Bessemer City

STRATEGIC PLAN

CITY OF BESSEMER CITY

FY 2027 Strategic Plan Quarterly Progress Report

Quarter 1 | July 1–September 30, 2026

Quarterly overview

This first-quarter report follows the adopted plan's five goals, 14 strategies, and 49 tactics. The departmental tracker includes 81 activity entries. At least one update is recorded for 41 tactics; eight have no entries for the quarter. These figures measure documentation coverage, not completion or effectiveness.

STRATEGIC GOAL	TACTICS WITH UPDATE	ACTIVITY ENTRIES
Goal 1: Promote a desirable place to live and work that provides a healthy quality of life.	9 of 9	27
Goal 2: Ensure a safe and secure community for residents and visitors.	6 of 6	18
Goal 3: Invest in high quality infrastructure to support a thriving and diverse economy.	9 of 12	13
Goal 4: Provide opportunities for citizen engagement and promote volunteerism.	7 of 10	11
Goal 5: Foster organizational sustainability that embraces innovation and creativity.	10 of 12	12

Activity highlights by goal

GOAL 1 Adopted stormwater/MS4 measures, advanced the LDC review, improved Stinger Park trail access, and completed the Ella May Wiggins mural.

GOAL 2 Advanced fire-station site due diligence, budgeted future fire staffing, strengthened enforcement activity, and confirmed $136,000 in additional state support.

GOAL 3 Continued capital-priority and infrastructure-funding work, advanced development-code review, and coordinated regional growth and broadband discussions.

GOAL 4 Launched the six-participant Citizens Academy pilot, advanced board/volunteer engagement, and drafted communication and website improvements.

GOAL 5 Partially implemented compensation measures, sustained employee recognition and training, and reviewed software and management workflows.

GOAL 1

Promote a desirable place to live and work that provides a healthy quality of life.

3 strategies • 9 of 9 tactics with recorded activity • 27 tracker entries

1.1 Continuously update and review City code.

Continue review of the Land Development Code and Code of Ordinances.

The Land Development Code (LDC) review was transitioned to the new planner and consultant coordination continued. The consultant completed Phase III and presented the project to Council. Staff also drafted water-conservation changes and advanced the MS4 Stormwater Ordinance and Stormwater Management Plan (SWMP) through adoption.

Prepare a prioritized list of code amendments for Council consideration.

Staff reviewed Chapter 52 water and drought provisions, shared recommended amendments with Council, and held a public hearing on the proposed water-code changes.

Improve code enforcement communication and citizen education.

Code Enforcement expanded the use of door tags alongside mailed notices. Additional code-related educational materials were also added to online resources and the monthly newsletter.

1.2 Improve and promote walkability, sidewalk connectivity, and safe movement throughout the City.

Develop a sidewalk and walkability priority list.

Sidewalk investments continued through the FY 2027 budget, with staff assessing additional improvements and future funding needs. Improvements to the Stinger Park trail were recognized with a ribbon-cutting.

Coordinate with NCDOT on road and sidewalk funding opportunities.

Staff continued working with NCDOT on scope adjustments for the Highway 161 sidewalk project and discussed additional sidewalk funding opportunities; project ultimately deemed not feasible from a funding perspective

Incorporate walkability review into the future street, development, and infrastructure projects.

Staff worked with Lennar Homes on walking-trail upgrades as development closeout approached and encouraged consideration of improvements to an unpaved street as part of a potential conditional-zoning proposal with another developer.

1.3 Advance arts, cultural, and community heritage initiatives through planning, partnerships, and outside resources.

Identify cultural arts partners, including faith-based, nonprofit, school, downtown, and community organizations.

Staff encouraged participation in Keep Bessemer City Beautiful. The Ella May Wiggins mural moved from project initiation to completion in partnership with the Ella May Wiggins Memorial Committee, with its public unveiling on September 14.

Evaluate feasibility of a VA monument or similar heritage project.

Staff engaged veterans and community partners about memorial concepts, researched downtown veteran banners, and developed a veterans-themed November car show. The Veterans Committee met to discuss memorial concepts and fundraising.

Maintain a public art, cultural, and heritage project opportunity list.

Downtown staff identified an art walk/tunnel concept and decorative utility-box art opportunities. These were incorporated into the downtown development work plan, with outreach to contractors for tunnel lighting and mural concepts.

GOAL 2

Ensure a safe and secure community for residents and visitors.

2 strategies • 6 of 6 tactics with recorded activity • 18 tracker entries

2.1 Advance implementation of identified public safety facility, staffing, and operational needs.

Continue planning for a new public safety building.

Council authorized a tentative land acquisition from Kintegra Health for a future fire station. Staff advanced environmental Phase I and Phase II reviews, site due diligence, design-build discussions, a site-contract extension, and the title search. The tracker does not confirm a final design-build approval date.

Develop a phased implementation plan for public safety facility needs.

Staff continued evaluating phased reuse of public safety facilities, including potential relocation of Police into the existing fire station and a future fire-station addition, while reviewing associated operational and staffing needs.

Review Police and Fire staffing needs and identify phased options for additional personnel.

The adopted FY 2027 budget provides for additional fire staffing beginning in January 2027. Staff reviewed firefighter credentials and compensation costs, assessed police staffing needs, and advanced discussions and purchasing activity for a police drone and speed-monitoring signage.

Track public safety service indicators.

The Police Department increased traffic-enforcement activity, installed a medicine drop-off location, and continued regional partnerships for incident response and crime prevention. The tracker does not provide quantitative service indicators.

2.2 Develop and maintain funding strategies for public safety capital, staffing, and operational needs not covered by grants or other outside resources.

Continue identifying grants, appropriations, partnerships, debt options, donations, and other resources.

Staff continued federal funding advocacy, including coordination with Congressman Tim Moore ($500,000), and documented confirmation of an additional $136,000 in state budget support for public safety (Hastings and Overcash). Potential resources remain an active funding priority.

Incorporate public safety staffing and facility needs into annual budget and capital planning when applicable.

Police and Fire facility and staffing needs were incorporated into the adopted FY 2027 budget and related capital planning.

GOAL 3

Invest in high quality infrastructure to support a thriving and diverse economy.

3 strategies • 9 of 12 tactics with recorded activity • 13 tracker entries

3.1 Develop and implement a long-range plan for capital improvements (CIP), utility maintenance, streets, sidewalks, and utility infrastructure improvements.

Update capital improvement priorities.

Staff continued reviewing capital improvement priorities for City facilities.

Prioritize existing infrastructure before major new infrastructure expansions unless required for safety, compliance, or strategic economic development.

The FY 2027 budget included the Oates Road/Highway 274 natural-gas project. The tracker records this project under the existing-infrastructure prioritization tactic, but does not document a comparative prioritization analysis.

Use enterprise fund studies, rate studies, engineering reports, and project updates to guide utility capital planning.

No progress entry recorded in the tracking workbook for July–September 2026.

Develop a grant and funding calendar for infrastructure projects.

Staff submitted State Revolving Fund loan applications for water and sewer infrastructure projects. A consolidated grant and funding calendar is not separately documented.

3.2 Clarify, streamline, and improve development ordinances to support quality growth and responsible development.

Create a running list of ordinance sections needing review, clarification, removal, replacement, or amendment.

Staff reviewed ordinance changes involving water conservation and drought, stormwater maintenance, and related stormwater provisions.

Review the Land Development Code for consistency with growth plans, infrastructure capacity, housing needs, and Council policy direction.

Staff revisited the water and sewer master plan as an input to development and infrastructure planning. A completed LDC consistency assessment is not documented for this tactic.

Use feedback from staff, developers, property owners, advisory boards, and Council to identify recurring ordinance issues.

Staff continued stakeholder meetings for the LDC revision, began reviewing alternative planning/zoning/code-enforcement software, and tentatively selected a new software option.

Start the process of building on the Comprehensive Plan.

Staff discussed a future Comprehensive Plan update with the LDC consultant for FY 2027–FY 2028 and raised the planning effort during Council retreat preparation. The update remains in the planning stage.

3.3 Align building, infrastructure, and service improvements with growth plans.

Continue coordination with NCDOT, Gaston County, schools, utilities, and regional partners.

Staff continued coordination with the Gaston County Economic Development Commission and other partners on future land-use and economic-development opportunities.

Explore opportunities to attract or improve access to high-speed internet.

Staff continued working with third-party internet providers, including Ripple, on options for high-speed internet access.

Evaluate service capacity impacts during major development, annexation, utility extension, or infrastructure requests.

No progress entry recorded in the tracking workbook for July–September 2026.

Review major capital projects for alignment with adopted plans, service capacity, financial sustainability, and long-term maintenance obligations.

No progress entry recorded in the tracking workbook for July–September 2026.

GOAL 4

Provide opportunities for citizen engagement and promote volunteerism.

3 strategies • 7 of 10 tactics with recorded activity • 11 tracker entries

4.1 Educate appointed and advisory boards to carry out City goals.

Develop an annual advisory board orientation.

Board orientation began with the downtown development board. Additional orientations were identified for new boards once membership is established.

Create a board recruitment plan.

Staff promoted board and volunteer opportunities through events, information sharing, and communications, with specific outreach supporting Keep Bessemer City Beautiful and the Veterans Committee.

Provide advisory boards with a simplified strategic plan summary.

No progress entry recorded in the tracking workbook for July–September 2026.

4.2 Create programs and resources that better advise the community.

Pilot informal discussion meetings, coffee-style conversations, or topic-based public meetings.

Staff organized a “What’s Happening in BC” community discussion event for October. This was planned during the reporting period, rather than documented as held by September 30.

Use City facilities for public information meetings on major topics.

No progress entry recorded in the tracking workbook for July–September 2026.

Pursue pilot program and annual Citizens Academy program.

The pilot Citizens Academy launched with six participants.

Continue developing citizen education resources.

Downtown event information was distributed, and staff began developing practical planning “how-to” education materials.

4.3 Implement and maintain a communication and engagement plan that supports Council priorities, public understanding, and community trust.

Coordinate social media, website, message boards, text alerts, and other channels.

Staff prepared a draft Public Information and Communication Plan and held a website-revision planning meeting, establishing a preliminary website improvement plan.

Advertise advisory board opportunities, public meetings, volunteer opportunities, and major project updates more consistently.

Staff increased promotion of volunteer and advisory-board opportunities through public meetings, social media, printed materials, and civic-group outreach.

Develop simple public-facing strategic plan progress updates.

No progress entry recorded in the tracking workbook for July–September 2026.

GOAL 5

Foster organizational sustainability that embraces innovation and creativity.

3 strategies • 10 of 12 tactics with recorded activity • 12 tracker entries

5.1 Ensure the City continues to attract and retain high-quality professionals.

Implement the pay and classification plan in a financially responsible manner.

Portions of the pay and classification plan were implemented through the adopted FY 2027 budget.

Review salary competitiveness as part of the annual budget process.

Salary competitiveness considerations were partially incorporated into the adopted FY 2027 budget.

Evaluate employee benefit options.

Staff met with the employee-benefits consultant to review benefit options.

Develop a compensation and benefits communication piece for employees.

Staff held implementation meetings for employee self-service (ESS) software intended to improve access to real-time benefit information. A separate compensation and benefits communication piece was not documented as completed.

5.2 Continue staff engagement programs and offer more professional development opportunities and training incentives.

Continue staff engagement efforts.

Employee engagement efforts continued through a quarterly staff luncheon and the annual staff pool party.

Establish a recurring employee highlight program.

A recurring employee-highlight feature began in the monthly staff newsletter.

Identify department-level professional development needs.

Professional development included additional water-utility staff training and certification opportunities, as well as economic-development training.

Explore low-cost or no-cost training partnerships.

No progress entry recorded in the tracking workbook for July–September 2026.

5.3 Continue identifying ways to increase service delivery effectiveness.

Develop a process for departments to identify service delivery challenges and workflow improvements.

Departmental service and workflow issues received more intentional review during monthly department head and supervisor meetings.

Provide periodic Council educational briefings on major City processes.

Council received expanded weekly management-report information and more detailed process discussions at regular work sessions.

Identify technology, software, policy, or procedural changes that could improve efficiency.

Staff reviewed replacement options for permitting and code-enforcement software as a potential service-delivery improvement.

Use strategic plan progress reporting to highlight successes and barriers.

No progress entry recorded in the tracking workbook for July–September 2026.