



Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development

Economic Development Division

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**TO: Economic Development Committee (EDC)
Vending Oversight Committee (VOC)
Common Council Executive Committee (CCEC)**

FROM: Matthew B. Mikolajewski, Economic Development Director

SUBJECT: EDC – VOC Merger (Legistar #86658)

DATE: August 18, 2025

On March 11, 2025, the Common Council directed staff to develop an Ordinance that would merge the Economic Development Committee and Vending Oversight Committee into a single new Committee. The purpose of this memo is to outline what such a merger might look like for consideration by the two existing Committees and the Common Council Executive Committee. Based on the feedback provided, the City Attorney's Office will draft the formal Ordinance change for referral and approval by the Common Council.

Proposed Timeline

August 20, 2025 – Review of memo/discussion with Economic Development Committee

August 27, 2025 – Review of memo/discussion with Vending Oversight Committee

September 2, 2025 – Review of memo/discussion with Common Council Executive Committee

September/October 2025 – City Attorney's Office to draft new Ordinance

November/December 2025 – Common Council approval of new Ordinance with referrals to EDC/VOC/CCEC

January/February 2026 – Common Council approval of appointments to new Committee

February 18 or 25, 2026 – Effective date and first meeting of new Committee; EDC and VOC formally dissolved after first meeting of new Committee

Committee Name

The proposed name of the new Committee is the “Business and Economic Resources Committee (BERC).”

Committee Membership

To maintain continuity during this transition, initial membership of the BERC will include some members of the existing EDC and VOC, selected and appointed by the Mayor.

Recurring Meeting Date

The Economic Development Committee currently meets at 5:00 on the 3rd Wednesday of every month. The Vending oversight Committee currently meets at 5:00 on the last Wednesday of every month. As the Mayor considers appointments to the BERC, the availability of potential members on the 3rd, 4th, or last Wednesday of every month will help to determine whether the BERC meets on the 3rd, 4th, or last Wednesday.

Draft Concepts for new Ordinance Language

Following is a draft list of features of the new Business and Economic Resources Committee. It would incorporate and combine some, but not all, elements of the existing ordinances for the Economic Development Committee and Vending Oversight Committee. This is a simplified list for the purpose of discussion. After we have gathered feedback, staff will meet with the City Attorney’s Office to draft a formal proposed Ordinance for introduction to the Common Council, with referral to EDC, VOC, and CCEC, and adoption by the Council.

DRAFT ORDINANCE ELEMENTS FOR DISCUSSION:

Composition. The Committee shall consist of eleven (11) voting members: one (1) Mayor Designee, one (1) Alderperson from a Downtown Aldermanic District, two (2) Alderpersons from Aldermanic Districts elsewhere in the City, and seven (7) Resident Members with knowledge and/or experience related to business, real estate, or workforce development. In addition, the Committee shall consist of up to three (3) non-voting Technical Advisors who must hold an active street vending or sidewalk café license. Non-voting Technical Advisors will be available at meetings to answer questions and participate in discussions but will not count towards a quorum of the Committee. The Mayor shall appoint all voting and non-voting members of the Committee subject to confirmation by the Common Council, with the exception of the Mayor Designee who shall serve at pleasure of the Mayor.

The Mayor Designee shall serve at the pleasure of the Mayor, with a term ending with the Mayor’s term in office. All other voting and non-voting members of the Committee shall have staggered three-year terms, commencing on May 1st and expiring on April 30th. Except that when the Committee is initially created, three (3) Resident Members and one (1) Technical Advisor shall have an initial term commencing upon creation of the

Committee and concluding on April 30, 2029, two (2) Resident Members and one (1) Technical Advisor shall have an initial term commencing upon creation of the Committee and concluding on April 30, 2028, and two (2) Resident Members and one (1) Technical Advisor shall have an initial term commencing upon the creation of the Committee and concluding on April 30, 2027. The terms of Alderpersons shall begin and end on the third Tuesday of every April.

A Chairperson and Vice Chairperson shall be elected annually at the May Committee meeting by the voting members of the Committee. The Committee shall be staffed by the Economic Development Division Director, or their designee.

Duties and Responsibilities. The Business and Economic Resources Committee shall:

- (a) Assist City officials and staff in promoting a healthy economy in which businesses can locate, open and expand, and in which all residents have access to living wage jobs and the ability to build generational wealth.
- (b) Assist City officials and staff in promoting economic investment throughout the City, including supporting small business development in all of the City's neighborhood commercial districts.
- (c) Make recommendations to the Mayor and the Common Council on street vending (food, merchant, art and craft, etc.), sidewalk/roadway cafés, business, real estate, economic development, workforce development, and any other matters assigned to the Committee by ordinance.
- (d) Have at least one voting member participate in the annual food cart review.
- (e) At least once every ten (10) years, receive and consider an Economic Development Plan ("ED Plan") prepared by Economic Development Division staff identifying policies, programs, and projects needed by the City to promote a healthy economy. After review and revision by the Committee, the ED Plan shall be submitted to the Common Council for approval. The ED Plan should include:
 - 1. Current business, real estate, and demographic data.
 - 2. An evaluation of current City policies, programs, and projects related to economic development.
 - 3. Recommendations of possible changes to, as well as new, programs, policies, and projects needed to achieve the City's economic development goals.
- (f) Act on matters of the Committee's jurisdiction as set forth in Secs. 9.13, 9.135, 9.136, and 9.54, the regulations promulgated under Secs. 9.13 and 9.136, and any other regulations or procedures relating to street vending, sidewalk/roadway cafes, and T, E, and M permits within the City.
- (g) Conduct hearings and miscellaneous proceedings as required by Secs. 9.13, 9.135 and 9.136 related to street vending.

- (h) Consider and provide recommendations regarding proposed ordinance changes under the Committee's jurisdiction.
 - (i) Ensure a venue for public input into street vending regulations within the City, including an avenue for street vending and sidewalk/roadway café license holders to appeal administrative decisions.
 - (j) Provide the community with a public forum for information sharing and discussion about the work of the City's Economic Development Division.
- (5) Rules of Procedure. The Committee shall meet once a month.

The Committee may adopt other rules of procedure which may from time to time be amended by the Committee. Such rules may include provision for delegation of the powers and responsibilities of the Committee to a Subcommittee or Subcommittees composed exclusively of Committee members.

Additional Ordinance Changes

In addition to adopting a new Ordinance to create the Business and Economic Resources Committee, other changes will be needed:

- Existing section 9.12 and 33.07 will be repealed.
- References to the VOC and EDC throughout existing ordinances will be amended to name the new Business and Economic Resources Committee, where appropriate.
- It may be advantageous to shift some current responsibilities of the Vending Oversight Committee identified in existing ordinances to City staff. For example, the Vending Oversight Committee is currently responsible for approving the location of specialized vending areas (such as the State Street Mall/Capitol Concourse Area, Southeast Campus Vending Area, etc.) as well as approving individual vending locations within these areas. While the BERC approval of the boundary of a specialized vending area is likely warranted, it might be more efficient moving forward for approval of individual vending site locations to be made by the Street Vending Supervisor, potentially with the ability of vendors to appeal decisions to the BERC.

In addition to merging the two exiting committees into one new Business and Economic Resources Committee, staff are interested in your input on this and other potential shifts of responsibility from the new BERC to staff.