development, including hotels, multifamily, and mixed-use projects. Current incentives prioritize multifamily, mixed-use, workforce housing, full-service hotels, and certain private dormitories, while maintaining the long-standing \$30 million threshold. He clarified that there are no requirements for public infrastructure, geographic targeting, density minimums, or structured parking, though hotels must include at least 100 rooms, a full-service restaurant, room service, and meeting space. Developers are granted five years to complete projects following execution of an agreement with the county.

There was discussion about the potential pursuit of a full-service hybrid hotel; infrastructure commitments to investment; geographically tailored incentives; clearer criteria for project eligibility; validating long-term economic impact models; adapting incentives as downtown population and retail needs change; incorporating workforce housing, density, and public parking where appropriate; allowing flexible investment thresholds for transformative projects; and using general criteria with case-by-case adjustments and "other considerations" such as infrastructure needs.

Executive Session

Upon a motion made by Mr. Brennan and seconded by Mr. Bailey, the committee voted unanimously to enter into Executive Session at 12:23 p.m. for the discussion of **Item 6**.

6. Discussion of matters relating to the proposed location, expansion, or provision of services encouraging location or expansion of industries or other businesses in the area served by the public body pursuant to S.C. Code §30-4-70(a)(5)
 - 2725 Main Street
 - Project Capstone
 - Bull Street infrastructure

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Erika D. Moore Hammond, MMC, CPM
City Clerk



Meeting Date: September 8, 2026

Department: City Clerk's Office

From:

Greater Columbia Chamber of Commerce Update — Ms. Susan McPherson, Vice President, Small Business and Military Affairs

Background Summary:

Attachments:

None



Meeting Date: September 8, 2026

Department: City Clerk's Office

From:

USC/Columbia Technology Incubator / The MIX Update – Mr. Rick Finch, Executive Director, The Midlands Innovation X-Change

Background Summary:

Attachments:

None



Meeting Date: September 8, 2026

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From:

Hardball Capital and Capital Improvements to Segra Park - Mr. Jason Frier, Chief Executive Officer / Hardball Capital and Mr. Brand Shank, Team President / Columbia Fireflies

Background Summary:

Attachments:

None



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- *Project Kick*

Background Summary:

Attachments:

None