Bessemer City
STRATEGIC PLAN

FY 2027 Strategic Plan

Adopted on June 8, 2026

Bessemer City NC
HEARTFELT LIVING

Goal 1: Promote a desirable place to live and work that provides a healthy quality of life.

Strategies:

1.1 Continuously update and review City code.

Tactics

- Continue review of the Land Development Code and Code of Ordinances.
- Prepare a prioritized list of code amendments for Council consideration.
- Improve code enforcement communication and citizen education.

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

Tactics

- Develop a sidewalk and walkability priority list.
- Coordinate with NCDOT on road and sidewalk funding opportunities.
- Incorporate walkability review into the future street, development, and infrastructure projects.

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

Tactics

- Identify cultural arts partners, including faith-based, nonprofit, school, downtown, and community organizations.
- Evaluate feasibility of a VA monument or similar heritage project.
- Maintain a public art, cultural, and heritage project opportunity list.

Goal 2: Ensure a safe and secure community for residents and visitors.

Strategy	Recommendation	Reason for Change
2.1 Conduct a public safety study.	Modify: **Advance implementation of identified public safety facility, staffing, and operational needs.**	The City has moved beyond a study-only phase. The 2026 retreat emphasized implementation, facility planning, staffing, and funding.
2.2 Fund public safety needs not covered by grants or sale of property.	Clarify: **Develop and maintain funding strategies for public safety capital, staffing, and operational needs not covered by grants or other outside resources.**	The revised language is more broad and recognizes facility, staffing, operational, grant, appropriation, and capital funding needs.

Strategy 2.1 - Recommended 2026 Tactics

Recommended 2026 Tactic	Implementation Intent
Continue planning for a new public safety building.	Advance site readiness, concept design, cost estimates, and funding structure.
Develop a phased implementation plan for public safety facility needs.	Address Fire Department needs and future Police Department facility needs in a sequenced manner.
Review Police and Fire staffing needs and identify phased options for additional personnel.	Support service delivery without creating unrealistic budget expectations.
Track public safety service indicators.	Use calls for service, response times, staffing levels, and facility needs in strategic plan monitoring.

Strategy 2.2 - Recommended 2026 Tactics

Recommended 2026 Tactic	Implementation Intent
Continue identifying grants, appropriations, partnerships, debt options, donations, and other resources.	Build a diversified funding strategy for major public safety capital needs.
Incorporate public safety staffing and facility needs into annual budget and capital planning when applicable.	Align operating decisions with long-term capital needs.

Goal 3: Invest in high quality infrastructure to support a thriving and diverse economy.

Strategy	Recommendation	Reason for Change
3.1 Develop and implement a long-range plan for CIP, utility maintenance, and infrastructure improvements.	Modify slightly: **Develop and implement a long-range plan for capital improvements (CIP), utility maintenance, streets, sidewalks, and utility infrastructure improvements.**	The strategy remains valid, but 2026 discussion call for more explicit reference to streets, sidewalks, and infrastructure maintenance (water, sewer, gas, stormwater)
3.2 Explore ways to continuously clarify, streamline, and improve Land Development Code and unified development ordinances so that developers are improving the City.	Simplify: **Clarify, streamline, and improve development ordinances to support quality growth and responsible development.**	The current language is too long and wordy.
3.3 Align building, infrastructure, and service improvements with growth plans.	Keep.	This remains a strong strategy and directly supports growth management, infrastructure capacity, and coordination with regional partners.

Strategy 3.1 - Recommended 2026 Tactics

Recommended 2026 Tactic	Implementation Intent
Update capital improvement priorities.	Distinguish between existing infrastructure maintenance, required utility improvements, road/sidewalk needs, and new growth-related infrastructure.
Prioritize existing infrastructure before major new infrastructure expansions unless required for safety, compliance, or strategic economic development.	Reflect Council direction to improve what the City already owns and operates (i.e. parks and facilities).
Use enterprise fund studies, rate studies, engineering reports, and project updates to guide utility capital planning.	Base capital decisions on data, engineering, and long-term financial sustainability.
Develop a grant and funding calendar for infrastructure projects.	Improve readiness for roads, sidewalks, utilities, stormwater, water, wastewater, and other capital needs.

Strategy 3.2 - Recommended 2026 Tactics

Recommended 2026 Tactic	Implementation Intent
Create a running list of ordinance sections needing review, clarification, removal, replacement, or amendment.	Modify existing ordinance language to match overall strategy, mission, values, and goals.
Review the Land Development Code for consistency with growth plans, infrastructure capacity, housing needs, and Council policy direction.	Ensure development rules are aligned with actual community and infrastructure conditions.
Use feedback from staff, developers, property owners, advisory boards, and Council to identify recurring ordinance issues.	Ground ordinance changes in repeated practical problems, not isolated complaints.
Start the process of building on the Comprehensive Plan.	Modify existing plans to better align with growth pressures and development regulations.

Strategy 3.3 - Recommended 2026 Tactics

Recommended 2026 Tactic	Implementation Intent
Continue coordination with NCDOT, Gaston County, schools, utilities, and regional partners.	Plan for growth-related needs that cross jurisdictional or organizational boundaries.
Explore opportunities to attract or improve access to high-speed internet.	Coordinate with providers, county/regional partners, and grant programs.
Evaluate service capacity impacts during major development, annexation, utility extension, or infrastructure requests.	Ensure growth decisions account for staffing, utilities, streets, stormwater, public safety, and maintenance obligations.

Recommended 2026 Tactic	Implementation Intent
Review major capital projects for alignment with adopted plans, service capacity, financial sustainability, and long-term maintenance obligations.	Improve discipline before committing to large projects or expansions.

Goal 4: Provide opportunities for citizen engagement and promote volunteerism.

Strategy	Recommendation	Reason for Change
4.1 Educate appointed and advisory boards to carry out City goals.	Keep.	Board education remains important, and the 2026 retreat added emphasis on recruiting members and business representation.
4.2 Create programs and resources that better advise the community.	Keep.	Informal discussions, structured meetings, and citizen education tools fit within this strategy.
4.3 Develop a communication plan that gains buy-in from Council and the public.	Modify: **Implement and maintain a communication and engagement plan that supports Council priorities, public understanding, and community trust.**	Move from developing a plan to using communication channels consistently and strategically.

Strategy 4.1 - Recommended 2026 Tactics

Recommended 2026 Tactic	Implementation Intent
Develop an annual advisory board orientation.	Cover board roles, open meetings expectations, staff/Council relationships, and strategic plan alignment.
Create a board recruitment plan.	Seek representation from businesses, community stakeholders, and residents with relevant experience.
Provide advisory boards with a simplified strategic plan summary.	Help board recommendations connect back to Council priorities.

Strategy 4.2 - Recommended 2026 Tactics

Recommended 2026 Tactic	Implementation Intent
Pilot informal discussion meetings, coffee-style conversations, or topic-based public meetings.	Create structured opportunities for legitimate questions and community education.
Use City facilities for public information meetings on major topics.	Support engagement on growth, infrastructure, budget, public safety, utilities, and downtown development.
Pursue pilot program and annual Citizens Academy program.	Develop overview of local government services, projects, initiatives, etc. for citizen engagement and comprehension
Continue developing citizen education resources.	Use social media, website, print material, etc. for citizen education purposes.

Strategy 4.3 - Recommended 2026 Tactics

Recommended 2026 Tactic	Implementation Intent
Coordinate social media, website, message boards, text alerts, and other channels.	Use communication tools strategically and consistently.
Advertise advisory board opportunities, public meetings, volunteer opportunities, and major project updates more consistently.	Increase awareness and participation without requiring major new funding.
Develop simple public-facing strategic plan progress updates.	Show completed tactics, projects underway, and upcoming Council decision points.

Goal 5: Foster organizational sustainability that embraces innovation and creativity.

Strategy	Recommendation	Reason for Change
5.1 Ensure the City continues to attract and retain high-quality professionals.	Keep.	This remains a core priority and was the strongest point of Council consensus in the 2026 retreat.
5.2 Continue staff engagement programs and offer more professional development opportunities and training incentives.	Keep.	The 2026 retreat supports expanding tactics around recognition, employee highlights, and training.
5.3 Continue identifying ways to increase service delivery effectiveness.	Keep, **but strengthen tactics.**	The existing tactics are valid but too general. More specific service delivery and process improvement tactics should be added.

Strategy 5.1 - Recommended 2026 Tactics

Recommended 2026 Tactic	Implementation Intent
Implement the pay and classification plan in a financially responsible manner.	Support recruitment and retention while maintaining budget discipline.
Review salary competitiveness as part of the annual budget process.	Keep compensation connected to market conditions and financial capacity.
Evaluate employee benefit options.	Identify benefit improvements that support retention and morale.
Develop a compensation and benefits communication piece for employees.	Help employees understand the City's investment in pay, insurance, retirement, and workplace support.

Strategy 5.2 - Recommended 2026 Tactics

Recommended 2026 Tactic	Implementation Intent
Continue staff engagement efforts.	Maintain employee appreciation, staff communication, and internal recognition.
Establish a recurring employee highlight program.	Recognize accomplishments, service milestones, certifications, project success, and customer service.
Identify department-level professional development needs.	Include priority training resources in the annual budget where feasible.
Explore low-cost or no-cost training partnerships.	Use regional, state, professional association, or peer-government resources.

Strategy 5.3 - Recommended 2026 Tactics

Recommended 2026 Tactic	Implementation Intent
Develop a process for departments to identify service delivery challenges and workflow improvements.	Make innovation and effectiveness part of routine management.
Provide periodic Council educational briefings on major City processes.	Improve shared understanding of budgeting, capital planning, development review, utility operations, public safety operations, and personnel processes.
Identify technology, software, policy, or procedural changes that could improve efficiency.	Pursue improvements without creating unsustainable ongoing costs.
Use strategic plan progress reporting to highlight successes and barriers.	Connect service delivery performance to the adopted strategic plan.