



## **CITY COUNCIL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE AGENDA REPORT**

**Meeting Date: April 24, 2025**

**From: Mitch Bull – Economic Development Director**

**Subject: Proposal to rebrand the Economic Development Department as the Economic Vitality Office. (EVO)**

### **Background:**

As part of the goal setting of the City Council in 2016, Economic Development was highlighted as one of the major areas for improvement. The Economic Development Department was created in a more formal way, expanding the part-time hours that I was working (in tandem with my duties as the President/CEO Brisbane Chamber of the of Commerce). Upon my “retirement” from the Chamber in 2019, the hours were expanded to create the stand-alone department that currently exists.

Over the years, the department has been actively involved with Economic Development, real estate procurement and liquidation, and the initial point of contact for anyone who wishes to conduct business within the City of Brisbane. We have represented the city throughout the region and state through attendance at numerous Progress Seminars, visits to legislative days in Sacramento, and as a representative to SAMCEDA and the California Economic Development Association (CALED).

With the changing of the City Manager’s office the Economic Development department has also been more cohesively involved with other city initiatives such as emergency planning, community development planning and sustainability. While we have had some success, such as the ATM installation at City Hall, we were involved, but ultimately failing to secure (currently) as replacement banking tenant for the former B of A site. We have also assisted the City Manager’s office in securing the lease for 25 Park Place and the sale of excess parcels on McClain St.

### **Discussion:**

Economic and Business Development has long had connotations of just filling buildings with tenants or building new structures on vacant or stressed properties. When one says the word “development” the immediate response is that a “developer” is going to do something; and the connotation is usually negative.

Economic Vitality is a concept that goes beyond signing leases and filling buildings but is a collaboration between city staff, community members, and business partners to enhance the economic stability of the city and improve the quality of life. It is more of a holistic concept that encompasses the integration of economics, environmental stewardship, sustainability, planning and communication as a total package. The Economic Vitality Office (EVO) will also be involved in

promoting workforce development and be an advocate for economic opportunity options available at a local, state and federal level.

The goal is a more engaged and complimentary solution that will result in economic growth, a continued strengthening of the city/business/citizen dynamic and a better marketing of the city in the regional outlook for potential businesses that are looking to locate to the SF Bay Area. entrepreneurship and sustainability.

*How is the EVO different than the Brisbane Chamber?*

The Brisbane Chamber is a 501c6 trade organization that focuses on enhancing and improving the economy of Brisbane and their member businesses and organizations. The Economic Vitality Office is a city staff department that will continue to work hand in hand with the Chamber but will have a broader action plan and reach, as the department will focus on larger city and regional issues, trends and policy solutions. Both organizations will continue to promote the City of Brisbane and the efforts of both organizations will continue to create an environment where the businesses, the citizens and the community thrive.

*Does this rebranding constitute a change in the focus of what the Economic Development Department has been doing over the past 7 years?*

No, the rebrand, while adding additional components, is a way to better explain and market the efforts and goals of the department. It's not just about filling spaces, but a mindful, planned response to strengthen and expand the economic vitality of the city. It will also provide a clear pathway for sharing communications and resources in areas such as marketing, communications, sustainability, emergency planning, city planning and other resources.

**Fiscal Impact:**

Minimal, at this time, (reprinting of business cards / website update). Future programs may involve "Businesses of the Year "awards, joint advertising campaigns with developers and media (e.g. San Francisco Business Times; Site Selector) to promote our city and highlight available business opportunities.

- |  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| • Small Business Grants  | \$ Future TBD     |
| • Advertising in trade journals / websites   | \$. TBD           |
| • Webpage Development  | \$ TBD (in house) |
| • Business of the Year awards: Home Business, Small Business, Large Business, Restaurant/Retail Business |                   |

**Measure of Success:**

Staff will base the success of the Economic Vitality Office (EVO) rollout on the following: Number of clicks on our webpage, Surveys that we will conduct to gauge client and citizen recognition of the EVO office and programs, increase on business activity in leasing and interactions with our partners in real estate, site development and leasing, and other interactions with our commissions, committees, and citizen groups.

**Expected Results and Measurements:**

- Visibility – Website Traffic results / Business Journal adv response
- Room Night uptick within Brisbane hotels
- Retention of Businesses / New Businesses
- Surveys of Business and Citizens on EVO efforts

**Recommendation:**

The recommendation is to approve a rebranding of the current Economic Development Department into the Economic Vitality Office (EVO). The EVO will continue to be the primary point of contact for businesses and entrepreneurs looking to do business in the city. We will continue to provide needed information and connections to city staff and resources throughout the county and state.

**Major Programs and Initiatives:**

- Employer Interviews: we have started to conduct employer interviews with some of our major businesses and have gained valuable feedback on city services, business needs and concerns.
  - We will be continuing this and expanding the reach.
- Continue to monitor business and industry trends
- Program recommendations, as fiscally appropriate, to enhance the environments of Visitacion Avenue, Brisbane Village, Shopping Center, Crocker Park, Sierra Point and the Brisbane Technology Park. From lighting, parking, zoning and land use the aforementioned business areas are critical to Brisbane's economic fortunes. They may require different solutions, in order to maximize the impact on the revenue that each sector can potentially generate.
- Develop and implement a business retention / business excellence and incubator strategy to link our citizens with business that support the economy
- Recruitment of Businesses and Sectors – Light Industrial / manufacturing / outreach to brokers and developers – through interviews / business roundtables and partnership advertising with our business and development partners

- Workforce Development – Explore job creation opportunities, affordable housing, workplace amenities such as maker space, incubator space, etc.

#### Future Initiatives:

- Revamped “Business of the Year” award programs – highlight large businesses/ small businesses / home-based businesses - develop methodology for selection. Awards can be plaques / cash grants. Announce winners in a “business celebration” held at the Doubletree Hotel with participation from the business community and general population.
- Develop small business grant program \$ TBD to encourage and help to launch start-up businesses. Possible future small grants to entrepreneurs and start-ups. (e.g. 5 grants/year at a future determined dollar amount)

#### Strategic Partnerships for the Economic Vitality Office:

- SAMCEDA
- State of California – GOBiz
- Community Resources – Commissions and Subcommittees
- Brisbane Chamber of Commerce
- CALED (California Economic Development Association)
- Local groups such as MOB, Brisbane Makers, etc.