



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."