BROOKINGS REGIONAL GROWTH ALLIANCE

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Brookings Regional Housing Study & Needs Analysis

Issued by the Brookings Regional Growth Alliance

Serving the City of Brookings and Brookings County, South Dakota

Issue Date: October 15, 2026

Proposals Due: November 12, 2026, 4:30 PM Central Time

Brookings Regional Growth Alliance
416 3rd St, Brookings, SD 57006
growthalliance.org

Section 1: General Information

The Brookings Regional Growth Alliance is soliciting proposals from qualified consulting firms to complete a comprehensive Housing Study & Needs Analysis for the City of Brookings and Brookings County, South Dakota. The Growth Alliance is the regional organization responsible for community and economic development, housing, and workforce initiatives in the Brookings area, and is issuing this Request for Proposals (RFP) as the sole contracting party for this engagement.

This study builds on the 2022 Brookings County Housing Study prepared by RDG Planning & Design for the Brookings Economic Development Corporation (BEDC), and is intended to update, deepen, and extend that analysis to reflect current conditions and the Growth Alliance's evolving regional priorities.

Contract Administration

All questions, correspondence, and proposal submittals regarding this RFP shall be directed to:

Kirsten Gjesdal
Community Development Director
Brookings Regional Growth Alliance
416 3rd Street, Brookings, SD 57006
kirsten@growthalliance.org | (605) 692-8922

Substantive questions should be submitted in writing at least five (5) business days before the proposal deadline. Responses will be issued as a written addendum to all firms known to have received the RFP.

Acceptance of Proposal Contents

The contents of the selected proposal will become part of the resulting contract. The Growth Alliance reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to waive minor informalities, and to negotiate final scope and terms with the selected firm prior to contract execution. The Growth Alliance assumes no liability for costs incurred by any firm in preparing a response to this RFP.

Section 2: Regional Background

Brookings County is located in eastern South Dakota, approximately 58 miles north of Sioux Falls and 210 miles southwest of Minneapolis-St. Paul. The County's estimated 2025 population is approximately 37,600, with roughly 25,300 residents in the City of Brookings, the county seat and largest city. Brookings is home to South Dakota State University (SD State), the state's largest university, with a fall 2026 headcount of 11,901 students — a major driver of both housing demand and the local economy.

Brookings County includes the following incorporated communities, all of which fall within or on the border of the study area: Arlington, Aurora, Bruce, Bushnell, Elkton, Sinai, Volga, and White, in addition to the City of Brookings.

A significant share of the regional workforce, including SD State employees, manufacturing and industry employees, and healthcare workers, commutes into Brookings from surrounding communities and rural areas. Understanding housing conditions across the wider county — not

just within Brookings city limits — is essential to understanding the region's labor market and growth capacity.

Brookings has known development constraints, including a high water table and flood-plain areas that limit or add cost to development in parts of the community. The consultant should account for these constraints in identifying developable land and feasible growth areas.

Section 3: Project Purpose & Overview

The purpose of this study is to give Brookings Regional Growth Alliance, the City of Brookings, Brookings County, area municipalities, employers, and community stakeholders a current, data-driven understanding of the regional housing market: what exists today, what is missing, and what is needed to support continued growth. The study will help the Growth Alliance connect near-term housing outputs to the region's longer-term community and economic development priorities and will provide a factual and analytical foundation for future housing policy, investment, and partnership decisions.

The study should, at minimum, help answer the following questions:

- What are the demographic and economic characteristics of households living in Brookings and Brookings County today, and how are they projected to change over the next 5, 10, and 15 years?
- What is the current housing stock (by type, tenure, age, condition, and value), and where are the gaps between supply and demand across income levels and household types?
- What unmet housing demand exists today, and what is projected through 2037, for ownership and rental housing, including workforce, entry-level, senior, family, and student housing?
- How does SD State's student population affect the rental market, housing pricing, and neighborhood livability in Brookings?
- How does commuting to Brookings for work from surrounding communities affect housing demand both inside and outside city limits?
- What barriers (land availability, infrastructure, water table/flood plain, development cost, lot supply, financing) are constraining housing production, and where are the opportunities?
- What strategies, policies, incentive tools, and partnerships should Brookings Regional Growth Alliance, the City of Brookings, Brookings County, and area communities pursue to close identified housing gaps?
- What are the most viable near-term (1–5 year) and longer-term (5–15 year) priorities for public and private investment in housing?

Section 4: Study Area

The base study area is the City of Brookings and Brookings County as a whole, including the incorporated communities of Arlington, Aurora, Bruce, Bushnell, Elkton, Sinai, Volga, and White. The study should give appropriate weight to the relationship between the City of Brookings and the

surrounding county, given the significant number of workers who commute into Brookings from other county communities and rural areas.

County communities may separately elect to fund a deeper, community-specific analysis of their own housing market as an optional add-on (see Section 6). The base scope described in Section 5 must still address county-wide conditions at a level sufficient to identify gaps and opportunities in each community, regardless of whether that community opts into the deeper add-on.

Section 5: Scope of Services — Base Study

The consultant may propose its own methodology, but the final study must, at minimum, quantify and map the elements below using current, cited data sources. All findings should be organized so that data can be viewed at both the county level and the individual-community level.

5.1 Data, Trends & Demographic Analysis

- Demographic and economic profile: population, age cohorts, household size and composition, income distribution, and projected change over 5-, 10-, and 15-year horizons, for the City of Brookings, Brookings County as a whole, and each incorporated community.
- Employment and commuting analysis: major employers, labor-shed mapping, commuting patterns into and out of Brookings, and the relationship between employment growth and housing demand.
- Existing housing stock inventory: by tenure, structure type, age, condition, value/rent, and vacancy rate, mapped geographically at the neighborhood and community level.
- Sales activity and building permit history for at least the past five years, including type of unit, buyer type, and price points.
- Rental market analysis: existing rental inventory, rents, vacancy, and amenities across price tiers, with specific attention to the impact of the student rental market on pricing and availability for non-student households.
- Housing affordability analysis: cost burden (owner and renter), value-to-income and loan-to-income ratios, and comparison to relevant peer communities.
- Senior/55+ housing and special-needs housing analysis, including existing inventory and projected demand.

5.2 Unmet Needs & Gap Analysis

- Quantified estimate of current and projected unmet housing demand (5-, 10-, and 15-year horizons) by tenure (own/rent), income tier, and housing type, for the City of Brookings and Brookings County overall.
- Identification of the number and type of housing units the region can support and should target adding within each horizon.
- Identification of specific gaps by community, sufficient for each county community to understand its own housing position within the regional picture, to the extent that data is available and reliable.

- Analysis of whether recent construction activity (by type and price point) is addressing — or failing to address — identified demand gaps.

5.3 Development Conditions & Barriers

- Analysis of development constraints specific to Brookings, including the high water table, flood-plain limitations, and other cost or regulatory barriers to housing production.
- Assessment of available and developable land, infrastructure capacity, and lot supply/cost.
- Review of current zoning, subdivision, and building code provisions that help or hinder the housing types most needed in the region, with recommended adjustments.
- Comparative overview of financing and incentive tools used in peer South Dakota and regional Midwest communities, and an assessment of which tools are realistic for Brookings-area jurisdictions to pursue.

5.4 Strategy & Recommendations

- A general strategy matrix identifying priority actions, responsible parties, general timeframe, and relative cost/effort — organized by near-term (1–5 year) and longer-term (5–15 year) horizons.
- Recommended housing types and price points to prioritize for the region and for the City of Brookings specifically, tied back to the gap analysis.
- Recommended roles for Brookings Regional Growth Alliance, the City of Brookings, Brookings County, area communities, SD State, employers, and the lending and development community in advancing housing priorities.
- Identification of which housing types/price points are unlikely to be built without some form of public or philanthropic support ("but-for" analysis), versus those the private market can deliver on its own.

5.5 Mapping & GIS

- GIS-based maps illustrating housing stock, vacancy, affordability, tenure, age of structure, and opportunity/constraint areas at the county and community level, consistent with the mapping approach used in the 2022 Brookings County Housing Study.

Section 6: Optional Add-On Scope — Community Deep-Dive Profiles

Beyond the county-wide base scope, individual Brookings County communities may choose to fund a more detailed, community-specific deep dive as an optional add-on to the base contract. This is being offered to the following communities that wish to participate and commit funding: Arlington, Aurora, Bruce, Bushnell, Elkton, Sinai, Volga, and White.

Consultants should propose a per-community cost for this add-on. The deep-dive add-on should include, at minimum:

- A community-specific housing profile (stock, condition, demand, and affordability) at a level of detail beyond what the base county-wide scope provides.

- Targeted stakeholder engagement and a listening session specific to that community.
- Community-specific recommendations and priority actions, sized appropriately to that community's capacity and resources.

Proposals should clearly separate the base scope cost from the per-community add-on cost and should note whether/how the per-community cost changes if multiple communities opt in (e.g., shared engagement trips, economies of scale).

Section 7: Community Engagement

Community and stakeholder engagement is a required component of this study, not an optional add-on to the base scope. At minimum, the consultant will:

- Design, distribute, and analyze a community-wide public survey covering both the City of Brookings and Brookings County.
- Conduct stakeholder interviews and/or listening sessions with a cross-section of the community, which should include (at minimum) the City of Brookings, Brookings County, SD State, area employers, realtors/developers, lenders, and nonprofit/affordable housing providers.
- Present preliminary findings to Brookings Regional Growth Alliance and community stakeholders for feedback before the report is finalized.
- Deliver a final public presentation of the completed study.

Timing consideration: Brookings' population and housing perceptions are heavily influenced by SD State's roughly 12,000 students. To maximize the accuracy and reach of the survey and listening sessions, the Growth Alliance strongly prefers that the primary public engagement window occur while SD State is in session — generally September through April, excluding the mid-December through mid-January winter break. The consultant should propose an engagement schedule that fits within this window; Brookings Regional Growth Alliance is open to the consultant's recommendation on the specific timing within it.

Section 8: Deliverables

- A polished, public-facing final report suitable for presentation to the Growth Alliance board, City Council, County Commission, and the general public — visually rich, with maps, charts, and plain-language summaries.
- A companion technical/internal document or appendix containing the full underlying data, methodology, and analysis, for internal Growth Alliance and staff use.
- An executive summary and a public presentation deck (electronic file).
- Five (5) bound hard copies of the final public-facing report, plus a fully editable electronic file (Word/InDesign source or equivalent) and PDF of both the public report and technical appendix.

All deliverables, data, and work products become the property of the Brookings Regional Growth Alliance upon final payment.

Section 9: Project Schedule

Brookings Regional Growth Alliance anticipates approximately one year from the proposal deadline to final report presentation. The schedule below is preliminary; we welcome the consultant's recommended refinements in its proposal, particularly regarding the community engagement window described in Section 7.

Milestone	Target Date
RFP issued	October 15, 2026
Proposals due	November 12, 2026
Proposal review & (if needed) finalist interviews	November 13 – December 11, 2026
Consultant selection / notification (contingent on funding)	Mid-December 2026
Contract execution	December 2026 – January 2027
Project kickoff meeting	Late January 2027
Data collection, market analysis, and GIS mapping	February – April 2027
Public survey & primary stakeholder engagement	February – April 2027
Preliminary findings presented to Brookings Regional Growth Alliance	May 2027
Draft report review	June – August 2027
Final report delivery & public presentation	By End of August 2027

Section 10: Budget

Proposals must include a firm "not-to-exceed" total cost for the base scope of services (Section 5). Cost will be evaluated alongside qualifications, approach, and overall value — not as the sole determining factor.

In addition to the base scope, proposals should include a separate, clearly itemized not-to-exceed cost for the optional per-community deep-dive add-on described in Section 6, and should note how that per-community cost would change depending on how many communities ultimately participate.

Cost proposals should include, at minimum:

- Not-to-exceed total cost for the base scope (Sections 5.1–5.5).
- Not-to-exceed per-community add-on cost (Section 6).
- Hourly rates for all personnel expected to work on the project, to govern any additional services requested beyond the scope of this RFP.

- Any reimbursable expenses, itemized by category.

Section 11: Proposal Submission Requirements

Proposals should be organized as follows:

- Cover Letter — signed by an authorized officer of the firm, including a primary point of contact.
- Firm Qualifications & Experience — firm history, relevant expertise, and examples of comparable housing studies completed for communities similar to Brookings (college towns, county-wide studies, or communities with a significant commuting workforce are especially relevant).
- Project Team — identification of the project manager, principal in charge, and all key personnel, with relevant resumes and roles; identify any subconsultants.
- Proposed Approach & Work Plan — description of methodology for each task area in Section 5, including how the community engagement described in Section 7 will be structured and timed.
- References — at least three references from comparable recent projects, with contact information.
- Work Samples — at least two recent, comparable housing study deliverables.
- Project Schedule — a detailed proposed schedule from contract execution through final delivery.
- Cost Proposal — as described in Section 10.

Section 12: Selection Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated by Growth Alliance staff and reviewed with input from the board and funding partners. Selection will be based on the following, with cost considered alongside overall value:

- Understanding of the project and quality of the proposed technical approach.
- Relevant experience with comparable communities (college towns, county-wide studies, commuter-driven housing markets) and quality of past work samples.
- Qualifications and availability of the proposed project team.
- Demonstrated approach to meaningful community and stakeholder engagement.
- Realistic, well-organized project schedule aligned with the Growth Alliance timeline and engagement-window preferences.
- Overall value of services proposed relative to the not-to-exceed cost.

Section 13: General Terms & Conditions

- Brookings Regional Growth Alliance reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, or to waive minor informalities, if doing so is in our best interest.
- Brookings Regional Growth Alliance assumes no liability for any costs incurred by a firm in preparing or submitting a proposal.
- Selection of a proposal does not constitute acceptance of all its terms; final scope, schedule, and cost are subject to negotiation prior to contract execution.
- Subcontracting is permitted for discrete tasks but must be disclosed in the proposal; the selected firm remains the sole point of contact and responsible party for the contract.
- All data, reports, maps, and work products developed under the resulting contract become the property of Brookings Regional Growth Alliance.
- This RFP and the successful proposal, in their entirety, will form the basis of the resulting contract.

Section 14: Submission Instructions

Proposals must be submitted no later than 4:30 PM Central Time on November 12, 2026 to:

Kirsten Gjesdal, Community Development Director
Brookings Regional Growth Alliance
416 3rd Street, Brookings, SD 57006
kirsten@growthalliance.org | (605) 692-8922

Please submit one (1) electronic PDF copy via email, and three (3) hard copies to the address above. Proposals should be labeled "RFP Response — Brookings Regional Housing Study & Needs Analysis."

Question & Answer

Q: Is there is a not-to-exceed budget amount?

A: We anticipate a base project budget of approximately $60,000–$70,000, excluding optional community-specific assessments. This is a target range rather than a firm not-to-exceed amount. Proposals exceeding this range may be considered, but cost will be a factor in the selection process. Consultants should provide separate pricing for optional community-specific assessments, which will be dependent on additional funding commitments from participating communities.

Q: What changes in housing conditions, development activity, or regional priorities since the 2022 Brookings County Housing Study prompted BRGA to update it?

A: The 2022 Brookings Housing Study projected that Brookings County would gain 3,557 residents between 2020 and 2030 and recommended the construction of 1,346 additional housing units within the City of Brookings to accommodate anticipated growth.

Since 2020, the county's population has increased by approximately 9.5%, from 34,375 to an estimated 37,635 residents, representing an increase of 3,260 people. During that same period, 954 new housing units of various types and price points have been completed within the City of Brookings. These figures represent more than 90% of the projected countywide population growth and more than 70% of the recommended city housing construction, with several years remaining in the original projection period.

Additionally, the City of Brookings has implemented zoning changes and introduced incentives intended to encourage investment in workforce and affordable housing.

These developments, along with changing housing costs and evolving community needs, have prompted us to seek updated projections and a more comprehensive understanding of housing demand, affordability, and gaps in the existing housing stock throughout Brookings County. The updated study is intended to provide a current, countywide foundation for future housing planning and investment decisions.

Q: Are there recent or proposed housing projects that BRGA would like us to examine to understand development barriers and whether new housing meets identified needs?

A: We welcome recommendations from the selected consultant regarding developments, housing strategies, and barriers that warrant further examination throughout Brookings County. However, we have identified several recent and ongoing developments that may provide useful case studies for understanding development barriers, financing tools, and how new housing construction is responding to community needs.

- Branch Creek Development: This development utilizes tax increment financing (TIF) and HUD grant funding to help offset infrastructure costs. Developers also worked with the City of Brookings on zoning adjustments to accommodate housing eligible for South Dakota's First-Time Homebuyer programs. The development is anticipated to include more than 100 owner-occupied housing units constructed between 2024 and 2029.

- Trails Head Development: This development also utilizes TIF, with development agreement provisions addressing area median income, a mix of unit sizes and price points, ground-level amenities, and retail opportunities.
- 6th Street Corridor: Several mixed-use developments along 6th Street provide additional examples of efforts to introduce housing alongside commercial uses.

Beyond new construction, we are also interested in exploring opportunities and barriers related to rehabilitation and reinvestment in existing housing stock, particularly within aging neighborhoods in Brookings.

Q: Should the study treat communities outside Brookings mainly as separate housing markets, or also assess their role in meeting Brookings-area workforce housing needs across the regional commuting area?

A: We would like the study to consider both perspectives. While communities throughout Brookings County have their own industries, employers, and housing needs, we recognize that many individuals working in the City of Brookings choose to live in surrounding communities based on housing affordability, availability, and personal or family preferences.

The study should assess these communities as part of an interconnected regional housing and commuting market while also recognizing their unique characteristics, strengths, and development opportunities. We are interested in understanding both how these communities contribute to meeting regional workforce housing needs and how their individual housing markets can support local growth and vitality.

Q: Beyond South Dakota State students' effects on rental demand, rents, and vacancy, what student-housing issues should the study explore—for example, competition with workforce households, neighborhood impacts, or how purpose-built student housing affects the broader rental market?

A: We are interested in understanding how SDState's student housing needs and preferences influence the broader housing market in Brookings, particularly regarding rental availability, affordability, and neighborhood stability.

Specific areas of interest include the presence of student rentals in established residential neighborhoods, particularly the conversion or use of single-family homes as student rental properties, and the potential impacts on neighborhood character, cohesion, and long-term housing availability for non-student households.

We would also like to better understand how the university's academic calendar influences rental availability and leasing practices, including lease start and end dates, short-term rental availability, and subleasing opportunities, and how these factors affect both students and the broader rental market.

Additionally, the study should consider recent and planned investments in on-campus student housing and how changes in university housing capacity and student preferences may influence demand for off-campus housing, including purpose-built student developments and traditional rental properties. SDState's 2024 Campus Master Plan also identifies a potential need for approximately 500 additional on-campus beds, primarily in suite-style and apartment-style accommodations. We are interested in understanding how such investments could influence the

broader rental market and housing availability for non-student households, and recommendations for how to address potential challenges or opportunities of these influences.

Q: Have any of the eight eligible communities expressed interest in the optional deep dives? How many should proposers plan for when estimating staffing, travel, and schedules?
A: We anticipate that approximately 4–5 of the eight eligible communities may elect to participate in the optional community-level assessments. However, participation has not yet been confirmed and will depend on individual community interest and available funding. Proposals should clearly identify the scope and cost of each optional community assessment to allow flexibility based on final participation.

Q: Clarification is needed regarding the 5-, 10-, and 15-year Under Section 3 Project Purpose, the third point mentions the study should identify unmet housing demand through 2037, but elsewhere throughout the RFP there are mentions of housing demand out 15 years (2042). Please clarify which planning horizon you want addressed in the study?
A: We would like the study to include housing demand projections at 5-, 10-, and 15-year intervals, consistent with Sections 5.1 and 5.2 of the RFP. The primary planning horizon for detailed analysis and actionable recommendations should extend through 2037, with broader, regional-level projections and strategic considerations extending through 2042.

Q: Arlington crosses over into Kingsbury County. Do you want the study to be limited to just Brookings County, or would you prefer to include Arlington in its entirety (including the portion located outside of the County)?
A: We would like the study to include the City of Arlington in its entirety, including the portion located within Kingsbury County. This will allow for a more complete assessment of Arlington's housing conditions and needs.

Q: For assessing developable land, would we have access to city engineers or other sources of accurate data on water table/constraints? Would we have access to city and county parcel data?
A: Yes, this information would be provided.

Q: In Section 9: Project Schedule, the Brookings Regional Growth Alliance anticipates approximately one year from the proposal deadline to final report presentation. However, the target date for the final report delivery and public presentation is by the end of August 2027. Can you confirm that August 2027 is the target for the final report delivery and public presentation?
A: The timeline outlined in Section 9 is preliminary and intended to provide a starting point for proposers. While August 2027 is the initial target for final report delivery and presentation, we're open to consultant recommendations for a realistic project schedule that allows sufficient time for data collection, community engagement, analysis, and report development. Our preference is to have the study completed within the 2027 calendar year, with final report delivery and public presentation occurring no later than December 2027. Proposers are encouraged to recommend a timeline that best supports a thorough and effective study.

Q: Are the stakeholder interviews and/or listening sessions anticipated to be conducted in person, virtually, or a hybrid?

A: We are open to a hybrid approach that includes both virtual and in-person engagement. However, we consider in-person visits and engagement an important component of understanding the community and its housing needs. In-person sessions are preferred for engagement activities where face-to-face interaction can encourage participation and meaningful dialogue. Proposers are encouraged to recommend an approach that balances accessibility, effectiveness, and cost constraints.

Q: Should the zoning and code review cover only the City of Brookings, or also Brookings County and each incorporated community?

A: The base study should include a comprehensive review of zoning and development regulations within the City of Brookings, along with a broader assessment of regulatory barriers and development conditions throughout Brookings County and its incorporated communities. A detailed, community-specific zoning and code review would only be expected for communities that elect to participate in the optional deep-dive assessments. For the base study, we would like consultants to identify significant regulatory barriers or opportunities affecting housing development across the region without requiring a comprehensive review of each individual community's ordinances.

Q: For work scope task 5.2, bullet #1 identifies the City of Brookings and Brookings County only and bullet #2 refers to the region. Should the work scope include estimating projected housing demand for the 8 other cities? Do the RFP's references to the region mean Brookings County or a larger region?

A: The base study is countywide and should assess housing conditions, needs, gaps, and development opportunities throughout the county, to the extent supported by available and reliable data. Detailed, quantified housing demand projections are required for the City of Brookings and Brookings County as a whole but are not required individually for each of the eight smaller communities. More detailed, community-specific analysis would be included in the optional deep-dive assessments for communities that elect to participate.

Q: For work scope task 5.3, the bullet #1 describes an analysis of development constraints specific to Brookings. Is task 5.3 needed for the City of Brookings only, not the County and the smaller cities?

A: Task 5.3 should address development conditions and barriers throughout Brookings County, with the most detailed analysis focused on the City of Brookings. For the smaller incorporated communities and unincorporated areas of the county, the base study should provide a broader assessment of significant development constraints and opportunities, including infrastructure capacity, land availability, and other barriers that may affect housing development. More detailed, community-specific analysis of development conditions and regulatory barriers would be included in the optional deep-dive assessments for participating communities. The level of analysis should be appropriate to each community's size, development activity, and available data.

Q: For work scope task 5.5, is the intent to add GIS-based mapping for the county level and the four additional small cities to the Opportunities chapter in the 2022 Housing Study? Is the intent to add GIS-based mapping for housing stock and vacancy at the US Census block group level? It looks like the current plan includes mapping for affordability, tenure, and age of structure.

A: We would like the updated study to include GIS-based mapping of housing conditions, development opportunities, and constraints throughout Brookings County and its incorporated communities. The intent is not necessarily to replicate or expand the Opportunities chapter of the 2022 study, but to provide an updated geographic understanding of housing needs and opportunities across the region. Extensive parcel-level or neighborhood-level mapping for each smaller community is not required as part of the base study, but may be included in the optional community deep-dive assessments.

The intent is to include GIS-based mapping of housing stock and vacancy, in addition to affordability, tenure, and age of structure, as outlined in Section 5.5. Census block group-level mapping may be appropriate where reliable data are available, but is not specifically required. We welcome the consultant's recommendations on the most appropriate geographic scale and mapping methodology to identify meaningful patterns at the county and community levels.