Michigan

Bessemer

Master Plan adopted 9/14/2021

Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction 3
Chapter 2: Vision and Guiding Principles 8
Chapter 3: Housing 10
Chapter 4: Infrastructure and Community Facilities 20
Chapter 5: Natural and Cultural Resources 29
Chapter 6: Health 38
Chapter 7: Winter City Bessemer 49
Chapter 8: Economic Development 57
Chapter 9: Land Use 78
Chapter 10: Transportation 86
Chapter 11 General City Operations 91
Chapter 12: Recruiting Young Adults 97
Chapter 13: Timeline 101
Appendix A 126
Appendix B 131
Appendix C 138
Appendix D 146
Appendix E 148

Chapter 1: Introduction

In the late 1800's, with the discovery of iron ore, people began settling the City of Bessemer. Prior to this, the land was tribal land. The land was ceded in 1842 from the Ojibwe. The new settlers were of Cornish, Irish, Scandinavian, French Canadian, Polish, and Finnish descent. In 1884, the city was platted by the railroad company. The mining boom helped the area prosper and it was a wealthy, vibrant town for many years. With all booms come a bust and the bust began in the late 1950's. Until recently, this bust beginning in the late 1950's has shaped the community. Moving forward, the community needs to come together to shift into a community young people want to stay in and move to.

The City of Bessemer is charged with updating the Master Plan every 5 years. However, the city didn't want to do a simple update, instead the city deeply explored issues impacted the town and become more attractive to young people. Some issues includes a shrinking population, climate change, automation, and many more. Throughout the Master Plan, the focus will be on action steps to mitigate these current and upcoming challenges. By getting on the front end of these challenges, the City of Bessemer will be poised to attract and retain young people and help our community grow and thrive.

Rural America for years has shrunk and deteriorated. Even after many years of attempts by local leaders to address rural challenges, the rate of economic decline has not slowed. In the last 4 decades the population of the UP has dropped by 10%, while Michigan has grown by 10%. This disparity has resulted in tax revenue not keeping pace, economies struggling due to the continued loss of qualified workforce, continued loss of major industries, and most importantly – these issues are disproportionally manifesting in the rapid loss of the younger population where ages 0-19 years old has dropped by 27% in just the last 3 decades. Bessemer is not immune to these changes. In fact, since 1990, the city has lost 21% of our population. The 2020 census information hasn't come out as of publication, but much of the population loss is expected to be a loss of residents aged 0-19.

Further, there are trends accelerating world-wide and unless rural regions like the U.P. initiate actions to address the advancements of technologies (A.I., Automation, Electrification) and the reactions to sustainability (climate change, upcycling/ recycling, bio/circular economies) these headwinds will have profound negative impacts. The City needs to address the expected public and government reaction to these trends. Job loss is already evident as automated cashiers replace human employees, pressure upon timber extraction as paper is replaced with digital mediums. The UP's reliance on fossil fuels will be on full display when subsidies are removed causing a surge in the cost of transported goods – which is almost everything the UP uses is transported in. Further, drought in the west is causing food supply concerns which, again, will impact the cost of foods delivered to the Bessemer area.

The City of Bessemer relies on Xcel Energy for our power and the city and residents need to work with them to ensure a secure energy source moving forward. Particular care needs to be given to protect the environment with carbon neutral, near neutral, or negative options. Solar, wind, or other forms of renewable must be sized and balanced to work more efficiently with the seasonal fluctuations. The city needs to work with partners to explore projects that include the traditional carbon neutral energy options, as well as anerobic digestion, bio-mass. A hurdle in Bessemer's area is the energy storage to address the lack of winter sun while the heating energy needs are the highest. This green energy needs to support the UP without destroying its natural beauty.

Bessemer is rurally located without a robust food system. As became apparent during the pandemic, supply chains can be faulty. Likewise, with climate change, many farmers are experiencing crop failures at far higher rates than previously and our major food suppliers such as in California, may be running out of water. The UP region will have to work together to develop a more robust local food supply.

Transportation is seeing some major changes as cars go electric. This is something the city is not currently prepared for. This will be a big drain on the electric grid and require charging stations. The city may also consider that car ownership may become less of a thing in the future which will dramatically lower the need for parking, garages, and other community staples.

The City of Bessemer is seeing a double crisis with housing. Much of our housing is becoming old and in need of updating while we have a shortage of contractors to fix it up. On the other hand, many second home owners are buying property in the city. This is creating a shortage of available housing for residents. It has been too costly in the past to build new housing and this will be something the community will have to tackle together.

Another crisis facing Bessemer is the workforce. After the last mine shut down in 1966 the town was set back and lost a significant percentage of its population including many of its young adults. Since the closing of the mines, the City has switched to an economy based upon tourism and services, with some industrial activity. After a dramatic spike in unemployment during the start of Covid-19, the unemployment rate has settled in around 5%. While this is lower than many parts of the country, many of the residents are underemployed subsisting off part-time and seasonal employment. Likewise, 27% of the residents of working age do not have employment. This suggests many have given up looking for employment. Considering that the average age of the UP is growing 5 months/year, and that many citizens are retiring, the region will not have a workforce sufficient to address health care needs. The community needs to focus much effort on attracting and retaining young people to meet this growing need. Young people tend to be worried about the issues highlighted above. By tackling these issues, the city will be more attractive for young people.

This is not something Bessemer is in alone. The region needs to work together to tackle many of these issues and become more attractive to our future citizens. This picture should be an illustration of solutions where the UP is not any longer at the mercy of outside forces, and instead capitalizes on the independent thinking and resiliency of the residents.

The future looks difficult, but the citizens of the UP are different than the rest of the USA. We see far too often that the UP is left behind as disaster monies are sent to the coasts for fire and flood, larger cities are given the attention in our political system, and disruptions within the UP economy (mining, timber, eCommerce, etc) are ignored. But we know that the determination and grit of the UP inhabitants places us perfectly to develop what rural America can and should look like. In the end, it is the future of the UP and the generations to come who depend on our planning and actions of today.

Community Involvement

To update this Master Plan, the City worked with the public to compose this strategic plan to shape the future of the City. This is a revision of the Master Plan initially written by North of 45 and the City of Bessemer. The update is done by the city with the help of the residents.

The City of Bessemer conducted 2 surveys for this Master Plan Update. The first was an open-ended strength, opportunity, and threat analysis and the second drilled into specifics.

The first survey was sent out on August 8th, 2020 921 surveys were mailed to people's addresses. One month later on 9/28/20 the city received 55 back. This is a 5.97% response rate. The second survey was sent out on January 25th, 2021. The city received 238 responses.

On June 7th, 2021 the Planning Commission sent out notices to adjacent communities, county/regional planning commission, and utilities/transportation entities operating in the community giving notice about the Master Plan hearing. It was published in the paper, on the city's website, and the city's Facebook. On September 14th, 2021, the Planning Commission had a public hearing about the Master Plan. There was no public comment. The Plan was adopted.

AUTHORITY AND PURPOSE

The purpose of the Master Plan is to guide the City's future and help the community develop economically through a realistic and well thought out approach. The Master Plan has been prepared under authority of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, P.A. 33 of 2008, as amended. The Master Plan is an important tool for a number of reasons:

- The Master Plan provides the legal basis for zoning, subdivision of land, and other local land use regulations.
- The gathering and analysis of comprehensive community information and data enables community leaders to holistically understand unique challenges and opportunities.
- By involving citizens and stakeholders in the planning process, the Plan serves as the supported community vision, including goals and strategies for achieving the shared vision.
- The Master Plan can serve as a catalyst for desired changes by engaging community action.
- The Plan can help to generate regional collaboration with neighboring communities.

The purpose of the master plan is to guide future development towards the economic and efficient use of land; promote the public health, safety, and general welfare; provide for adequate transportation systems, public utilities, and recreation;

and ensure efficient expenditure of public funds. The master plan may project 20 years or more into the future. The Plan adoption is subject to public hearing and approval by resolution of the City of Bessemer Planning Commission and City Council.

Implementation of the plan is an on-going process, requiring the monitoring of changes in the community as well as the progress towards achieving the plan's goals. The Master Plan should be reviewed every five years and a determination made whether it needs updating or a new plan adopted.

The plan explores the following topics:

- Growing the economic vitality, sustainability, and stability of the community.
- Collaborating with other agencies and local governments.
- Expanding on our appeal to potential residents and tourists by capitalizing on outdoor recreation.
- Diversifying our economy through growing light industry.
- Cleaning up the appearance of the town by addressing blighted buildings and reshaping the entrances to our town.
- Improving the mobility of our citizens by promoting multi-modal transportation.
- Updating the zoning code and future land use map to address the current needs of constituents.
- Improving our correspondence with constituents.
- Continuing the education of our elected and appointed officials in their roles and duties.
- Developing a brand to showcase the community's assets.
- Creating development packets to encourage growth in residential, commercial, and industrial zones.
- Expanding the employment opportunities and fostering growth.
- Recruit and retain remote workers and a skilled workforce
- Addressing the needs of our environment by making environmental conscious decisions.
- Maintaining and growing the City's infrastructure, library, cemetery, and fire department offerings to better serve constituents.

Chapter 2: Vision and Guiding Principles

The City's values toward growth and development are reflected in their Vision Statement, Guiding Principles, Goals, and Strategies. Following is a summary of the Vision Statement and Guiding Principles.

Vision Statement

Strive to provide residents with a high quality of living in Bessemer

Guiding Principles

The following are key characteristics of our guiding principles:

- Listen to our residents and work in their interest
- Creatively use funds to move our City forward
- Treasure our past and focus on the future
- Collaborate with neighboring communities to help all grow together
- Foster sustainable job growth that meets the needs of our constituents
- Create an achievable plan
- Work to grow our Taxable Value and revenue

Chapter 2: Vision and Guiding Principles

The city's values toward growth and development are reflected in their vision statement, guiding principles, goals, and strategies. Following is a summary of the vision statement and guiding principles.

Vision Statement

Strive to provide residents with a high quality of living in Bessemer

Guiding Principles

The following are key characteristics of our guiding principles:

- Listen to our residents and work in their interest
- Creatively use funds to move our City forward
- Treasure our past and focus on the future
- Collaborate with neighboring communities to help all grow together
- Foster sustainable job growth that meets the needs of our constituents
- Create an achievable plan
- Work to grow our Taxable Value and revenue
- Work to attract and retain young people in the community

Chapter 3: Housing

Housing Characteristics

The City of Bessemer has many single-family homes that were built in the mining era prior to 1940. These tend to be smaller 3-4 bedroom, two story houses. Several neighborhoods are composed of nearly identical, former mining company houses that at one time were provided for workers. These neighborhoods also may include larger homes that housed mining captains or company management families.

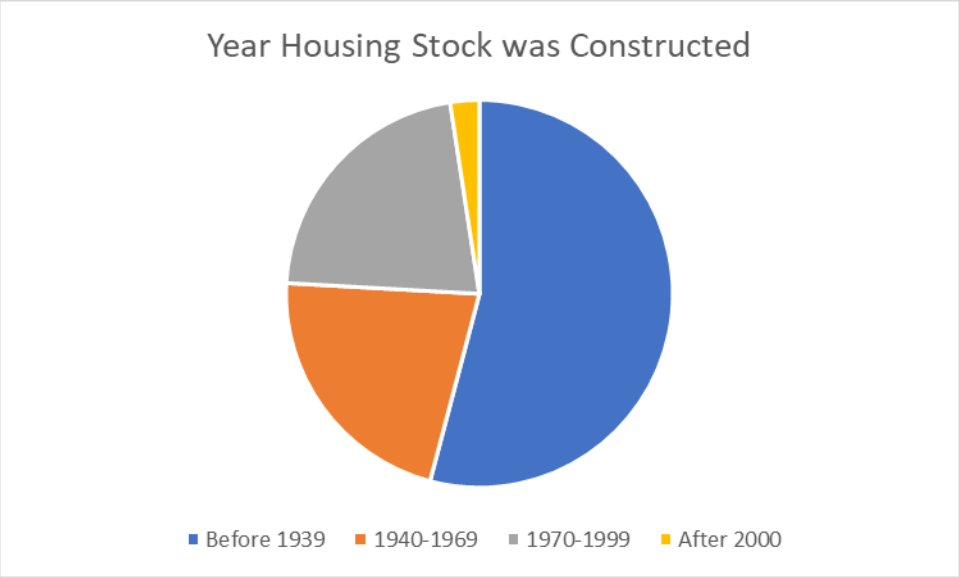
The City has 1960's style houses in the east end of Bessemer. These are one story, ranch style houses typical of the 1960's era. The town also has apartments above most of the downtown stores. In recent years, many of these apartments have been fixed up and more people are living downtown.

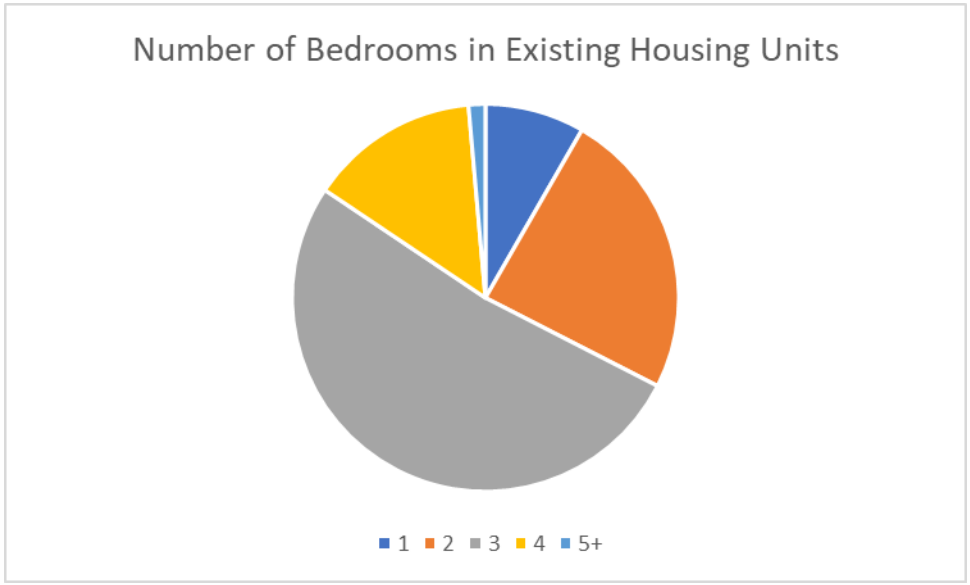
The Bessemer Housing Commission provides low-income housing for families, single individuals, and retired people living on fixed incomes.

MSHDA provides Section 8 vouchers for individuals on fixed incomes looking to live in private houses. Xcel energy can assist in energy replacements of heaters, water heaters, etc for low-income individuals and families.

Current Housing Stock

- 74.6% of housing units are owner occupied
- 84.4% of housing units are single family unattached houses
- Average household size in a rental is 1.88 people





Bessemer is known for its very affordable housing. Many retirees have moved here because of the low cost and find they can have a higher quality of life in Bessemer than in many other parts of the country. This low cost also makes the City ideal for individuals who perform work that can be done from anywhere. These telecommuting jobs include online sales, call centers, many health care roles, accounting, assistants, etc. With such a low cost of living individuals can live here and experience a higher standard of living than living in most other parts of the country.

Blight and lack of property value increase was identified as an issue in the survey with 37% of respondents disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that they are satisfied with the appearance of homes in their neighborhood. This is down from 43% in the last survey. 28% of respondents disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the statement “Comparing last year to this year, the quality of residential living environment has increased in Bessemer.” This is down from 70% in 2017.

More people seem to be fixing up their housing since the last Master Plan update. People responded that they have collectively spent $3,025,694 on their properties in Bessemer over the last 5 years with an average response of $19,775.78.

With a perceived lack of property value increase, some existing housing hasn't been well maintained. This makes finding low maintenance housing and quality rentals harder to find.

Bessemer's existing housing stock also doesn't meet the needs of many of our residents. 57 of 238 respondents said they had issues finding housing in the past 5 years. 58% of the 57 respondents said they had issues with the quality of housing, 46% with the availability of housing, 28% with the cost, and 14% finding the size of house they were looking for. Statistically baby boomers and millennials are looking for small, low maintenance housing, as many in these generations are single and/ or childless. Similarly, baby boomers and older generations are looking for single level houses. Much of the housing stock is typically a two-story house built for families and thus doesn't meet the demand.

Most people feel safe in their neighborhood with 81% agreeing or strongly agreeing to the statement. Only 8% strongly disagreed or disagreed. Seventy-six percent of people agreed or strongly agreed that they feel welcome in the community. 5% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

There are no assisted living units or nursing homes in the City of Bessemer. The area has a shortage of these facilities; existing units experience long waiting lists.

The region also has no housing for those homeless unless due to domestic violence.

The City needs to actively encourage the rehabilitation of many of these homes to ensure the city can provide quality housing to future residents and maintain and grow the property values. The City will continue to work with the blight program to fix up houses falling in disrepair. After starting a more robust blight program now 46% agreed or strongly agreed that they are satisfied with code enforcement and 32% disagreed or strongly disagreed. The City will continue to work to ramp up the code enforcement program.

The City will continue to create developer packages for apartments and will continue to encourage in-fill development in town so as to maximize the use of our existing infrastructure.

After surveying landlords, large local businesses, and local real estate agents the City feels the following could be successful

- Units: 4
    - Businesses indicated a need for 12-17 higher end units.

    - While our housing is cheap, it's selling so quickly workers can't buy houses. Likewise, from conversations with employers, many of the employees making more than $60,000/ year only plan on staying in the area for a few years and don't want to buy.
- Total monthly rental cost including utilities: $800-$1,500/ month.
    - Businesses indicated there are employees making $60,000 - $100,000+ per year that need units. 30% of $60,000 is $18,000 or $1,500/ month.
- Amenities to include
    - Garage, we have lots of snow
    - Plowing/ grass mowing
    - Utilities can be included or excluded from the rent. There is no local standard.
- Bedrooms: 2 bedroom seems ideal.
    - Businesses indicated a need for housing for single and married people without kids.

See full surveys in appendix C

The City of Bessemer should focus on in-fill development and fixing up existing houses. This will result in more taxes per built infrastructure (roads, water, sewer), be more environmentally friendly with less development on green land and encourage walking and biking for transportation, leaves the townships with the remote character, results in more affordable housing, and will improve the downtown by resulting in more people who can walk to the businesses. This can be done by selling in-town land for very cheap if development happens within a year, utilizing brownfields funding for multifamily units, making the downtown a more desirable place people want to leave near, and encouraging people to flip houses.

Goals and Strategies

Goal 1

Stop the decay of the housing stock.

Strategy 1.1

Continue to strictly follow the International Property Maintenance Code by maintaining a code enforcement officer. The Property Maintenance Code is a great tool to get landowners to clean up their property and maintain it. Reducing the number of blighted and dilapidated structures will improve the aesthetics of our community and increase property values. Improving aesthetics makes the community more appealing to tourists, people looking to move to the area, and developers.

Strategy 1.2

Have City Council Members and the City Manager write thank you notes to individuals who have made improvements to their buildings or land that help improve the aesthetics of our community or continually keep up their property. Many of the measures suggested are a punishment approach. If individuals don't maintain their property, they receive a fine. By writing thank you notes, the City is acknowledging the hard work of our citizens to maintain their properties and helping to improve community pride.

Strategy 1.3

Continue to contract with a code enforcement officer.

Strategy 1.4

Determine if a vacant property registry would be beneficial to the area. A Vacant Building Registry requires all owners of vacant buildings to register their buildings and pay an annual fee. The registration includes local emergency contacts and other general information to make contacting the owner easier if there is an issue. Many towns have found these programs to be useful to disincentivize retaining vacant buildings. This area may be more difficult to implement such a program due to a large number of vacation homes.

Strategy 1.5

Work with local citizens interested in keeping our empty lots clean and maintained with the Adopt-a-lot program. This is a grass roots program intended to utilize community volunteers to maintain empty lots. Keep a data base of all participating volunteers and publicly thank them for their contributions.

Strategy 1.6

Continue to support Gogebic Ontonagon Community Action Agency in their housing efforts. The Community Action Agency is committed to assisting citizens in their housing needs through grant assistance.

Strategy 1.7

Inform residents about the USDA-RD grant and low interest loan program designed to assist homeowners with repairs. This program can help homeowners get new roofs, siding, windows, etc. This is a very valuable program that the City should share with residents especially while addressing blighted structures.

Strategy 1.8

Inform property owners and potential property owners of opportunities to address blight through MEDC's Brownfields program. If a developer purchases a structure that is blighted or is in some way environmentally contaminated, the developer can utilize Brownfield's for low interest loans which can be paid back through a Brownfields TIF, thereby saving the developer significantly.

Strategy 1.9

Continue to look at other state funding when available. The City has about thirty buildings that are significantly blighted, many of which should be torn down. The City should continue to look for grant opportunities to address these buildings.

Strategy 1.10

Enact a City wide clean-up day to encourage citizens to dispose of junk materials in their yard.

Strategy 1.11

With our partners, explore ways to start a community of people flipping houses.

Strategy 1.12

Explore the possibility of implementing Neighborhood Improvement Authorities in neighborhoods to help fix them up.

Goal 2

Address Housing Demand

Strategy 2.1

Actively work to encourage in-fill development. Place welcome signs on city owned lots and sell lots for $1 to people looking to build within a year.

Strategy 2.2

Actively recruit investors to build multi-family and single family homes, renovate existing unused apartments and homes.

Strategy 2.3

Actively recruit house flippers. Many houses could also be flipped if we attract skilled builders to the area. Many houses can be purchased quite inexpensively, rehabilitated, and sold for a profit. The City should continue to make the City more attractive for individuals looking to move to the area for flipping houses.

Strategy 2.4

Recruit a nursing home or an assisted living facility. The City will need to compile all the available information on available sites, and actively seek out investors.

Strategy 2.5

Actively recruit investors to build multifamily housing near the downtown.

Strategy 2.6

Market the ability to build tiny houses in our community.

Strategy 2.7

Continue to monitor short-term rentals and second homes. They don't seem to be contributing to our housing shortage at this time.

Strategy 2.8

Search for funding to add Accessory Dwelling Units to senior/ low income houses so residents can get additional income and stay in place. This will also help address rental shortage.

Strategy 2.9

Support partners in their efforts to house people without homes.

Strategy 2.10

Send vacant land to real estate agents so they can provide information about buildable land to people who can't find housing.

Chapter 4: Infrastructure and Community Facilities

Water System

The City of Bessemer has provided safe, quality water to the residents since the late 1800's. We are proactively updating our system. Maintenance now, will save significantly compared to emergency replacements in the future. After the 2021 75% of our water system will be from the 1980's or newer with 35% being updated through this project. This means over 75% of the system has 50+ years of life remaining. The City will work to continue to update the system and save for future replacements. Seventy-nine percent of survey respondents said improving the water and sewer system was important or very important to them.

The City's main reservoir is carved into one of our bluffs. This holds 1,000,000 gallons. Another tank is the Tilden tank which holds about 60,000 gallons. The water treatment plant was constructed in 2002.

The Bluff Reservoir was carved out of the reservoir in the 1930's. It can't be easily cleaned. It also holds up to 1,000,000 gallons and to keep pressure on the Black Jack line, the tank is maintained at capacity of which we can use about 100,000 before we lose pressure on the Black Jack line. This leads to a low turnover. Furthermore, the line running to the tank is shallowly buried and risks freezing. The City should look at possibilities to mitigate these issues.

The City of Bessemer has to physically visit each building that uses water at least every two months to check the meter for usage. Businesses are visited monthly. This is a very time-consuming endeavor for the City workers. The City received funding as part of the USDA project to replace all the meters to meters that can be read digitally. This will save staff countless hours. The city will work to replace meters over the next several years.

The City of Bessemer has applied for funding to assist in a long-term plan for our water system. If the city doesn't receive the funding. The City should keep searching for other funding or pay for it out of the water fund.

Finally, the City of Bessemer will continue to replace lead service lines in compliance with the state of Michigan rules.

Storm Water System

The Department of Public Works has been slowly updating the ditching and culvert stormwater systems to improve the water flow in the community. Most of the community now has very little issues with drainage, however, there are some problem areas needing to be addressed.

Galena Area and the East Subdivision are problem areas for water drainage during spring meltdowns and heavy storms. The East Subdivision was planned with ditches and culverts to provide drainage for the storm water. However, over the years, the ditches and culverts have been filled in and covered. Now during heavy rains and spring meltdowns, there is no place for the water to go and people are experiencing issues with flooding and the roads have significant amounts of water flowing on them which deteriorates the roads.

The City needs to reach out to residents in both areas and determine how to proceed. The federal funding under the American Rescue Plan may be able to help with this. The City can explore special assessments, ditching, or leaving it as is.

Wastewater System

The City of Bessemer is part of the Bessemer Area Sewer Authority (BASA). BASA oversees the sanitary sewer treatment plant while the city is responsible for the transmission lines to the plant. The authority was established when the City of Bessemer and Bessemer Township decided to jointly provide sewer services. The authority received a new treatment plant in the 1980's. Some of the sewer pipes date back to the early 1900's, but most have been replaced.

In 2017, the City of Bessemer received SAW funding from the state to create a long-term plan for the sewer infrastructure. This included televising the older sewer lines through town. Most of the problem areas identified with the study will be replaced during the 2021 project which should conclude in 2023. At the end of the 2021 project, 76% of the wastewater system will have been replaces in the 1980's or more recently. This means about 76% of the system has 50+ years of life remaining. This project will ensure about 35% of the sanitary sewer will have been replaced through the project.

The City should continue to monitor the condition of the pipes and plan for future maintenance and replacement.

Roads and Streets

Roads are a top concern of survey respondents with 93% of respondents ranked improving streets as very important or important. While a few of Bessemer's streets are in decent shape, many have long been suffering for repair, as they have been low on the priority list for years. If revenues do not increase to meet increasing costs, the City may not be able to put as much funding from the general fund into the street fund.

The City will be finishing up a sewer and water project, which will include some new street paving, in 2023. These sections of roads are scattered across our City and seem to line up with some of the worst streets.

The City of Bessemer needs to seriously consider ways to obtain more funding to fix up the roads. After the 2021 project is complete, the finances and existing road conditions need to be analyzed in great depth and a bond should be considered. From the survey, 185 out of 238 responses said they would support some sort of road millage with 60% of the 185 saying they would support 2 mills, 32% 4 mills, 15% 6 mills.

City Owned Buildings

The City owns City Hall, the City garages, buildings at Bluff Valley Park, and the building currently occupied by the Historical Society.

City Hall was recently tuck pointed and reroofed. It does need updated plumbing, windows, heating/ cooling system, insulation in the walls, many fixtures to be converted to LED lights, and new carpeting and flooring in the council chambers. Much thought should be given to converting the existing space into a space frequently used by the community. A plan should be put together to renovate and update city hall.

The City garages have been well maintained and should only need minor repairs.

The building occupied by the Historical Society is mostly maintained by the occupants. The City will assist, but most of the maintenance is not the responsibility of the City.

Bluff Valley park could use some care. The old water building, the brick building is in rough shape and the city should work to fix it up. Likewise, the bathrooms should be improved to become ADA accessible.

Dedicated Fiber Internet

Dedicated Fiber internet, often called fiber or fiber optic internet provides a dedicated fiber line to each connection thereby providing consistent speeds regardless of how much internet the neighbors are using. This provides far better reliability, speed, and safety when compared to traditional internet. As our society is becoming more and more dependent on technology, we are using internet at rates that couldn't be comprehended 20 years ago. As such many businesses are currently reporting their internet is sufficient for their needs; however, there will probably be an increased demand in the future. Likewise, many data heavy companies such as engineering firms, website development firms, and technology dependent industrial businesses are beginning to require dedicated fiber internet before they will even look into locating in a community.

Merit has fiber running along US-2. Private and public entities can purchase fiber and run it to businesses and homes. The City of Bessemer has dedicated fiber internet running mostly down Iron Street to reach A.D Johnston high school. There is also a line running south from Iron Street down Moore St, and east on Colby St to City Hall. Dedicated Fiber internet is currently only offered to City Hall and the high school leaving demand particularly in the downtown and industrial areas and secondarily in the residential areas.

The current system is not redundant in how it is laid. If a line is cut, the system will go down.

The State of Michigan understands the importance of dedicated fiber internet and has been exploring opportunities to bring dedicated fiber internet to rural communities. The city should remain aware of opportunities and reach out when possible. The DDA could look at providing match funds to bring a dedicated line into the commercial areas. The city should also work to get dedicated fiber internet into the industrial area.

Private companies are expanding fiber in certain residential areas.

If the state doesn't get involved in bringing internet to Bessemer, the DDA can look into leasing internet from Merit and running a line through the downtown. This seems cost prohibitive unless grant funding is available or an existing business helps with the costs.

.

Fire Department

The City of Bessemer has a volunteer fire department to save on the costs of paying staff. The fourteen volunteers attend many training programs and attend monthly meetings. The City has a mutual aid agreement to assist neighboring communities in the event of out-of-control fires. The City has about 12 incidents a year in the City limits and will assist neighboring communities a few times a year.

The volunteers are dedicated individuals who commit to helping our community fight fires. While the City has 14 volunteer firefighters, 20 would be ideal. It has been a struggle to recruit enough volunteers. Some of the firefighters are getting close to an age when it may not be feasible for them to fight fires and it may be hard to replace them. However, the City has the opportunity to reach out to the community and further recruit firefighters.

The City should work to replace dated and aging equipment.

Cemetery

The Bessemer Cemetery is maintained by a full-time sexton in the summer who is a light equipment operator in the winter. The cemetery provides summertime casket and internment burials for residents and non-residents. Fortunately, the Cemetery has duplicated burial records from the 1920's on and adequate records from the 1900's to 1920's. Prior to the 1900's record keeping was sparse. The cemetery currently has enough developed plots for another 15-20 years of burials.

The road leading to the Mausoleum has settled and needs to be reconstructed with better drainage. The City recently purchased land adjacent to the cemetery for expansion. The process of developing the land will be completed over the next fifteen (15) years.

The city heavily subsidizes the cemetery and the city should continue to look at ways to bring in more revenue. Some suggestions are to raise the **non-resident** rates to come closer to meeting true costs and exploring new alternatives such as natural burials.

Infrastructure and Community Facilities Goals and Strategies

Goal 1

Maintain the City's wastewater system

Strategy 1.1
Execute the 2021 project.

Strategy 1.2
Plan and save for future projects. Continue to review the SAW data.

Goal 2

Maintain and upgrade City streets.

Strategy 2.1
After the 2021 project is complete, conduct a long term plan for the roads. Prioritize maintenance on the newly finished roads over other street needs. Deteriorated streets should be maintained for safety as much as possible, recognizing complete rebuild will be necessary.

Strategy 2.2
Determine the practicality of having bike lanes to connect the Iron Belle Trail to neighborhoods.

Strategy 2.3
Consider and adopt a pot-hole program to bring awareness to the condition of the roads.

Strategy 2.4
Consider going out for a road bond

Strategy 2.5
Continue to work to develop complete streets

Goal 3

Bring dedicated fiber internet that can be utilized by citizens into Bessemer

Strategy 3.1
Work with the State of Michigan to bring the fiber to Bessemer.

Strategy 3.2
Work with Merit and the DDA to lease a connection to provide services to downtown businesses as funding becomes available.

Goal 4

Continue to offer quality and efficient fire support services to the community

Strategy 4.1
Continue applying for grant funding to replace old equipment

Strategy 4.2
Explore ways to recruit long term members of the fire department.

Goal 5

Continue to maintain and expand the cemetery offerings.

Strategy 5.1
Continue to develop the recently purchased land adjacent to the cemetery through 2032.

Goal 6
Continue to maintain and update the City's water system

Strategy 6.1
Look for funding to replace the Bluff Valley Park reservoir with a reservoir at Black Jack.

Strategy 6.2
Continue with the 2021 project

Strategy 6.3
Continue to replace lead service lines as required by the State of Michigan

Strategy 6.4
Continue to develop the Water Asset Management Plan

Goal 7
Fix and replace storm sewer issues

Strategy 7.1
Identify all storm water issues and develop a plan to correct them.

Strategy 7.2
Work with neighbors to correct the storm sewer issues in the Galena St area

Strategy 7.3
Work with neighbors to correct the storm sewer issues in the East End

Strategy 7.4
Replace the failing culvert on Gold Street

Goal 8
Upgrade City Hall

Strategy 8.1
Continue to work to make the City Hall more accessible for those with wheelchairs, strollers, deliveries, and mobility issues.

Strategy 8.2
Look into insulating City Hall's walls

Strategy 8.3
Replace plumbing at City Hall

Strategy 8.4
Create a comprehensive plan for upgrading City Hall.

Strategy 8.5 Explore having a community center at City Hall and other ways of creating mor of a community space at City Hall.

Goal 9
Fire Department

Strategy 9.1
Work to grow the number of volunteers on the fire department

Strategy 9.2
Work to replace worn out and aged equipment

Chapter 5: Natural and Cultural Resources

Natural Resources

Iron ore and the timber resources of the Gogebic Range shaped the development of the City of Bessemer. While wood products remain an important natural resource for the region, it is the natural environment that offers great potential for growth in the region and the City.

The almost one million acres of the Ottawa National Forest surround the City of Bessemer and are an important recreational and timber resource for the area. The forest extends from the south shore of Lake Superior to the Wisconsin border across the western Upper Peninsula. Wildlife, rolling hills, rivers and waterfalls, hiking trails, gorgeous fall colors and dependable winter snowfall all contribute to a four season, outdoor paradise.

The Black River National Forest Scenic Byway comprises 12 miles of Black River Harbor Road from Bessemer to Black River Harbor, Michigan. This byway was dedicated in October, 1992. This byway is a very popular travel route because of the scenic beauty of the area including the numerous waterfalls on the Black River, and the Historic Black River Harbor Village. The North Country Scenic Trail can be accessed along this road. Black River Harbor provides charter fishing opportunities in Lake Superior.

Winter and snow are important natural resources for the area. Three of the top midwest downhill ski resorts are located near Bessemer; Indianhead Mountain, Blackjack and Big Powderhorn Mountain. These resorts, known collectively and marketed as “Big Snow Country” were developed beginning in the late 1960’s to take advantage of the hilly topography and ample lake effect snowfall resulting from the proximity to Lake Superior. These resorts provide a major economic impact to the region.

Cross country skiing on the nearby Wolverine Ski Trails (public) and the ABR Trails (private), and snowmobiling on the Gogebic Range Trail Authority Trail that runs through Bessemer, snowshoeing, and fat tire biking, are also major contributors to the economy.

The Iron Belle Trail is a large asset to the community. This non-motorized trail connects Ironwood to Ramsay. The City will continue to connect neighborhoods to the trail and is working to create a new trailhead behind City Hall.

If funds become available, the City will work to create a downtown park with a stage and splashpad.

Agriculture

There is agricultural land in the City of Bessemer. While farming is not a major economic driver in Gogebic County, there are operating farms, as noted on the table below:

Highlights	Gogebic County	Michigan
Acres in ag production	6078 acres	9,948,564 acres
Acres of state forest	0 acres	3,907,504 acres
Number of farms	62 farms	52,194 farms
Average size of farm	98 acres	191 acres
Average age of principal operator of farm	58.3 years	57.6 years
Farm gate sales	$497,000	$8,678,050,000

Gogebic County top three areas of agriculture production (by volume of sales):

- Cattle and calves
- Hogs and pigs
- Grains, oilseeds, dry beans, and dry peas

Source: MSU Extension AgBio Research Gogebic County Profile, 2016

Cultural Resources

An area's cultural resources are important to achieve quality of life for a community. This section identifies some of the cultural resources available in Bessemer. In addition to these, the region offers considerably more cultural opportunities, including a Gogebic Community College, Downtown Arts Place, the Ironwood Theatre and Theatre North, all located in nearby Ironwood.

Historic Buildings and Sites

The following sites in and around Bessemer are listed on the National and/or State Register of Historic Places

National Register of Historic Places

- Gogebic County Courthouse (national and state)
- Copper Peak (national and state)

State Register of Historic Places

- Colby Mine
- Memory Lane Park (Gogebic Range Informational Designation)
- Powder Mill Creek Bridge
  Concrete Deck Arch,

Arts and Cultural Groups

- Platinum Dance

"A few explorers settled here in 1884 but the real growth did not begin until the following year. The spring of that year, 1884, witnessed a rapid development. The Milwaukee Lake -Shore & Western Railroad had pushed into Bessemer late the previous fall and had continued on toward its destination at Ashland. With it came hundreds of people to populate and explore this wonderful region.

A large share of these settled at Bessemer and began to clear off the lots and build and soon a thriving settlement began to appear among the forests of this northern county. It has continued ever since to grow until a beautiful little city is the result."

The City should work to improve access to the arts. "People who report high levels of access to arts and culture in their community also demonstrate greater stewardship, participation, and civic trust compared to those who report low levels of access to arts and culture." Their study showed when there is access to arts and culture residents are 21% more likely to say their local leaders are effective, 14% more likely to attend local events, and give 12% more to non-profits, (Assembly- Civic Guidelines, Center for Active Design, 2018).

Bessemer Area Historical Society and Museum

The purpose of the Bessemer Area Historical Society is to promote and preserve the history of the Bessemer area. The Society was incorporated in 2002 as a non-profit organization. The Society operates a Museum on Sophie Street in downtown Bessemer, which is leased from the Bessemer Downtown Development Authority. The Museum building was renovated using volunteer help and the support. The building has been repainted, new lighting installed, the entire floor has been retiled and a suspended ceiling installed in the office portion. The DDA installed new windows and new brickwork on the front of the building.

Public Library

The Bessemer City Library serves the City of Bessemer, Bessemer Township, and Ironwood Township. The Library provides reading material, videos, cd's, access to technology, and space for no charge to City of Bessemer, Bessemer Township, and Ironwood Township residents. The library sees over 8,800 visitors a year and over 22,000 items were checked out in 2019. The library is part of Mel Cat and a library cooperative allowing for sharing of materials across libraries. The library features fiber optic connectivity.

The library was ranked the most efficient and trustworthy department in the city with 76% of people agreeing or strongly agreeing that the library is trustworthy, professional, and efficient.

The Bessemer Library is in the basement of the City Hall building which saves the library tremendously on maintenance and heating costs. However, this does provide a limited space for the library. There is not a separate room for children's activities and meetings are held in a room with books available for check out lining the walls. The librarian has thus far mitigated the size by strategically placing book shelves and furniture to create places inside the large room.

Goals and Strategies

The goals and policies on this page support the vision and guiding principles of the plan and should be used to inform future decision-making and action.

Goals are broad statements that describe a desired outcome. Goals are often long-term in scope.

Strategies describe a specific course, action or way in which programs and activities are conducted to achieve a stated goal, and are often place-specific.

Funding is always a threat to libraries. If the state withholds funding from libraries, the Bessemer library may suffer. Likewise, the federal government has discussed cutting funding to Institute of Museum and Library Services which would cut the funding for MEL Cat, an interlibrary loan program. To minimize these threats, the City has implemented a 1 mill levy for our library. There should be further exploration of funding options.

The library is steadily improving its physical space and offerings each year. Over the next several years the library intends to improve their community space, cores services, technology, and outreach.

Natural and Cultural Resources Goals and Strategies

Goal 1

Promote Bessemer's access to the natural environment as a major quality of life factor to attract residents and business

Strategy 1.1
Develop better access to the Iron Belle Trail from city neighborhoods.

Strategy 1.2
Enhance the winter season as an important natural resource (see Chapter 7).

Strategy 1.3
Support the Public Library and other cultural offerings in the area.

Strategy 1.4

Develop a trailhead behind City Hall for the Iron Belle Trail

Strategy 1.5

Continue to work with local groups to maintain and improve the conditions of our existing parks.

Goal 2

Support the area's historical significance, historic architecture and sites to boost community pride and tourism.

Strategy 2.1
Create a walking tour of Bessemer to include historic buildings, homes, bridges, and sites.

Strategy 2.2
Identify historic buildings and sites with a uniform sign/kiosk.

Strategy 2.3
Support the Bessemer Area Historical Society's efforts to preserve the history of the community.

Goal 3

Encourage the arts.

Strategy 3.1
Work to install murals around town

Strategy 3.2
Support local art groups.

Goal 4

The Library will continue to strive to provide a welcoming sense of place in which all members of the public can interact, exchange ideas, learn and build community as well as read, think, work, and reflect.

Strategy 4.1
Provide services and spaces – both electronic and physical – that allow members of the community to work, learn, interact, and exchange ideas.

Strategy 4.2
Provide the community with facilities that are comfortable, safe and secure.

Strategy 4.3
Ensure that the library environment welcomes and respects all members of our community.

Strategy 4.4
Work to develop a coworking/ business development area.

Strategy 4.5
Expand Services to include resume assistance, tax preparation assistance, book discussions

Strategy 4.6
Create a Little Free Pantry where people can take or give household essentials. A refrigerated option will be in the entry by the library for good requiring refrigeration.

Strategy 4.7
Participate in the 1000 books before Kindergarten and other early literacy programs.

Strategy 4.8
Once gatherings in person are safe, encourage people to use the library as a gathering place.

Strategy 4.9
Continue to stock the little libraries around town.

Goal 5

Provide library resources that inform, educate, inspire, and bring enjoyment to both individuals and the community as a whole.

Strategy 5.1
Provide a quality collection and resources that are responsive to the needs of the community.

Strategy 5.2
Offer programming and cultural opportunities for children, teens and adults that enhance quality of life in the community.

Strategy 5.3
Provide outstanding customer service to support access to the library resources and programs.

Strategy 5.4
Anticipate and integrate new practices and technologies to best serve the needs of our community.

Strategy 5.5
Preserve and share local history that fosters an understanding and appreciation of Bessemer's past.

Goal 6

Develop, implement, and maintain an information technology architecture that accommodates the changing requirements of delivering library services in the 21st century.

Strategy 3.1
Maintain a flexible integrated library system to support core library services.

Strategy 3.2
Invest in technologies that support operational efficiencies.

Strategy 3.3
Select technologies and design systems that enable resource sharing, partnerships, and collaborations.

Goal 7
Engage the entire community in order to understand and meet individual and varying library informational needs.

Strategy 7.1
Implement library services to address the needs of underserved members of the community and those with challenges.

Strategy 7.2
Inform and educate community members about traditional and emerging library resources and programs.

Strategy 7.3
Develop partnerships that address community information needs and leverage resources, including expanded work with educational institutions, non-profits, and the local business community.

Strategy 7.4
Implement high-quality programs that support and empower adults, teens, and children through the acquisition of literacy skills.

Chapter 6: Health

Health Characteristics

With the recent Covid-19 pandemic, more and more attention has shifted to the health of our residents. While the City of Bessemer is not a medical provider, we can work with our partners to shift the culture to a healthier culture and change our built environment to encourage a healthier lifestyle.

It is essential that the City of Bessemer focus on health. Healthy people are better for the economy. They miss less work and are more productive. This improves the economy which further improves health as people can afford a healthier lifestyle.

Healthier people have healthier relationships. There is also less violence in healthier communities; ergo the communities have more cohesion. More cohesion leads to healthier communities as people work together to build healthier communities through events and improvements to recreational opportunities.

With 24.6% of Gogebic County's residents being over the age of 65 while the countries average is 18.5% (US Census Community Resilience Estimates, 2020), a healthy community should be at the forefront of the community's thoughts. Fortunately, the community is located a few miles from Aspirus- Ironwood Hospital. Given that many rural hospitals have been shut down, the community is very lucky to have retained one of America's Top 100 Critical Access Hospitals (CAH) as ranked by the iVantage Strength INDEX™ in 2014. In fact, Gogebic County has more primary care physicians per population than the typical Michigan County (County Health Rankings, 2019).

While the county has more primary care physicians per population than the average Michigan county, Gogebic County is behind in Mental Health Providers and Dentists. The county has one dentist for every 2,160 residents. The state average is 1 to 1,340 (County Health Rankings, 2019). Not only is the county currently short several dentists, the current dentists are nearing retirement. The City of Bessemer needs to work to recruit dentists.

Likewise, the county is short mental health care providers. Gogebic County has 1 mental health care provider for 570 people. The top US performers have 1 for every 290 people (County Health Rankings, 2019). This is a common concern in rural areas as all counties in the Upper Peninsula are considered "Health Professional Shortage Areas" for mental and

behavioral health providers. (Rural Health Information Hub, 2020). However, the city should continue to work with health care partners on attracting and retaining efforts.

Overall, the county is ranked 42 out of 76 Michigan Counties for health outcomes. This leaves the county exceling in some areas, behind in others, and middle of the pack for most. The life expectancy is 79.2 while the state average is 78. Diabetes is a bit higher in Gogebic County with a 14% prevalence compared to the State's average of 11% (County Health Rankings, 2019). A big concern for Gogebic County is the number of children in poverty. Due to the high childhood poverty rates, all students at the Bessemer Area Schools receive free breakfasts and lunches. While there are high rates of poverty, Bessemer Schools remail a school of choice for the area.

The City needs to work to ensure our economic development helps all and not just transplants, people who move from another area to Bessemer. The community should work to ensure we are lifting families out of poverty and that some jobs brought in or developed can employ local residents.

Finally, the City needs to address loneliness in the community. According to National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine a third of people over 45 report loneliness and over a quarter of adults over 65 are considered socially isolated. This loneliness is similar to smoking, obesity, and lack of physical inactivity for reducing life expectancy. It is also associated with a 50% increased risk of developing dementia, 29% increased risk of heart disease, and a 32% increased risk of strokes, (Social Isolation and Loneliness in Older Adults, Opportunities for the Health Care System, 2020).

Goals and Strategies

Goal 1

Assisting local Health Care

Strategy 1.1

Continue efforts to recruit and retain new residents. This could help the local health providers recruit and retain health care workers.

Strategy 1.2

Continue to support our local health care providers.

Strategy 1.3

Continue to work with our local partners including Gogebic-Ontonagon Community Action Agency, Gogebic Range Health Foundation, Community Mental Health, Department of Health and Human Services, MSU-extension, Aspirus- Ironwood, and others to support their efforts.

Goal 2

Assist in recruiting underserved area in the medical field

Strategy 2.1

Work to recruit and retain a dentist

Strategy 2.2

Work to recruit and retain mental health professionals

Goal Three

Adapt the built environment to encourage more activity

Strategy 3.1

Continue to encourage awnings on downtown buildings to help people stay dry while walking.

Strategy 3.2

Have warming stands near places where people recreate in the winter.

Strategy 3.3

Plant conifers on the west sides of parks to protect against harsh winter winds. Plant deciduous trees on the south side of parks to provide shade in the summer.

Strategy 3.4

Continue to work to bring access to the Iron Belle Trail from neighborhoods in the city

Strategy 3.5

Continue to look for funding to replace missing and broken sidewalks.

Goal Four

Encourage recreational events

Strategy 4.1

Continue to offer our parks and city hall auditorium for health and wellness classes.

Strategy 4.2

Help advertise recreational meet-ups

Strategy 4.3

Consider creating events and forming groups of like-minded people to recreate and socialize.

Goal 5

Reduce Loneliness

Strategy 5.1

Encourage social organizations by sharing through social media

Strategy 5.2

Encourage more festivals and events in town

Strategy 5.3

Consider creating events and forming groups of like-minded people to recreate and socialize.

Strategy 5.4

Host more events

Strategy 5.5

Explore a plan to create a community center.

Local Foods

According to USDA “food deserts are areas where people have limited access to a variety of healthy and affordable food. As policymakers consider interventions to increase food access, it is important to understand the characteristics associated with these areas, such as income, vehicle availability, and access to public transportation,” (Characteristics and Influential Factors of Food Deserts, USDA, 2012). Given that the City of Bessemer has very little healthy food available in its stores, the public transportation is infrequent, 6.1% percent of our residents over the age of 16 don’t have access to a car (2010 Census), and the city has higher poverty rates than the average Michigan town it can be assumed that the City of Bessemer meets the definition of a food desert.

Eighty-three percent of survey respondents indicated they would shop at a local grocery store. Fifty-four percent stated they would shop or participate in a supervised community garden. There wasn’t much support in the survey for a traveling grocery store and many commented they didn’t know what it was. Further education would be necessary for a traveling grocery store.

The City of Bessemer has actively worked to recruit a grocery store. Thus, far it hasn’t been successful because the funds required to start a grocery store are astronomical. Individuals in the industry have estimated $2,000,000 is necessary to start a small grocery store in Bessemer. Pulling in a chain grocery store is difficult because the town is close to Walmart and SuperOne. Typically chains like to be located within a few blocks from each other.

Another option for local foods are farmers markets in the summer. The area seems to be about maxed out on farmers markets. There are farmers markets in Ironwood, Ironwood Township, and Hurley. Likewise, farmers set up stands in Bessemer and Ironwood on certain days of the week to sell produce. Talking with board members for the local farmers markets, there doesn’t seem to be room for further farmers markets due to a lack of farmers in the area.

While a less severe issue for the residents, the community doesn’t have a nicer sit-down restaurant not associated with a bar. This hinders Bessemer’s ability to keep tourists in the town and many residents have stated a need for more restaurant options. 92% of survey respondents rated improving the variety of shopping and restaurant services as important or very important. In 2019 the city worked with MEDC and MML to develop a study on restaurants. The study indicated a shortage of restaurants in the community.

Goals and Strategies

Goal 1

Increase healthy food sold in Bessemer

Strategy 1.1

Continue efforts to recruit a grocery store. Consider a traveling grocery store.

Strategy 1.2

Work with future and existing businesses to sell healthy foods.

Strategy 1.3

Start tracking healthy food options in town

Strategy 1.4

Continue to keep an eye on the farmers markets and if conditions change, work to bring one to the city.

Goal 2

Work to build a food community

Strategy 2.1

Update the zoning for growing food in Country Estates zones. It is not straightforward as to what is allowed.

Strategy 2.2

Work with partners to have educational courses in the region such as how to grow food, compost, preserve, and cook fresh vegetables.

Strategy 2.3

Assist with advertising when community partners have local food related classes.

Strategy 2.4

Find partners and volunteers to develop community gardens in vacant spaces.

Strategy 2.5

Search for grant funding to subsidize gardening tools for residents.

Strategy 2.6

Recruit volunteers to make apple trees and fruit bushes more easily accessible in City owned land. Place signs near the fruit indicating people are welcome to help themselves.

Strategy 2.7

Work to ensure the food growers are growing in more sustainable ways that protects the environment.

Goal 3

Recruit a restaurant

Strategy 3.1

Work with partners to start a community commercial kitchen that people can rent to make foods to be sold

Strategy 3.2

Work with the DDA to find space and equipment for a sit-down restaurant to be started in Bessemer

Strategy 3.3

Consider an investment model where local investors pay $1,000 to get the restaurant going and then they get paid back in gift cards over several years.

Environmental Sustainability

Climate Change and the environment are directly related to residents' health. Air quality directly impacts people's life expectancy. Climate Change also threatens our food sources as fish die and farms can no longer grow what they are accustomed to due to more extreme weather and a general rising of global temperatures (US Global Change Research Program).

Many citizens today expect and demand more efforts by local government to improve environmental response and sustainability. Many cities take sustainability very seriously with efforts like recycling, reducing energy use and cost, converting city lighting systems to LED, community gardens, alternative energy production and promoting alternative transportation such as walking and biking.

The City of Bessemer is one of the few communities in the Upper Peninsula to offer curb side pickup of recyclables. Likewise, Xcel energy, the community's energy provider, is shifting to renewable energy faster than many energy providers. Currently 54% of their energy in Michigan is carbon free with only 23% of their energy coming from coal. Their goal is to provide carbon free energy by 2050 and to have reduced carbon emissions by 80% in 2030 compared to their 2005 levels. In 2019 they had already reduced their levels by 44%. The City needs to make this information more readily available to people looking to move to the area.

While the city is fortunate to be able to provide these two environmentally sustainable options, there is more the city can work on.

The City is fortunate to be near the Ottawa National Forest. This provides a beautiful area for recreation and trees to help filter the air. However, in the city, many of the street trees planted decades ago are dying and not being replaced. To quote Sarah Kobos "Our ancestors, who hadn't yet invented air-conditioning or automobiles, understood this. They knew that city building and tree planting went hand in hand. Thus, long before the introduction of zoning codes, cities passed laws requiring trees to be planted along the public rights-of-way… Among the most important to municipalities are significant reductions in stormwater runoff; improved air quality and reductions in greenhouse gases like ozone and carbon dioxide; improved pedestrian and driver safety; and higher taxes resulting from increased property values and

commercial sales," (The magic of tree lined streets, Strong Towns, 2017). The City of Bessemer should work to replant street trees.

Goals and Strategies

Goal 1

Become more environmentally sustainable

Strategy 1.1

Work with partners to replant street trees with a goal of obtaining 40% tree cover.

Strategy 1.2

Continue to explore options for having renewable energy in Bessemer. Consider solar panels, wind turbines, etc.

Strategy 1.3

Work with partners to advertise opportunities for housing assistance to become more energy efficient.

Strategy 1.4

Continue to work on developing complete streets, adding bicycle lanes where appropriate, and connecting neighborhoods to the Iron Belle Trail.

Strategy 1.5

Educate the public on environmentally friendly actions they can take to help the community and themselves.

Strategy 1.6

Support organizations working to improve the environment

Strategy 1.7

Start a Clean-up day to remove large items of garbage and potential environmental contaminants.

Strategy 1.8

Work with partners to develop community gardens in vacant lots.

Strategy 1.9

Watershed management. Work to include rain gardens and landscaping in parking lots for future development.

Strategy 1.10

Determine where wetlands and floodplains are located in the City and work to restrict future building to protect the buildings and the environment.

Chapter 7: Winter City Bessemer

Introduction

A growing number of communities across the northern tier of the United States and in Canada are embracing the winter season and finding the opportunities it offers: economically, socially and culturally. Other northern cities are transforming themselves with things like year-round bicycling lanes, snow management innovations, festivals, skating plazas and all-season town squares, markets and other business opportunities. People want to walk, bike and socialize outside year–round, as long as they can do so with relative ease and comfort. It only makes sense to plan and design our city for winter as much as we do for summer.

In the 1960's, visionaries saw the opportunity created by the area's rugged topography, ample snowfall and a growing winter sports industry, establishing 3 of the top Midwest ski resorts near Bessemer. The area, marketed as "Big Snow Country" boomed as a ski destination. While changing demographics and increased competition have impacted the popularity of the area for downhill skiing, it has continued its success as a winter destination with snowmobiling and cross country skiing filling the winter tourism gap. While winter tourists travel to the area for outdoor fun and adventure, they also want to experience local culture, shopping and entertainment. These values have become more important to people as they plan their vacations and getaways. Bessemer is in a unique position to fill this need by becoming the "ski town" for the Big Snow Country region.

This chapter of the Master Plan provides ideas to make the most of winter's opportunities and to create a culture shift so that our city is considered one of best places to live, work and play in winter and year–round. The goals and actions, when implemented, will minimize winter's negatives and create a more livable city, where the realities of our northern location—snow, ice, and darkness—are resources we use both to make it easier and more fun to go play outside, and to transform Bessemer into a prosperous community.

Northern communities or "winter cities" must become more competitive than their southern counterparts to find their place in today's global marketplace. Unfortunately, the winter season is often dreaded in the North American culture due to

perceived discomfort, inconvenience, and a potential increase in costs. In order to overcome this attitude, communities must embrace the winter season. By applying creative planning approaches to solving winter-related issues, Bessemer can mitigate some of the discomfort and inconvenience of winter. This positive "place making" approach can also benefit the attitudes of residents, and bolster the City's ability to attract new businesses and residents.

Outlined below are some of the positives and negative aspects of the winter season:

Positive Aspects of Winter

- Outdoor recreational opportunities, including downhill and cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, ice fishing, snow shoeing, ice skating, fat tire biking, and hockey.
- Natural beauty, accented by snow and ice
- Increased appreciation for indoor arts, culture, and social activities.

Key winter weather statistics for Gogebic County

Average annual snowfall: 188 inches

Snowfall on 72 days

Snow on the ground: 132 days

January average high and low temperatures: 20 degrees and 3 degrees F

- Winter tourism, special events, and festivals.
- Using ice and snow for civic art.
- Opportunities for innovation and improvement in services, building, and product design.
- Generally speaking, the population is more fit with a strong will to overcome challenges.

Negative Aspects of Winter

- Increased cost for snow management for both the public and private sectors.
- Health costs associated with accidents, both auto-related and pedestrian "slip and fall" incidents.
- Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) and psychological depression related to a lack of sunlight.
- Difficult mobility, particularly for seniors and the disabled, either as pedestrians or in automobiles.
- Prolonged cold, snow, and icy conditions.
- Limited outdoor activity for many persons.

- Increased heating costs and energy consumption.
- A visually monotonous environment dominated by white and gray.

A great winter city will work to enhance the positive aspects of the winter season while trying to mitigate the negative effects. To help reach this goal, a series of recommendations have been developed. These strategies include specific winter design guidelines, as well as the promotion of broader initiatives, such as the development of new winter recreation opportunities,

Goals and Strategies

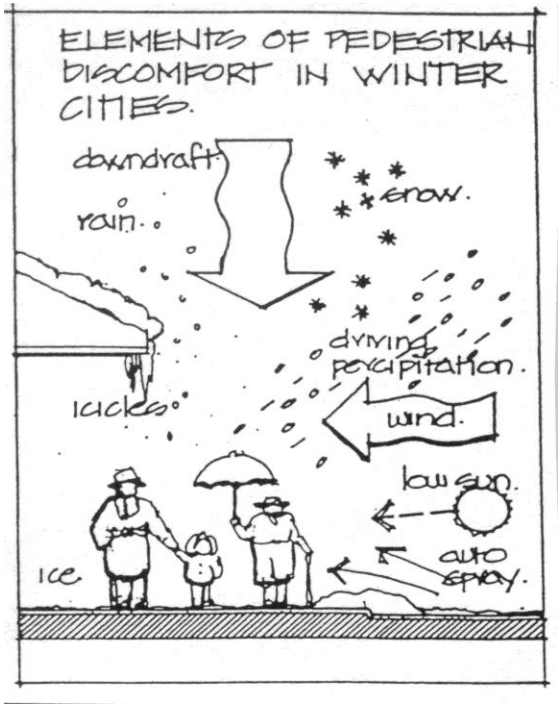
Goal 1

Provide or enhance opportunities for winter outdoor activity

Strategy 1.1
Consider ways to use existing city parks and open space for additional winter activities, such as a sledding hill, an ice skating rink or pathway, outdoor gathering area with a fire pit and creative warming hut.

Goal 2

Improve Winter Transportation for Pedestrians, Cyclists and Public Transit Users



Strategy 2.1
Designate critical pedestrian areas that should receive priority when clearing sidewalks and walkways. Consider recruiting the assistance of local residents, such as business owners, neighborhood groups, or other organizations to maintain some of these critical areas.

Strategy 2.2
Ensure that transition areas such as curb-cuts and bus stop platforms are properly plowed to ensure pedestrian safety. These areas are often a collecting point for large mounds of icy snow due to street plowing.

Goal 3

Design for Winter Safety and Comfort

Strategy 3.1
Utilize solar radiation in the orientation of buildings and outdoor spaces. Such areas should provide a southern exposure to maximize the penetration of heat and sunlight.

Strategy 3.2
Use buildings to protect outdoor spaces, such as vest pocket parks, from prevailing winter winds. Avoid building orientations which will create a wind tunneling effect. Avoid creating public spaces for winter use in areas that are shaded from the sun. Provide shelters or wind blocks in areas that serve as outdoor gathering spaces.

Strategy 3.3
Cover ramps or stairs to protect them from snow and ice. Provide handrails for all public and private walkways that exist on slopes. Particularly hazardous areas, such as steps and ramps, may need to be heated to prevent snow and ice from accumulating.

Strategy 3.4
Design roofs to account for snow and ice accumulation. The design should be strong enough to handle the snow load, and also prevent snow and ice from shedding onto parking areas or pedestrian walkways.

Strategy 3.5
Create transition areas at building entrances to provide patrons with an area to shed snow prior to entering the building.

Strategy 3.6
Consider snow removal in the design of road improvements. For example, curb extensions should be designed as a series of gentle curves, rather than sharp angles to allow for easy maneuverability of equipment around such areas.

Strategy 3.7
Design road cross-sections to provide an area for snow storage adjacent to the road. Creating this additional space between the road and sidewalk prevents snow from being plowed onto the sidewalks when road are cleared.

Strategy 3.8
Evaluate the impacts of winter winds and drifting snow on city streets and walking paths. Redesign areas where wind is problematic to use earth forms and vegetation to reduce wind and drifting snow.

Strategy 3.9
Consider installing snowmelt systems for high-traffic walkways and sloped areas.

Goal 4

Provide the best possible snow management practices and service

Strategy 4.1
Investigate the use of new equipment or innovative technology for snow removal. This is particularly important when existing snow removal practices potentially interfere with walkability.

Strategy 4.2
Balance the need for efficient snow removal with other considerations such as walkability, aesthetics, and parking.

Goal 5

Pay more attention to how the City of Bessemer looks in winter; aesthetics and landscaping.

Strategy 5.1
Plant deciduous trees on the southern face of a building or outdoor area. Such vegetation will provide cooling in the summer (when leaves are present), while still allowing sunlight to filter in during the winter (when leaves have fallen). Coniferous vegetation should be used on the north and west sides to protect the area from prevailing winter winds.

Strategy 5.2
Use berms and vegetation to direct snow drifts away from building entrances.

Strategy 5.3
Select appropriate landscaping for snow storage areas. Grassed or landscaped areas that are used for snow storage are subject to damage and poor growth due to compaction, pollutants, and poor drainage.

Strategy 5.4

Consider using living snow fences to protect open roadways and other areas from prevailing winter winds. These vegetative wind blocks are easier to maintain and have a longer life than snow fences and other man-made wind blocks.

Strategy 5.5
Create “outdoor rooms” using trees and vegetation to shelter exposed areas from prevailing winds. For example, the use of dense coniferous vegetation on a park’s north-west side help block wind, while the space’s southern exposure will maximize heat from solar-radiation. Areas of dense, evergreen vegetation can serve as a “wind sponge”, protecting pedestrians from the wind’s chilling effects.

Strategy 5.6
Use landscaping plant species that offer attractive or useful winter characteristics such as twig color, fruit, or salt-tolerance.

Strategy 5.7
Design municipal facilities to function and look good in all seasons.

Strategy 5.8
Consider color and lighting treatments for public spaces and buildings, in order to offset the darkness and monotony of the winter season. Public art or seasonal light displays provide winter interest and offset the muted tones prevalent in a winter landscape.

Strategy 5.9
Use technology and materials appropriate for a “winter city”. Outdoor furniture should be constructed using appropriate materials such as wood, polyethylene, or vinyl-coated metal. Exposed metal is not appropriate.

Goal 6

Make winter a positive asset to attract business, tourism and new residents

Strategy 6.1
Collaborate with other area organizations to create a sustainable annual winter festival featuring family outdoor activities, snow/ice sculptures, winter market, food and music.

Strategy 6.2
Explore and implement appropriate “best practices” for snow management that will improve service, reduce inconvenience and increase citizen satisfaction.

Strategy 6.3
Consider implementing a “winter market” to capture a greater share of winter tourism.

Strategy 6.4
Dress up downtown for the entire winter season to create a “ski town” image.

Chapter 8: Economic Development

In 1966, the last mine in Bessemer closed. Since then, the City has transitioned and reinvented itself as a center for a four-season outdoor recreation area. There is a strong desire within the community to diversify Bessemer's economy, providing a variety of new sustainable jobs within the City. In addition to this diversification, the community is also strongly committed to revitalizing their existing downtown business district, and seeking ways to encourage infill development and reuse of existing facilities.

Bessemer is in the ideal location for outdoor recreation. Residents and tourists have access to hundreds of miles of beautiful motorized and non-motorized trails for mountain biking, skiing, hiking, ATVs, and snowmobiles. The City is located within 15 miles of Lake Superior, close proximity to three of the best ski hills in the Midwest, and a few miles from Copper Peak, the largest ski jump in the world. There are very active trail groups in the area for trail maintenance and development.

Redevelopment Ready Communities

Redevelopment Ready Communities is an initiative through the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) to help cities promote their developable sites and buildings. It involves gathering and maintaining data on developable sites and buildings to advertise locally and with the state. The program also requires cities to have available incentives, tools and programs to assist with redevelopment.

As of publication, the City of Bessemer is the only community in the UP to be Redevelopment Ready Certified. This certification process helped identify key redevelopment ready sites as well as redevelopment opportunities.

The City is beginning the recertification process and should work through it to update and become recertified.

The City of Bessemer identifies several locations in our downtown, along US-2 and in our industrial park as redevelopment ready. We should continue to market these and update the marketing.

The physical locations survey respondents would like to see redeveloped are ranked as follows: 1. Downtown 2. Residential 3. highway-2 corridor 4. industrial areas 5. trails/ parks.

Redevelopment Ready Community Goals and Strategies

Goal 1

Market vacant City owned and privately owned land for developers.

Strategy 1.1
Prioritize sites for redevelopment efforts and determine which types of businesses are appropriate on these sites. Focus efforts on Industrial land.

Strategy 1.2
Create property information packages.

Strategy 1.3
Create developers' packets and continue actively recruiting businesses through directly mailing developers and by posting the information on our website and other websites such as costar and zoom prospector. Work with WUPPDR and various state agencies on these packets.

Strategy 1.4
Work to recruit needed industries such as dentists and mental health professionals.

Strategy 1.5
Determine what land in the Industrial Park can be developed and market it.

Goal 2

Recertify

Strategy 2.1
Work with RRC to become recertified. Update our documents as required.

Marketing

The City of Bessemer has a well-received brand dubbed “Be Bessemer.” The DDA has updated the welcome signs and banners to include the new brand. The City has updated the vehicles and website with the new brand. The City continues to work to include the brand in future projects.

The brand is intended to identify Bessemer as a place where they can be themselves. Typical be phrases are “Be Outdoorsy,” “Be Community,” and “Be Home.”

The City started a Be Bessemer video series highlighting young people who chose to live in Bessemer. These videos were well received and further videos should be considered as funding is available.

Marketing Goals and Strategies

Goal 1

Continue marketing for tourists

Strategy 1.1

Create Be Bessemer videos highlighting people who moved here from other countries years ago

Strategy 1.2

Work to develop a regional brand

Strategy 1.3

Support the Western U.P. Convention and Visitor Bureau, Ironwood Chamber of Commerce, and Wakefield Chamber of Commerce in their marketing and educational endeavors. These entities help entice tourists to the area and educate the business owners to better serve tourists.

Strategy 1.4
Work with businesses to train employees on all things tourists can do in the area to keep tourists in the area longer.

Goal 2

Connect with residents

Strategy 2.1

Continue updating Facebook and the website with relevant information

Strategy 2.2

Continue a monthly newsletter for residents

Strategy 2.3

Send mailers to residents impacted by zoning changes or construction

Goal 3

Market to recruit people to move here.

Strategy 3.1

Create Be Bessemer videos highlighting people who moved here from other countries years ago

Strategy 3.2

Continue to update Facebook, Instagram, and the website.

Strategy 3.3

Work with DDA and Be Bessemer groups to continue branding and marketing efforts

Strategy 3.4

Host events bragging about the city at 4th of July and Pumpkinfest festivities

Beautification

The more aesthetically pleasing our town is, the more time people will want to spend in the town, and the more others will work to approve the aesthetics of the town. The town should work to clean up the aesthetics where feasible to encourage others to join in. The City of Bessemer has two businesses and near the downtown that should be a focus to work with the owner to fix up.

Beautification Goals and Strategies

Goal 1

Work to improve aesthetics downtown

Strategy 1.1

Work with property owners to develop sensible improvements to their buildings and decorations to increase the appeal.

Strategy 1.2

Consider murals in the downtown either honoring the past or celebrating our present

Strategy 1.3

Work to grow retail in downtown.

Strategy 1.4

Consider adding flower basket and banners to downtown light poles to bring more color to the downtown.

Strategy 1.5

Continue working to maintain flowers and parks in downtown.

Strategy 1.6

Consider adding more white lights to downtown in the night year-round.

Strategy 1.7

Work with owners of blighted downtown buildings to fix them up. Explore options such as a Brownfield's TIF, State funding, and DDA funding.

Employment/ Job Creation

Employment seems to be a top concern of residents. When asked to rank five priorities for the city's focus, Infrastructure and job creation/ expansion were ranked as number one. Likewise, 92% of survey respondents reported encouraging new business development/ growth was important or very important to them and 89% reported that working with existing businesses to promote job growth was important or very important to them.

The City of Bessemer is the Gogebic County seat. This designation brings numerous county and state jobs. Many of our residents also use Bessemer as a bedroom community and work in nearby cities and townships. Some major area employers include Aspirus Hospital, businesses in Ironwood and Wakefield township industrial parks, Gogebic Community College, and various service-based jobs. The wood-based industry centered in Bessemer employs many local people.

An issue with recruiting is the county doesn't have a centralized recruiting agency. There is no economic development office at the county. This leaves cities and townships competing for businesses instead of working together. Likewise, most of the municipalities do not have a community development office who can focus on recruitment.

The City of Bessemer has a relatively high rate of economic mobility for an American community. Economic mobility is the ability for someone to move from one economic class to another throughout their life. A child born in Gogebic County in the bottom 20% of the income distribution has an 11.3% to 12.9% chance of making it to the top 20% over their lifetime. This is the highest rate of social mobility in Michigan. A good educated guess on how the county has obtained relatively high rates of social mobility is the city hasn't segregated the housing. The city has mixed incomes and mixed types of housing in the same neighborhoods. This gives children of all economic backgrounds the chance to play with each other and learn about different ways of life. This also gives kids from lower economic backgrounds connections that children from higher economic backgrounds may have as they get older. This is very rare. It's becoming more and more common for economic classes to segregate into different communities and schools. This leads to less and less economic mobility. The City's relatively high economic mobility is a real gem that we have to work to preserve and strengthen.

Underemployment

During Covid-19, the county's unemployment rate fluctuated drastically. The average unemployment rate in 2020 was 7.9% however the rates shifted between 4.3% and 17.6% in 2020 (US Bureau of Labor Statistics). The area has many seasonal jobs which also changes the unemployment rate monthly. The Western Upper Peninsula tends to have higher unemployment than the State of Michigan, but during Covid, the region lost less jobs and had a lower unemployment rate. In fact, Gogebic County has more jobs in 2021 than they did going into the pandemic. It can be estimated that the unemployment rate will be similar to 2019's average unemployment rate of 5.2% (US Bureau of Labor Statistics). This is typically considered a healthy unemployment rate where it is assumed that workers can quickly find jobs and employers aren't struggling to find employees. However, many employees say they struggle to find employees who meet their needs.

Many area businesses are struggling to find skilled and unskilled workers. As of writing, there are 76 job openings through Michigan Works for Gogebic County with a wide range of job skills required with many having minimal requirements.

Twenty-nine percent of the working age residents in Gogebic County are not in the labor market (United Way, Alice Report, 2019). This doesn't include those who have retired early or are unemployed. If the City can find a way to bring some of these individuals back into the labor market, it could go a long way towards meeting the worker shortage.

On the other side, the City of Bessemer's poverty rate is at 15.9% which is higher than Michigan's and the US (13% and 10.5% respectively). Likewise, Bessemer's median household income is $37,333/year which is about $30,500 less than the United States median ($68,733) and about $20,000 less than Michigan's median ($57,144). This indicates that many Bessemer residents are struggling to make ends meet.

This leaves the city in a position where there are open jobs but not enough people with the right skill set to fill the jobs. This indicates further training is needed for residents. It also indicates businesses may need to find unique and creative ways to train residents. Furthermore, the City needs to continue attraction efforts for future skilled employees.

Automation

Automation is a serious concern for this area. Forty-seven percent of jobs in America are at high risk of being eliminated within the next 10-20 years thanks to significant increases in automation, (The Future of Employment: How Susceptible are Jobs to Computerisation? Frey and Osbourne, 2013)

The region may experience a higher percentage of jobs lost because due to a higher percentage of people working in the service and production/ transportation industries than the national average given the industries are already struggling to find qualified workers.

Bessemer and the Gogebic Range area have some characteristics that are ideal for bringing in higher paying jobs that probably won't become automated. Likewise, Gogebic Community College and the State of Michigan are working to make two-year degrees more accessible to residents to provide training for future employment.

Climate Change

Our climate has been changing and will continue to do so in an accelerating manner. Between 2041-2070 this area is projected to see an increase in our average temperature by 4.5 to 5 degrees Fahrenheit (http://nca2014.globalchange.gov/report/regions/midwest#graphic-17079).

The area is projected to have milder winters, an increase in major storm events and potentially more but less reliable snowfall. These changes may negatively impact Bessemer's strong winter economy in the long term. This Chapter will provide an overview of economic development issues and opportunities, and provides goals and strategies to address these important issues.

With climate change, parts of the southern US may become too hot for many humans, and people may migrate north. The Environmental Protection Agency has various scenarios on the amount of climate change based on greenhouse gas emissions, but they are estimating a nation-wide increase of 1 to 3 degrees by 2065. This seemingly minor increase will have huge impacts on many southern and low-lying states. Many of these areas may become too hot for people and other areas will flood and become uninhabitable. Bessemer could become an ideal location for people to move to, bringing their jobs with them. While this is many years away, the City should recognize that climate change could result in an increase of residents in the future.

Similarly, water managers in 40 of 50 states expect water shortages in at least some part of their state in the next ten years (EPA Water Sense). Sitting, near the world's largest supply of fresh water, Bessemer may become attractive to individuals as water shortages become more of a problem in other states.

Rural Advantage

Not only does the City have the advantage of weather, Bessemer is also rural. Rural blue-collar workers are able to work up the work ladder and make a decent wage. This tends to be less the case for younger, urban blue-collar workers. Combined with a low cost of living and upward mobility, people with blue collared jobs tend to do better in towns like Bessemer.

To further our attraction the city should highlight the very low cost of living and beautiful area. This area will be attractive to adventure seeking people who are interested in starting businesses based on online sales or are based on telecommuting. If people can work from anywhere in the country, they may choose to work in a beautiful, affordable place where they can have a higher quality of life.

In order to attract young people, the city needs to be welcoming to all. Towns that embrace diversity tend to do better in attracting most people. Young people, regardless of their background, tend to choose places more accepting of diversity. Likewise, the City should work to become more welcoming of visitors as they may choose to relocate here if they have a welcoming experience.

Employment/ Job Creation Goals and Strategies

Goal 1

Attract New Businesses to Bessemer

Strategy 1.1

Focus efforts on supporting new and existing small, locally owned businesses and in attracting and retaining skilled labor. Locally owned small businesses are less likely to replace staff with automation and skilled individuals are also less likely to be replaced.

Strategy 1.2

Continue to actively recruit new and different types of businesses. Focus on businesses identified as lacking in the area such as the following

- A grocery store (83% indicated they would shop at a local grocery store even if prices were higher)
- Dentist (110 of 238 indicated a need)
- Contractors of all types (58 of 238 indicated a need)
- Mental Health Services (34 of 238 indicated a need)
- Child care (25 of 238 indicated a need).
- Shopping and restaurant (92% indicated a need)

Strategy 1.3

Continue to follow and update our tax incentive policy.

Strategy 1.4

Work with the library to create a co-working space with access to technology necessary for remote work. Seventy-four percent of survey respondents support coworking spaces for remote workers and business start-ups

Strategy 1.5

Work to build a regional Economic Development Organization.

Strategy 1.6

Work to connect locals looking to start a business with other locals interested in funding businesses.

Strategy 1.7

Inform the public about starting up cooperatively owned businesses/ employee owned and operated businesses to spread out the risk of starting businesses over several individuals.

Strategy 1.8

Continue to market and sell vacant property for $1 if the purchaser builds within a year.

Goal 2

Bring more people downtown

Strategy 2.1
Actively pursue placemaking, a term used to describe creating fun and interesting places in the downtown for very little cost. These efforts are intended to brighten the downtown and build a positive association with our downtown to encourage people to return. Some ideas painting the cross walks fun colors, stringing up lights, having chalk boards for people to write on, etc.

Strategy 2.2
Work with the Parks and Rec Committee to develop a trailhead for the Iron Belle Trail behind City Hall.

Strategy 2.3

Work with businesses to update their Trip Advisor, Facebook, Yelp, and recommend they take the Google Host training series on customer service and tourism.

Strategy 2.4

Continue to fill vacant buildings in the downtown. Decorate them to improve the downtowns inviting qualities.

Strategy 2.5

Work to grow and support events and festivals downtown

Goal 3

Start-up new businesses downtown.

Strategy 3.1
Encourage entrepreneurs through a pop-up shop program. The DDA plans to provide minimum funding of about $3,500 to help a business pop up in the downtown. This makes it easier for entrepreneurs to start their business by lowering their initial start-up costs and thus lowering their risk. It's also a low-cost way to bring new businesses.

Strategy 3.2
Market our area as a great place to start up a business and/or telecommute (working on their computer from anywhere). When people can move anywhere to start a business or to work from their computer, Bessemer is an ideal location. We have the outdoor beauty, reliable internet in town, and inexpensive land.

Strategy 3.3
Work with providers to improve Internet quality. While for some businesses is sufficient, businesses that host a lot of video conferencing and massive data sharing, may find the internet to be slower than satisfactory.

Goal 4

Support and grow area industry

Strategy 4.1
Attract industry that can creatively adapt to market changes.

Strategy 4.2
Build upon the strong wood-based industry presence in the region, and attract manufacturing of customized wood products.

Strategy 4.3
Consider employee-owned and operated industries if owners are looking to sell/ retire. This may help keep the business locally owned and adaptive.

Strategy 4.4
Look to expand industrial area. Consider changing the 60 acres on the east side of Bessemer from commercial to industrial.

Strategy 4.5
Continue to look for funds to develop speculative buildings. There is currently a shortage of buildings for industrial development.

Strategy 4.6
Plot out all industrial land to be sold and determine where is buildable. Purchase a large map to put near US-2 with available land.

Goal 5

Further our welcoming of all.

Strategy 5.1

Work to celebrate immigrants who built this community and people from different backgrounds moving here. Consider making films similar to the Be Bessemer films.

Strategy 5.2

Change existing bathrooms with only one toilet per bathroom into male/ female bathrooms. When building new bathrooms avoid stalls and make family bathrooms.

Strategy 5.3

Celebrate and support local diversity groups and events dedicated to celebrating diversity

Strategy 5.4

Create events that are welcoming to everyone and provide a safe place for people from different backgrounds to meet

Strategy 5.5

Update our flags in the Ethnic Common's park to include one from the tribe and a plaque explaining how this is ceded land

Strategy 5.6

Consider working with a community who is losing their community due to rising water levels to relocate to Bessemer.

Strategy 5.7

Work to develop a volunteer network who can help welcome people to the community. Have them bring a welcome packet with things from businesses to newcomers. Consider working with local partners doing similar packets. Include a map of Bessemer or a link to a map of Bessemer.

Strategy 5.8

Invite newcomers to the newsletter. Include things to do in the community and advertise events coming up.

Strategy 5.9

Meet and Greet events where newcomers can meet. Consider having events on the Iron Belle Trail, at local restaurants, picnics in the park, etc.

Strategy 5.10

Work with local organizations to stress the importance of welcoming newcomers

Strategy 5.11

Work with local businesses to incorporate more Bessemer products.

Strategy 5.12

Work with local businesses to teach employees how to be welcoming and tell visitors neat things to do in the community.

Strategy 5.13

Continue to improve the downtown to make the community more aesthetically welcoming.

Goal 6

Work to reduce poverty

Strategy 6.1

Work with partners to come up with creative ways to reduce poverty in the region.

Strategy 6.2

Explore grant funding to implement poverty reduction.

Existing Businesses

A number of existing local businesses thrive in Bessemer. From a locally owned clothing store, to lumberyards and a plywood plant, to a regionally acclaimed bakery, Bessemer has dedicated businesses. Some of these businesses have struggled from the mines closing, the 2008 recession, and Covid-19 but they are still open and supporting the community. In support of local, existing businesses, the City of Bessemer should offer cooperation and assistance where appropriate to strengthen the business climate.

A few issues have been defined based upon feedback from business owners and community members. There has been a lack of communication between the city and the business owners in the past. The City has been actively working to correct this and should continue to communicate effectively with business owners. This may harm the owner's retirement plan and harms the community. Likewise, some business owners have closed up their business when they retire, rather than sell it due to a lack of knowledge and planning for the transition. Finally, some employers have indicated there are challenges finding an educated workforce.

Existing Business Goals and Strategies

Goal 1
Assist existing business owners

Strategy 1.1
Provide existing business owners who are nearing retirement age with contacts and organizations who can deliver technical assistance and services to assist them with transition and turnover to new owners. This strategy can help local business people achieve their retirement goals while keeping the business present and viable in the community.

Strategy 1.2
Effectively market the DDA's façade improvement assistance program to help property owners fix up their buildings.

Strategy 1.3
Effectively communicate to the business owners about upcoming changes and events that can impact their business.

Strategy 1.4
Actively communicate with the businesses about employee-owned and operated models to consider as they transition into retirement.

Strategy 1.5

Continue to work with Gogebic Community College to work to train residents for existing jobs.

Strategy 1.6
Work to recruit and grow daycare facilities to help employees.

Strategy 1.7
Consider quarterly meet-ups to discuss the community with residents and business owners.

Strategy 1.8
Work with existing business owners to encourage businesses to buy locally.

Strategy 1.9
Try to meet with each business owner yearly to discuss issues and concerns.

Goal 2
Attract and retain an educated workforce.

Strategy 2.1
Continue to work with area Chamber of Commerce organizations and the Western U.P. Conventional and Visitor Bureau to market this area for tourism and people looking to live here, building upon the outdoor recreational activities and special events, including the creation of an online community calendar. Focus efforts on young adults looking for work, to start a business, or remote work from here and retirees.

Strategy 2.2
Support the expansion and maintenance of outdoor recreation efforts inside and outside the Bessemer City limits. Many workers, especially millennials will choose a location to live and then look for work. Whether this is supporting the reopening of Copper Peak, or supporting the construction of trails off the Iron Belle Trail, the City needs to give their support to developing amenities to further attract skilled workforce.

Strategy 2.3
Follow the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Plan to revitalize our downtown to make the City more attractive for people looking at moving to the area. The City should continue to support DDA in their pop-up shop program, façade improvement program, and in their general beautification of the downtown.

Strategy 2.4
Work with Michigan Works and local businesses to determine how we increase wages. Wages have been stagnant in the area for many years. As an example, Gogebic Community College trains many people for jobs that are needed in the area, such as welding and automotive technology, yet our local businesses don't offer as high of wages as other areas, so these skilled workers move to higher paying areas.

Strategy 2.5
Continue to support of the Gogebic-Iron County Young Professional's Club of Gogebic and Iron County. This is a social group for young professionals under 40 years old. It helps connect young professionals with other people in similar positions to help network, and make social connections which are vital to retaining talent.

Strategy 2.6
Develop one regional brand to market the region.

Strategy 2.7
Host a presentation during 4th of July and Pumpkinfest activities discussing the wonderful things the City is doing. Target market is people who have left the area and may consider moving back.

Tourism

The City of Bessemer is located in a tourist area. The tourism activity not only supports a lot of our local businesses but also helps recruit new residents when people visit and fall in love with the area.

Some of our main tourism attractions include our snowmobile trails, three ski hills, Copper Peak, Waterfalls, and Lake Superior. As of writing, the three ski hills are all for sale and Copper Peak is still working to get funding to return the Ski Jump into operation. The City should work with these partners and help develop tourism strategic plans as necessary.

Goal 1
Increase Tourism

Strategy 1.1
Marketing. Continue to market the area regionally and nationally when possible, to recruit tourists.

Strategy 1.2
Work to develop a regional brand.

Strategy 1.3
Assist local partners in developing tourism strategic plans as necessary.

Strategy 1.4
Continue to develop access to the natural resources such as Iron Belle Trail, snow mobile trails, and mountain biking trails.

Strategy 1.5
Continue to work to fix up our downtown to create a more inviting space with restaurants and cafes and no vacant buildings.

Strategy 1.6
Work with our local partners and support their efforts to improve the area for tourists.

Strategy 1.7
Interview tourists to find what they are missing in their experience up here. Work with existing businesses to fill these gaps.

Strategy 1.8
Explore developing an RV Park/ Campground.

Strategy 1.9
Continue to work to find a hotel and/ or restaurant developer

Chapter 9: Land Use

Natural resources, history and transportation have shaped the existing land use in the City of Bessemer. From its early beginnings as an iron mining town, Bessemer has evolved to its current function as a residential and recreational services community, as well as providing industrial employment opportunities. This chapter of the Master Plan provides a Future Land Use Plan, Land Use Goals and Strategies, as well as a Zoning Plan.

Existing Land Use

The City of Bessemer contains a variety of land uses that include residential, commercial, industrial and vacant properties. Much of the City land area is forested. The City has some hills with steep slopes and scenic rock bluffs. There is also land devoted to agriculture within the City limits. Existing land use in the City of Bessemer is described as follows:

The U.S. 2 corridor is characterized by a mix of older and newer commercial development, residential land use, and vacant property.

The downtown district is located south of U.S. 2 along Sophie Street, and includes a number of historic buildings, civic, commercial and office land uses. Some residential units are located above commercial space in downtown buildings. The downtown includes a number of vacant lots suitable for new infill construction of mixed-use retail, office and residential buildings.

Industrial land uses are located west and east of the residential areas of the City.

Several residential neighborhoods of varying density surround the central core of the City.

There are large tracts of land within the city limits that exhibit rural characteristics, including agricultural and low-density residential land use.

An Existing Land Use Map is included in the Appendix D.

Future Land Use

Future land use in the City of Bessemer will generally follow the existing development patterns. This section describes future land use categories and includes a table comparing the categories to zoning districts. A Future Land Use Map is included in Appendix E.

Residential

Many of the city neighborhoods are in good condition and provide affordable housing opportunities. These neighborhoods should be protected by enforcement of building and zoning codes.

Future residential development should focus on infill development and fixing existing houses. Infill development is desirable to development in the more rural parts of town because there are more taxes per built infrastructure, it's more environmentally friendly, and it retains the character of the more rural parts of the town. This can be encouraged by making the downtown and parks more attractive. This will encourage people to live within walking distance of the downtown. To make this a reality, the city will have to decrease the required lot size for building in R-2 district from 4,500 sf to something more in line with existing lots of 2,250 sf.

Smart Growth Tenets

- Create a range of housing opportunities and choices.
- Build/enhance walkable neighborhoods
- Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration
- Foster a distinctive, attractive community with a strong sense of place
- Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost-effective
- Mix land uses
- Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas
- Provide a variety of transportation choices
- Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities
- Take advantage of compact design.

Rural Residential/Agriculture

There are large areas within the city limits that exhibit rural characteristics. Some of these sites offer great views of the surrounding hills, bluffs and woods, making them highly desirable for future low density residential development.

Consider changing the land near Tilden Hill that had been intended for a subdivision and hasn't been treated as such to Country Estates.

Core Mixed Use (Downtown)

Downtown Bessemer and Sophie Street presents a charming image, from its intersection at U.S 2 to its terminus at the City Hall. While several buildings are somewhat run down, others have been renovated and new uses have emerged in other buildings. Sophie St will be redone as part of the 2021 project. Some sidewalk and bulbouts may not be replaced. The DDA should consider updating as possible.

A better streetscape and community gateway at U.S. 2 would help improve the image of the highway and enhance business development downtown. Future commercial land use requiring small sites in the City of Bessemer should be directed to downtown or the U.S 2 corridor near downtown, as recommended in this plan and in the "Bessemer Image/Character Study" done by Michigan State University students.

Corridor Mixed Use Development

Commercial development along U.S 2 should be directed to areas already developed and served by utilities. Commercial development should not be allowed to impact the existing residential neighborhood west of downtown, as the Craftsman-era and older, well-kept homes in this area present a very positive image of the community.

The City needs to develop a long-term plan for the 60 acres to the east of town along US-2. The city should determine if this should stay as Cooridor-mixed use, or be changed to industrial or residential. Likewise, land to the north of US-2 in the eastern part of the city should be discussed to determine if it should remain Country Estates or change to corridor mixed use.

Industrial

Industrial land use should be directed to the existing Industrial Park area west of town and to the Steiger site east of the City. The entrance road to the City Industrial Park at U.S 2 should be improved to include a sign identifying the industrial park and a directory of businesses in this area. The City should consider turning the 60 acres east of Steiger's into industrial land.

Redevelopment Opportunities

Higher intensity business and industrial development opportunities exist along the undeveloped western highway corridor area and in the current eastern industrial park area.

There are some underutilized properties along the central portion of the highway corridor that could be redeveloped.

In the downtown area, underutilized buildings and lots have potential for infill mixed use (retail on ground floor with offices and/or apartments above) development and the creation of public gathering spaces.

Goals and Strategies

The goals and policies on this page support the vision and guiding principles of the plan and should be used to inform future decision-making and action.

Goals are broad statements that describe a desired outcome. Goals are often long-term in scope.

Strategies describe a specific course, action or way in which programs and activities are conducted to achieve a stated goal, and are often

Land Use Goals and Strategies

Goal 1

Ensure that new development follows Smart Growth tenets, such as prioritizing compact development and channeling new development to make the best use of existing infrastructure. This will enhance efficiency in public service provision and infrastructure maintenance, and help preserve natural resource lands

Strategy 1.1
Provide incentives for ground-floor retail combined with upper-level residential uses, including the use of tax increment financing, low-income tax credits (affordable housing), and façade improvement funds, and reduced land cost.

Strategy 1.2
Prioritize the rehabilitation or reuse of vacant and underutilized properties or the conversion of single-uses into mixed-use developments as a preferred strategy over new development.

Strategy 1.3
Work to make infill projects more feasible by reducing the square footage required to build in the R-2 district.

Goal 2

Foster a distinctive, attractive community with a strong sense of place.

Strategy 2.1
Encourage new development or redevelopment that is compatible with the scale and architecture of existing properties (especially in the traditional, historic neighborhoods and Downtown) while preserving existing natural features as much as possible.

Strategy 2.2
Require landscaping or public art or other such aesthetic treatment along long, blank walls to improve community aesthetics, and encourage pedestrian activity.

Strategy 2.3
Pursue streetscaping and aesthetic enhancements for the US-2 corridor through the City, including pedestrian scale lighting, street trees, bicycle amenities such as parking facilities, bicycle lanes, and wayfinding and gateway signage.

Goal 3
Improve residential neighborhoods.

Strategy 3.1
Continue to enforce appropriate blight and rental-inspection ordinances and utilize Municipal Civil Infractions methodology for enforcement.

Strategy 3.2
Encourage maintenance/upkeep of properties with incentives and volunteer efforts.

Strategy 3.3
Improve maintenance and reconstruction of infrastructure/roads in the neighborhoods to encourage private investment.

Strategy 3.4
Add small neighborhood parks, gathering areas, trails/trail connections, and community gardens as needed or desired within neighborhoods.

Strategy 3.5
Encourage in-fill development of houses and the repair and renovation of existing houses to improve the housing stock.

Strategy 3.6
Work to make infill projects more feasible by reducing the square footage required to build in the R-2 district.

Goal 4
Improve industrial land stock

Strategy 4.1
Analyze land owned by the city in industrial zones to determine if the city can sell the land as developable lots.

Strategy 4.2
Explore changing the 60 acres of land owned by the city to the east of town into industrial land if sufficient sites don't exist in the current industrial park. This land will need to be better developed.

Zoning Plan

This plan satisfies the requirement of P.A. 33 of 2008 for a local unit of government that has adopted a zoning ordinance, to have a zoning plan within the master plan, including an explanation of how the land use categories on the future land use map relate to the districts on the zoning map.

Comparison of Future Land Uses to Current Zoning Districts

The following table contains a summary of how the future land use categories for the City of Bessemer relate to the current zoning ordinance categories.

Future Land Use Category	Zoning Category
Rural Residential & Agricultural	**Country Estate (CE)**
Single-Family Residence	**Single-Family Residential (R-1)**
Medium Density Residential	**Mixed-Density Residential (R-2)**
Downtown Commercial Medium Density Residential Commercial	**Core Mixed-Use (C-1)**
Commercial Single-Family Residence Medium Density Residential Rural Residential & Agricultural Mixed-Use	**Corridor Mixed-Use (C-2)**
Industrial **Mixed-Use** Rural Residential & Agricultural	**Light Industrial (M-1)**
Industrial	**General Industrial (M-2)**
	Planned Development Overlay (PD)
	Resource Protection Overlay (RP)

Zoning Ordinance Recommendations

The City of Bessemer Zoning Ordinance was adopted in 2011 and is fairly current. The Ordinance meets the requirements of **MICHIGAN ZONING ENABLING ACT (Act 110 of 2006).** While the ordinance does address many "best practices", such as site plan review, landscaping requirements, and storm water management, there are local food allowances needs to be clarified. This section of the Land Use Chapter will address some of these needs.

1. Update the local food allowances in the zoning for clarification.

2. Continue to annually review and approve a Zoning Ordinance fee schedule that covers all staff, mailing and publishing costs.

3. Consider changing the R-1 land near Tilden Rd to CE.

4. Consider rezoning 60 acres owned by the city on the east side of the town to meet future needs.

Chapter 10: Transportation

Like many American cities, both small and large, Bessemer is auto-dependent town. Many businesses are located on US-2, which makes them more visible to potential customers driving through, but aren't bicycle or pedestrian accessible. Likewise, many residents don't live within walking distance of downtown, making the automobile a first choice in transportation. This leaves a portion of our population at risk.

The recent citizen survey revealed that 6.1% percent of our residents over the age of 16 don't have access to a car and 6% walk to work (2010 Census). The city needs to consider these residents as we discuss transportation to ensure we provide complete streets that are friendly and accessible to all modes of transportation.

Gogebic County is fortunate to have the Gogebic County Transit Authority. This is a partially tax-payer funded bus system that services the community. It is a Flex Route system where people can be picked up at bus stops or near bus stops at their house if they call in advance. The authority also provides Rides to Wellness with the help of Superior Health Foundation. This helps provide non-emergency rides to doctors appointments across Michigan and Wisconsin. In the Western- Upper Peninsula, many residents have to travel to Duluth, Rhinelander, and Wausau for doctor's appointments. This provides rides for people for people unable to drive. The Transit Authority has seen a decrease in riders due to Covid-19. Since the height of covid, the ride numbers are increasing and they are hoping it will continue to increase so they can increase their hours. The City should continue to support such a vital part of the community.

The City of Bessemer is centered within a few miles of the neighboring Wakefield and Ironwood on US-2, which runs from St Ignace, Michigan all the way to Everett, Washington. The City's industrial park is on an all-season road allowing for

year-round transportation of heavy trucks and Black River Road/Moore St/ Spring Street is a Local Rural Task Force funded road. The rest of the streets are maintained completely by the city.

Bessemer is close to the Gogebic-Iron County Airport which provides reasonable daily flights to Chicago and Minneapolis. The county also has an Indian Trails bus stop in Ironwood providing regional bus transportation. The Gogebic Transit Authority provides local bus transportation.

A motorized trail runs through Bessemer. The Gogebic Range Trail Authority maintains this trail, part of a regional motorized sports trail network providing snowmobilers and ATV riders a safe trail around the region.

The City also offers non-motorized transportation options. The Iron Belle Trail is a State of Michigan initiative to create a non-motorized trail from Belle Isle, in Detroit, to Ironwood. The trail extends from Hurley, through Ironwood and Bessemer to Ramsay. Once off the trail, most side streets have light traffic that allows for safe bicycling. The Iron Belle Trail is hoping to expand to Wakefield from Ramsay.

Bessemer's city streets have been deteriorating in condition for years, due to a lack of funding. Ninety-three percent of survey respondents ranked improving streets as very important or important. US Highway 2 and Moore/Spring St are not bicycle friendly and in many parts aren't pedestrian friendly either. Similarly, sidewalks throughout the community are deteriorating. The City pays for half of the materials for sidewalk replacements with the property owner covering the other half plus labor. This is infrequently used. Except in the downtown, sidewalks are not cleared in the winter, making walking dangerous in the winter. The City and DDA plan to start snowplowing parts of the sidewalk on the highway after the highway is redone in 2021 and 2022.

US-2 is being reconstructed starting in 2021. As part of this reconstruction, the road will become a three-lane highway. This will provide a safer, new sidewalk 4 feet away from the road. Likewise, through the City's USDA-RD reconstruction projects, sidewalks through town are being replaced where disturbed. This funding only covers sidewalk that is disturbed so in places there will be new sidewalk blocks between deteriorating sidewalk blocks.

Seventy-four percent of survey respondents ranked improving visual appeal on highway 2 as important of very important. The ideal time to improve the aesthetics of US-2 would be in conjuncture with the reconstruction of US-2. However, the city isn't eligible for any grant funding to develop the aesthetics. The DDA and City will continue to discuss ways to cheaply improve the aesthetics.

While the state increased the gas tax to further fund roads in municipalities, the City's overall revenue isn't projected to increase in line with the projected cost increase. Therefore, the City may have to rely on the gas tax to cover some of the road funding that has traditionally come from the General Fund and not increase our funding towards streets.

Safe Routes to Schools provides grant funds to fix up sidewalks leading to schools. The city should continue to explore this to determine whether we can fix up sidewalks leading to the schools for a fraction of the entire cost.

Finally, there will be dramatic changes to the transportation as we know it. More and more cars will become electric and hybrid. This will impact the city's funding as most of our road funds come from gas tax. Likewise, electric cars need charging stations. Along with the change to electric cars may be a change to autonomously driving vehicles. This may result in more car sharing models and less ownership which would mean a dramatic shift in needs. Instead of parking lots, gas stations, and garages, the community would need charging docks.

Transportation Goals and Strategies

Goal 1

Maintain and update our existing streets.

Strategy 1.1
Proactively maintain newer streets. The City of Bessemer received new pavement on many roads through a Sewer and Water Project in 2017/18 and will get more new streets as part of the 2021-2023 USDA-RD project. As these will be the newest streets in town, the city should proactively maintain them with a chip and seal every 8-10 years.

Strategy 1.2
With the Sewer and Water Project, and any other road project, when street corners are reconstructed, the corner curbing should be made ADA compliant.

Strategy 1.3
Consider complete streets in all street reconstructions.

Strategy 1.4

Work to repaint or replace street signage throughout town

Goal 2

Improve our non-motorized transportation facilities.

Strategy 2.1
Connect Bessemer neighborhoods with the Iron Belle Trail, as shown on the map in the Appendix.

Strategy 2.2
Paint bold and interesting crosswalks to create visual interest in the community and enhance pedestrian safety.

Strategy 2.3
Look into the Safe Routes to School program for grant funds to repair sidewalks that access the school. While a match is required, the City should put priority into these sidewalks for students.

Strategy 2.4
Work to plow more sidewalks in the City of Bessemer particularly the sidewalk along US-2.

Goal 3
Work to adapt the city to the changing landscapes of transportation

Strategy 3.1 Look at creative funding mechanisms if the city receives less funding in gas tax

Strategy 3.2 Work to develop charging stations

Strategy 3.3 Continue to evaluate our parking needs as the landscapes change.

Strategy 3.4 Work with existing businesses built around gas powered vehicles to adapt.

Chapter 11 General City Operations

This Chapter will address the relationships between the City and its residents as well as general operations that need to be reviewed.

Recruitment and Education of Public Officials

Recruiting and training dedicated Commission and Council members should always be a priority. The City of Bessemer currently has a City Council, eight commissions appointed directly through the City, and three boards less directly through the City. The City should continue to work to develop young leaders.

Public Participation

Public participation is a key to our City's future and maintaining a relationship with the community. Improving communication, establishing trust, generating new ideas, and garnering community support for initiatives are benefits of good community engagement and involvement.

Recently the City of Bessemer updated their website, created a Facebook page, and created an Instagram account. The City should continue to actively update these to keep residents informed.

The City of Bessemer should continue to develop a monthly newsletter. The newsletter should update residents on the budget, and construction projects, hot button topics, and more. For cost savings, the newsletter can be an email newsletter and be posted on Facebook as well. If funds become available, the city should consider mailing the newsletter to residents.

The community should work to create more events where people comfortably interact with public officials and others unlike them. People who report access to an abundance of community events are more likely to say that local police are effective (+ 31%); that they interact with their neighbors (+10%); and that they work with others for change (+11%) (Assembly – Civic Design Guidelines, Center for Active Design, 2018)

Finally, the City of Bessemer should continue to update the Public Participation Plan which explains how the City should actively communicate with residents about changes and redevelopment.

.

Community Pride

The City is actively working to improve the community for residents. Seventy- six percent of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they feel welcome in the community. Five percent disagreed or strongly disagreed. This indicates there is a lot of pride in the community but it can always be improved upon.

Data Collection Process

The City needs to actively track the progress it makes. This helps encourage others to assist in tackling our issues and helps show how far the community has progressed. The City should strongly consider a dashboard of hot topic items. Some suggestions are as follows

a. Measure number of people voting in local elections
b. Obesity Rate
c. Number of fruits and vegetables that can be purchased in the city
d. Unemployment/ Underemployment
e. Median Wage
f. Number of downtown business vacancies
g. Labor Force participation rate
h. High school graduation rate
i. Crime rate
j. Number of Pre-term births
k. Premature death rate
l. Money invested into housing

Emergency Management

During the pandemic, it was made clear how important emergency management plans are. The City needs to work on the Disaster Recovery Plan and include plans if the internet goes down and if there is another pandemic.

Goal 1

Develop Young Leaders

Strategy 1.1

Continue to have events with the city officials present. This will help people feel more comfortable approaching the city to help out.

Strategy 1.2

Work with the schools to have more youth participation. Ideas include micro-internships, youth representatives on the parks and rec, and having city workers talk in classes about their jobs.

Strategy 1.3

Continue to actively train and welcome all new members of commissions and the council.

Strategy 1.4

Connect with Facebook groups from graduating classes

Goal 2

Increase public engagement

Strategy 2.1

Continue to produce an educational and interesting monthly newsletter

Strategy 2.2

Continue to update Facebook, website, and Instagram

Strategy 2.3

Host more festivals and events where the public interacts with public officials.

Strategy 2.4

Have informational sessions on city's successes at 4th of July and Pumpkinfest.

Strategy 2.5

Do a better job at celebrating successes.

Strategy 2.6

Continue Townhalls with Ironwood and Wakefield to discuss important topics.

Strategy 2.7
Work to develop a more participatory budgeting process

Strategy 2.8

Consider crowd sourcing policy considerations.

Goal 3
Restore and Grow Pride in Bessemer

Strategy 3.1
Continue the Be Bessemer Videos

Strategy 3.2
Continue to actively engage with residents

Strategy 3.3
Continue to improve the community

Strategy 3.4
Embrace our history. Highlight how Bessemer became the County Seat, Bessemerites are a tough people, record stories from the past, and support the historical society.

Goal 4
Data Collection

Strategy 4.1
Create a dashboard updated annually

Strategy 4.2
Continue to send out surveys on zoning, Pop-Up Shops, housing need, etc.

Goal 5
Emergency Management

Strategy 5.1
Complete the Disaster Relief Plan and include plans if internet goes down or if there is another pandemic.

Chapter 12: Recruiting Young Adults

Need

Since the 1970's, the City of Bessemer has lost approximately 40% of our population. The City needs to work with residents and community partners to reverse this. One of the biggest challenges is the average age of the residents is increasing. Younger people are leaving once they graduate high school and if they come back, they are having less children than previous generations. The K-12 schools are seeing this decline in their enrollment and budgets as well.

This is leaving the city in a cycle where the city and schools are forced in to cutting services to make the budget balance. Then less people want to move in and budgets have to be cut further. Strides have been taken to start recruiting young adults and to bring in outside funds for infrastructure. However, more drastic action needs to be taken.

Recruiting young adults needs to be a top priority for the city. To be successful in the attraction of young people, the city needs to focus efforts on what young adults are looking for in a community.

Goals and Strategies

Goal 1

Make the City Attractive for young adults

Strategy 1.1

Housing. Work to improve the housing stock. See Chapter 3

Strategy 1.2

Work to provide more daycare opportunities. Currently the county needs 230 more daycare clots for children aged 0-5.

Strategy 1.3

Continue to encourage and support local foods such as local farms, community gardens, residential gardens, farmers markets, etc to create a more stable food source. See Chapter 6

Strategy 1.4

Continue to support the Gogebic Range Young Professionals

Strategy 1.5

Continue to work towards a bicycle friendly and centered community with public transportation and car charging stations. See Chapter 10.

Strategy 1.6

Continue to grow the downtown with public gathering places, coffee shops, brew pubs, outdoor dining, and green space. See chapter 7 and 8.

Strategy 1.7

Continue to support arts and culture. See Chapter 8

Strategy 1.8

Continue to work to provide better internet. See Chapter 8.

Strategy 1.9

Continue to promote outdoor recreation.

Strategy 1.10

Continue to help our schools so they can continue to provide exceptional K-12 education.

Strategy 1.11

Continue to work with entrepreneurs and develop co-working spaces and start-up assistance. See Chapter 8.

Strategy 1.12

Continue to work with our partners to provide renewable energy

Strategy 1.13

Work with local and regional partners to diversify the available jobs to include jobs that are less likely to become roboticized.

Goal 2

Marketing

Strategy 2.1

Continue to actively market Bessemer for young professionals. Consider working with Travel Ironwood and the CVB. Consider another series of the Be Bessemer videos.

Chapter 13: Timeline

Timeline per action type

Housing

Action Item	Responsible Party	Invested Parties	Timeline	Funding Source	Plan Item
Vacant Property Registry	City Council, Manager	Planning Commission, various housing organizations	2022	minimum	Ch 3, Strategy 1.4
Flipping Houses	Manager	City Council, Planning Commission, various housing and planning organizations	2023	TBD	Ch 3 Strategy 1.11
Research and consider Neighborhood Improvement Authorities	Manager, City Council, Neighborhood	Planning Commission, various housing and planning organizations	2024	minimum	Ch 3 Strategy 1.12
Welcome signs in vacant lots	Manager		2022	Minimum, general fund	Ch 3, Strategy 2.1

Tiny House Marketing	Manager	Planning Commission, various housing and planning organizations	2023	TBD	Ch 3, Strategy 2.6
Monitor Short Term Rentals	Manager, City Council	Planning Commission, various housing and planning organizations	2022 and ongoing	minimum	Ch 3, Strategy 2.7
Notify local real estate agencies of vacant land available	Manager		2021 and ongoing	minimum	Ch 3, Strategy 2.10

Infrastructure

Action Item	Responsible Party	Invested Parties	Timeline	Funding Source	Plan Item
Create Road Plan	Manager, City Council, DPW	Residents	2023/ 2024	Major and Local Streets	Ch 4, Strategy 2.1
Connect neighborhoods to Iron Belle Trail	Parks and Rec, Manager		Ongoing	TBD	Ch 4, Strategy 2.2
Adopt a pot hole	DPW, City Council, Manager	Residents	2023	Self funding	Ch 4, Strategy 2.3
Consider going out for a road bond	City Council, Manager		2024/ 2025	Major and Local Streets	Ch 4, Strategy 2.4
Replace Bluff Valley Reservoir	DPW, City Council, Manager	GRWA	2023/ 2024	Water Fund and Grant funding	Ch 4, Strategy 6.1
Replace Galvanized Service Lines	DPW, City Council, Manager	Engineers	ongoing	Water Fund and Grant Funding	Ch 4, Strategy 6.3
Update Water Asset Management Plan	DPW, City Council, City Manager	Engineers	2023/2024	Water Fund and Drinking Water Asset Management Grant	Ch 4, Strategy 6.4

Galena Area Storm Sewer	DPW, City Council, City Manager	residents	2021/2022	TBD	Ch 4, Strategy 7.1
East End Storm Sewer	DPW, City Council, City Manager	residents	2023/ 2024	TBD	Ch 4, Strategy 7.2
Gold St failing culvert	DPW, City Council, City Manager	residents	2024	TBD	Ch 4, Strategy 7.3
Storm Sewer Plan	DPW, City Council, City Manager	residents	2025	TBD	Ch 4, Strategy 7.4
Repaint or replace street signs	DPW, Manager	residents	2023	Local and Major St Funds	Ch 10 Strategy 1.4
Plow more sidewalks	DPW, DDA, Manager		2022	DDA	Ch 10, Strategy 2.4

City Hall

Action Item	Responsible Party	Invested Parties	Timeline	Funding Source	Plan Item
Upgrade Accessibility	City Council, Manager		2022	General Fund	Ch 4, Strategy 8.1
Comprehensive Plan for City Hall	City council, Manager, Library		2021/ 2022	Minimum	Ch 4, Strategy 8.4

Natural and Cultural Resources

Action Item	Responsible Party	Invested Parties	Timeline	Funding Source	Plan Item
Iron Belle Trailhead	Parks and Rec, Manager, City Council	Residents	2020-2025	DNR Trust Fund, fundraising	Ch 5, Strategy 1.4
Walking Tour of Bessemer	DDA, Manager		2026	TBD	Ch 5, Strategy 2.1
Identify Historic Buildings and sites with uniform sign/ kiosk	DDA, Manager		2026	TBD	Ch 5, Strategy 2.2

Work to install murals around town	DDA, Manager		2025	TBD	Ch 5, Strategy 3.1
Co-working/business development area	Library, Manager, DDA		2022	TBD	Ch 5, Strategy 4.4
Little Free Pantry	Library		2021-2022	TBD	Ch 5, Strategy 4.6
Implement 1000 Books before Kindergarten program	Library		2022	TBD	Ch 5, Strategy 4.7

Health

Action Item	Responsible Party	Invested Parties	Timeline	Funding Source	Plan Item
Work to recruit a dentist and mental health providers	Manager	CMH, GRHF, Aspirus	ongoing	TBD	Ch 6, Strategy 2.1 and 2.2
Work with existing businesses to bring in healthier foods	Manager	Local Businesses, DDA	2024	Minimal	Ch 6, Food, Strategy 1.2
Update zoning for food in CE zones	Planning Commission, Manager	City Council	2022	Minimal	Ch 6, Food, Strategy 2.1
Work to develop Community Gardens	Manager, Residents		2025		Ch 6, Food, Strategy 2.4
Work to make fruit trees more accessible	Manager, Residents		2025		Ch 6, Food, Strategy 2.6

Environmental Sustainability

Action Item	Responsible Party	Invested Parties	Timeline	Funding Source	Plan Item
Determine Tree Cover in town	Manager		2023	Minimal	Ch 6, Env. Sus. Strategy 1.1
Create rain gardens	Manager		2026	TBD	Ch 6, Env. Sus. Strategy 1.9
Determine locations of wetland and floodplains	Manager, DPW		2026	TBD	Ch 6, Env. Sus. Strategy 1.10

Winter City

Action Item	Responsible Party	Invested Parties	Timeline	Funding Source	Plan Item
Create an Ice Skating Rink	Parks and Rec, Manager	Residents	2022	General Fund	Ch 7, Strategy 1.1

Marketing

Action Item	Responsible Party	Invested Parties	Timeline	Funding Source	Plan Item
Be Bessemer videos highlighting people who live here from other countries	DDA, Manager		2024	TBD	Ch 7, Marketing, Strategy 1.1
First Impression Business Training	DDA, Manager	Chamber of Commerce, CVB	2025	TBD	Ch 7, Marketing, Strategy 1.4
Host events at 4th of July and Pumpkinfest to recruit people	Manager, City Council	Pumpkinfest, 4th of July Committee	2022	minimal	Ch 7, Marketing, Strategy 3.4
Work with Businesses to update Trip Advisor, Facebook, Yelp	Manager, DDA		2024	minimal	Ch 7, Employment, Strategy 2.3

Beautification

Action Item	Responsible Party	Invested Parties	Timeline	Funding Source	Plan Item
Work with Property Owners to improve appeal of buildings	Manager, DDA		2025	Minimal	Ch 7, Beautification, Strategy 1.1
Consider adding flower baskets and banners downtown	DDA		2024	DDA	Ch 7, Beautification, Strategy 1.4

Consider adding more white lights in downtown	DDA		2026	DDA	Ch 7, Beautification, Strategy 1.6
Streetscaping along US-2	DDA, City Council, Manager	Businesses	2025	DDA	Ch 9, Strategy 2.3

Employment/ Job Creation

Action Item	Responsible Party	Invested Parties	Timeline	Funding Source	Plan Item
Plot out industrial land to be sold	Manager, Council, DPW		2021	General Fund, Grant funding	Ch 7, Employment, Strategy 4.6
Work to recruit/ grow Day care offerings	Manager	Residents, Day Care Providers	2025	USDA	Ch 7, Businesses, Strategy 1.6
Quarterly Meet-ups	Manager, City Council	Residents, Business owners	2022	minimal	Ch 7, Businesses, Strategy 1.7
Work with existing Businesses to purchase locally	Manager, DDA	Business Owners	2025	minimal	Ch 7, Businesses, Strategy 1.8
Interview Tourists about gaps in experience	Manager	Business Owners, Chamber, CVB	2024	minimal	Ch 7, Tourism, Strategy 1.7
Explore Developing an RV Park	City Council, Parks and Rec, Manager		2025	TBD	Ch 7, Tourism, Strategy 1.8
Consider rezoning 60 acres owned by city on the east side of town	Planning Commission, Manager, City Council		2026	minimal	Ch 9, Zoning recommendations 4

Further Welcoming

Action Item	Responsible Party	Invested Parties	Timeline	Funding Source	Plan Item
Change bathrooms to family bathrooms where feasible	Manager, Parks and Rec		2022	Minimal	Ch 7, employment, Strategy 5.2
Include flag from local tribe in Ethnic Commons	Manager, DDA		2023	DDA	Ch 7, Employment, Strategy 5.5
Develop Welcoming Committee	Manager	Residents	2024	Minimal	Ch 7, Employment, Strategy 5.7
Meet and Greet Events	Manager	Residents	2024	Minimal	Ch 7, Employment, Strategy 5.9

Public Participation

Action Item	Responsible Party	Invested Parties	Timeline	Funding Source	Plan Item
Grow Events	Manager, Council, Commissions	Residents, businesses	ongoing	TBD	Various
More youth participation	Manager	Schools	2024	minimal	Ch 11, Strategy 1.2
Connect with facebook groups of graduating classes	Manager, Intern	Schools	2025	minimal	Ch 11, Strategy 1.4
Develop a more participatory budget	Manager, Clerk/ Treasurer	Residents	2023	minimal	Ch 11, Strategy 2.7

Pilot Crowd Sourcing Public Policy	Manager, City Council	Residents	2024	minimal	Ch 11, Strategy 2.8
Create a dashboard	Manager, City Council, Commissions		2021	minimal	Ch 11, Strategy 4.1
Finalize Disaster Recovery Plans	Manager, Library, DPW, City Council		2021	minimal	Ch 11, Strategy 5.1

Yearly Timeline

2021

Timeline	Action Item	Responsible Party	Invested Parties	Funding Source	Plan Item
Notify local real estate agencies of vacant land available	Manager		2021 and ongoing	minimum	Ch 3, Strategy 2.10
Galena Area Storm Sewer	DPW, City Council, City Manager	residents	2021	TBD	Ch 4, Strategy 7.1
Comprehensive Plan for City Hall	City council, Manager, Library		2021/ 2022	Minimum	Ch 4, Strategy 8.4
Iron Belle Trailhead	Parks and Rec, Manager, City Council	Residents	2020-2025	DNR Trust Fund, fundraising	Ch 5, Strategy 1.4
Work to recruit a dentist and mental health providers	Manager	CMH, GRHF, Aspirus	ongoing	TBD	Ch 6, Strategy 2.1 and 2.2
Plot out industrial land to be sold	Manager, Council, DPW		2021	General Fund, Grant funding	Ch 7, Employment, Strategy 4.6
Finalize Disaster Recovery Plans	Manager, Library, DPW, City Council		2021	minimal	Ch 11, Strategy 5.1

Create a dashboard	Manager, City Council, Commissions		2021	minimal	Ch 11, Strategy 4.1
Little Free Pantry	Library		2021-2022	TBD	Ch 5, Strategy 4.6

2022

Timeline	Action Item	Responsible Party	Invested Parties	Funding Source	Plan Item
Vacant Property Registry	City Council, Manager	Planning Commission, various housing organizations	2022	minimum	Ch 3, Strategy 1.4
Welcome signs in vacant lots	Manager		2022	Minimum, general fund	Ch 3, Strategy 2.1
Monitor Short Term Rentals	Manager, City Council	Planning Commission, various housing and planning organizations	2022 and ongoing	minimum	Ch 3, Strategy 2.7
Connect neighborhoods to Iron Belle Trail	Parks and Rec, Manager		Ongoing	TBD	Ch 4, Strategy 2.2
Galena Area Storm Sewer	DPW, City Council, City Manager	residents	2021/ 2022	TBD	Ch 4, Strategy 7.1
Plow more sidewalks	DPW, DDA, Manager		2022	DDA	Ch 10, Strategy 2.4

Upgrade Accessibility	City Council, Manager		2022	General Fund	Ch 4, Strategy 8.1
Comprehensive Plan for City Hall	City council, Manager, Library		2021/ 2022	Minimum	Ch 4, Strategy 8.4
Iron Belle Trailhead	Parks and Rec, Manager, City Council	Residents	2020-2025	DNR Trust Fund, fundraising	Ch 5, Strategy 1.4
Work to recruit a dentist and mental health providers	Manager	CMH, GRHF, Aspirus	ongoing	TBD	Ch 6, Strategy 2.1 and 2.2
Update zoning for food in CE zones	Planning Commission, Manager	City Council	2022	Minimal	Ch 6, Food, Strategy 2.1
Create an Ice Skating Rink	Parks and Rec, Manager	Residents	2022	General Fund	Ch 7, Strategy 1.1
Host events at 4th of July and Pumpkinfest to recruit people	Manager, City Council	Pumpkinfest, 4th of July Committee	2022	minimal	Ch 7, Marketing, Strategy 3.4
Quarterly Meet-ups	Manager, City Council	Residents, Business owners	2022	minimal	Ch 7, Businesses, Strategy 1.7
Change bathrooms to family bathrooms where feasible	Manager, Parks and Rec		2022	Minimal	Ch 7, employment, Strategy 5.2
Grow Events	Manager, Council, Commissions	Residents, businesses	ongoing	TBD	Various

Co-working/business development area	Library, Manager, DDA	2022		TBD	Ch 5, Strategy 4.4
Little Free Pantry	Library	2021-2022	TBD		Ch 5, Strategy 4.6
Implement 1000 Books before Kindergarten program	Library	2022	TBD		Ch 5, Strategy 4.7

2023

Timeline	Action Item	Responsible Party	Invested Parties	Funding Source	Plan Item
Flipping Houses	Manager	City Council, Planning Commission, various housing and planning organizations	2023	TBD	Ch 3 Strategy 1.11
Tiny House Marketing	Manager	Planning Commission, various housing and planning organizations	2023	TBD	Ch 3, Strategy 2.6

Create Road Plan	Manager, City Council, DPW	Residents	2023/ 2024	Major and Local Streets	Ch 4, Strategy 2.1
Connect neighborhoods to Iron Belle Trail	Parks and Rec, Manager		Ongoing	TBD	Ch 4, Strategy 2.2
Adopt a pot hole	DPW, City Council, Manager	Residents	2023	Self funding	Ch 4, Strategy 2.3
Replace Bluff Valley Reservoir	DPW, City Council, Manager	GRWA	2023/ 2024	Water Fund and Grant funding	Ch 4, Strategy 6.1
Update Water Asset Management Plan	DPW, City Council, City Manager	Engineers	2023/2024	Water Fund and Drinking Water Asset Management Grant	Ch 4, Strategy 6.4
East End Storm Sewer	DPW, City Council, City Manager	residents	2023	TBD	Ch 4, Strategy 7.2
Repaint or replace street signs	DPW, Manager	residents	2023	Local and Major St Funds	Ch 10 Strategy 1.4
Iron Belle Trailhead	Parks and Rec, Manager, City Council	Residents	2020-2025	DNR Trust Fund, fundraising	Ch 5, Strategy 1.4
Work to recruit a dentist and mental health providers	Manager	CMH, GRHF, Aspirus	ongoing	TBD	Ch 6, Strategy 2.1 and 2.2

Determine Tree Cover in town	Manager		2023	Minimal	Ch 6, Env. Sus. Strategy 1.1
Include flag from local tribe in Ethnic Commons	Manager, DDA		2023	DDA	Ch 7, Employment, Strategy 5.5
Grow Events	Manager, Council, Commissions	Residents, businesses	ongoing	TBD	Various
Develop a more participatory budget	Manager, Clerk/ Treasurer	Residents	2023	minimal	Ch 11, Strategy 2.7

2024

Timeline	Action Item	Responsible Party	Invested Parties	Funding Source	Plan Item
Research and consider Neighborhood Improvement Authorities	Manager, City Council, Neighborhood	Planning Commission, various housing and planning organizations	2024	minimum	Ch 3 Strategy 1.12
Create Road Plan	Manager, City Council, DPW	Residents	2023/ 2024	Major and Local Streets	Ch 4, Strategy 2.1
Connect neighborhoods to Iron Belle Trail	Parks and Rec, Manager		Ongoing	TBD	Ch 4, Strategy 2.2

Consider going out for a road bond	City Council, Manager		2024/ 2025	Major and Local Streets	Ch 4, Strategy 2.4
Replace Bluff Valley Reservoir	DPW, City Council, Manager	GRWA	2023/ 2024	Water Fund and Grant funding	Ch 4, Strategy 6.1
Replace Galvanized Service Lines	DPW, City Council, Manager	Engineers	ongoing	Water Fund and Grant Funding	Ch 4, Strategy 6.3
Update Water Asset Management Plan	DPW, City Council, City Manager	Engineers	2023/2024	Water Fund and Drinking Water Asset Management Grant	Ch 4, Strategy 6.4
East End Storm Sewer	DPW, City Council, City Manager	residents	2023	TBD	Ch 4, Strategy 7.2
Gold St failing culvert	DPW, City Council, City Manager	residents	2024	TBD	Ch 4, Strategy 7.3
Iron Belle Trailhead	Parks and Rec, Manager, City Council	Residents	2020-2025	DNR Trust Fund, fundraising	Ch 5, Strategy 1.4
Work to recruit a dentist and mental health providers	Manager	CMH, GRHF, Aspirus	ongoing	TBD	Ch 6, Strategy 2.1 and 2.2
Work with existing businesses to bring in healthier foods	Manager	Local Businesses, DDA	2024	Minimal	Ch 6, Food, Strategy 1.2

Be Bessemer videos highlighting people who live here from other countries	DDA, Manager		2024	TBD	Ch 7, Marketing, Strategy 1.1
Work with Businesses to update Trip Advisor, Facebook, Yelp	Manager, DDA		2024	minimal	Ch 7, Employment, Strategy 2.3
Consider adding flower baskets and banners downtown	DDA		2024	DDA	Ch 7, Beautification, Strategy 1.4
Interview Tourists about gaps in experience	Manager	Business Owners, Chamber, CVB	2024	minimal	Ch 7, Tourism, Strategy 1.7
Grow Events	Manager, Council, Commissions	Residents, businesses	ongoing	TBD	Various
More youth participation	Manager	Schools	2024	minimal	Ch 11, Strategy 1.2
Pilot Crowd Sourcing Public Policy	Manager, City Council	Residents	2024	minimal	Ch 11, Strategy 2.8

2025

Timeline	Action Item	Responsible Party	Invested Parties	Funding Source	Plan Item
Connect neighborhoods to Iron Belle Trail	Parks and Rec, Manager		Ongoing	TBD	Ch 4, Strategy 2.2
Consider going out for a road bond	City Council, Manager		2024/ 2025	Major and Local Streets	Ch 4, Strategy 2.4
Replace Galvanized Service Lines	DPW, City Council, Manager	Engineers	ongoing	Water Fund and Grant Funding	Ch 4, Strategy 6.3
Storm Sewer Plan	DPW, City Council, City Manager	residents	2025	TBD	Ch 4, Strategy 7.4
Iron Belle Trailhead	Parks and Rec, Manager, City Council	Residents	2020-2025	DNR Trust Fund, fundraising	Ch 5, Strategy 1.4
Work to install murals around town	DDA, Manager		2025	TBD	Ch 5, Strategy 3.1

Work to recruit a dentist and mental health providers	Manager	CMH, GRHF, Aspirus	ongoing	TBD	Ch 6, Strategy 2.1 and 2.2
Work to make fruit trees more accessible	Manager, Residents		2025		Ch 6, Food, Strategy 2.6
First Impression Business Training	DDA, Manager	Chamber of Commerce, CVB	2025	TBD	Ch 7, Marketing, Strategy 1.4
Work with Property Owners to improve appeal of buildings	Manager, DDA		2025	Minimal	Ch 7, Beautification, Strategy 1.1
Streetscaping along US-2	DDA, City Council, Manager	Businesses	2025	DDA	Ch 9, Strategy 2.3
Work to recruit/ grow Day Care offerings	Manager	Residents, Day Care Providers	2025	USDA	Ch 7, Businesses, Strategy 1.6
Work with existing Businesses to purchase locally	Manager, DDA	Business Owners	2025	minimal	Ch 7, Businesses, Strategy 1.8
Explore Developing an RV Park	City Council, Parks and Rec, Manager		2025	TBD	Ch 7, Tourism, Strategy 1.8

Develop Welcoming Committee	Manager	Residents	2024	Minimal	Ch 7, Employment, Strategy 5.7
Meet and Greet Events	Manager	Residents	2024	Minimal	Ch 7, Employment, Strategy 5.9
Grow Events	Manager, Council, Commissions	Residents, businesses	ongoing	TBD	Various
Connect with facebook groups of graduating classes	Manager, Intern	Schools	2025	minimal	Ch 11, Strategy 1.4
Work to develop Community Gardens	Manager, Residents		2024		Ch 6, Food, Strategy 2.4

2026

Action Item	Responsible Party	Invested Parties	Timeline	Funding Source	Plan Item
Connect neighborhoods to Iron Belle Trail	Parks and Rec, Manager		Ongoing	TBD	Ch 4, Strategy 2.2
Replace Galvanized Service Lines	DPW, City Council, Manager	Engineers	ongoing	Water Fund and Grant Funding	Ch 4, Strategy 6.3
Walking Tour of Bessemer	DDA, Manager		2026	TBD	Ch 5, Strategy 2.1
Identify Historic Buildings and sites with uniform sign/ kiosk	DDA, Manager		2026	TBD	Ch 5, Strategy 2.2
Work to recruit a dentist and mental health providers	Manager	CMH, GRHF, Aspirus	ongoing	TBD	Ch 6, Strategy 2.1 and 2.2
Create rain gardens	Manager		2026	TBD	Ch 6, Env. Sus. Strategy 1.9

Determine locations of wetland and floodplains	Manager, DPW		2026	TBD	Ch 6, Env. Sus. Strategy 1.10
Consider adding more white lights in downtown	DDA		2026	DDA	Ch 7, Beautification, Strategy 1.6
Consider rezoning 60 acres owned by city on the east side of town	Planning Commission, Manager, City Council		2026	minimal	Ch 9, Zoning recommendations 4
Grow Events	Manager, Council, Commissions	Residents, businesses	ongoing	TBD	Various

2027 and Beyond

Action Item	Responsible Party	Invested Parties	Timeline	Funding Source	Plan Item
Connect neighborhoods to Iron Belle Trail	Parks and Rec, Manager		Ongoing	TBD	Ch 4, Strategy 2.2
Replace Galvanized Service Lines	DPW, City Council, Manager	Engineers	ongoing	Water Fund and Grant Funding	Ch 4, Strategy 6.3

Appendix A

Survey 1 results

On August 8th, 2020 921 surveys were mailed to people's addresses. One month later on 9/28/20 the city received 55 back. This is a 5.97% response rate. The low response rate is expected to be due to the survey was open ended, the city not have a drawing for a prize, there wasn't self-addressed stamps for returning the survey, it was sent in the middle of summer, and there wasn't anything controversial in the survey.

The survey results were coded into a spreadsheet and then divided over numerous topics. Coding is inherently biased and all City Councilors, DDA Members, and Planning Commissioners received the individual responses weeks before the coding.

Branding/ Marketing/ signage

People used words such as peaceful, affordable, small town life, quality of life, safe, lower cost of living to describe the town. Some ideas for promotion are the waterfalls, Black River Harbor, Lake Superior, history, ability for people to work from home, winter and summer sports, and recreation in general. Respondents recommended hiring a tourism business to put Bessemer on the map, using social media to attract businesses, and focusing on tourism. One person said they liked the branding. There were a lot of comments about signage including a recommendation for quaint signs. Additional or new signs are recommended for the entrance into town, on historical buildings, to bluff valley park and Black River, gateway to Black River Harbor, and Gateway to Lake Superior and Copper Peak.

Downtown

Several respondents mentioned the downtown. Some saw it as an asset to the community and many made recommendations for improvements. Some negatives mentioned were marijuana, lack of retail, and blight. One person wrote the downtown needs to look more alive. A couple of people mentioned the buildings downtown need more upkeep. Some suggestions for future focus are on the downtown lots and making the downtown a destination.

City Business

There were numerous notes about the city's finances and ability (or inability) to maintain infrastructure. Seven respondents said the water, sewer, and garbage rates are too high. Three mentioned taxes are too high with one additional person pointing out the difference in taxes between a township and a city. One respondent said the cost of government is too high and another had a similar sentiment with the cost of maintaining city services. One mentioned the city should reduce spending with review of retirement benefits and retiree hospitalizations. Four mentioned the roads being in bad shape and another the inability to maintain city infrastructure. Three mentioned our declining funds with two mentioning declining tax base and the third a lack of revenue sharing.

Four people praised staff with one calling out the librarian and two city crew. One of these respondents expressed concern about hiring good staff to replace staff. Another respondent said they are excited about the library.

Eight people praised the city's leadership. One said the council is erratic and irresponsible and another said elected officials lack accountability. One praised the city for wanting to work with the community and another for the city welcoming new ideas. Someone mentioned the city needs willpower and commitment.

Some general complaints are variances made without input from businesses, 8 mentioned keeping 4 lanes on US-2, anti-business, the city won't pick up leaves, no annual pick-up, and one wants the garbage to go back the old way. One wants the city to seek non-sanctuary status.

A future focus is to eliminate excess membership on boards (GRWA)

Some compliments are to the city hall's beauty and the well-kept cemetery. Three mentioned specific places they want infrastructure improvements (two of which will be addressed in the next project). One is excited about the infrastructure improvements and another wants it to be a future focus.

Marijuana

The City received mostly negative comments about marijuana while two people wanted recreational marijuana and one comment state we should capitalize on the Jimmy Fallen money. There were 16 negative comments on marijuana. Most were focused on the smell/ grow houses. Two mentioned decreasing property values due to it and another that it is making people leave. There were two generic comments about drugs moving in and wanting less drugs. Staff is uncertain if the respondents were talking about marijuana or drugs in general.

Schools

While schools are out of the city's purview, they are clearly an important part of the community and there were numerous comments about the schools. There were 6 positive comments about having good schools. This seems to be a topic several wanted to make a future focus. There was concern from one respondent about the loss of school kids. Two comments were about school consolidation in the positive and one in the negative. Another was concerned about losing one or both schools. One concern was about hiring top notch educators and another was recommending fighting common core education.

Events and Festivals

There were 14 comments about events and festivals. There were 3 each that spoke positively of the 4th of July and Pumpkinfest. Some ideas for future focus are on mid summer-mid winter activities, festivals, concerts/ picnics in the park, craft vendors, Saturday farmers market, and a winter festival.

Outdoors

Seventy comments were directed to the outdoors. The vast majority celebrated the outdoors and want to see future focus in this area. There were 9 general comments on our beautiful surroundings, natural beauty, beautiful landscapes, and natural resources. Specifically, people mentioned focus on the following: Bluff Valley Park (4), Parks, Ethnic Commons Park, Bluffs (3), Copper Peak (2), trails, playgrounds, Iron Belle Trail (20), trailhead by City Hall, Motorized trails, trailhead, ski hills, snowshoe trails, and the National Forest. Recommendations for focus on outdoor activities included on winter sports, recreational visitors, silent sports, winters, snowmobilers, outdoor life, motorized sports, and generic outdoor activities (7). Specific recommendations include adding more trees, more benches on the Iron Belle, more areas for sitting, turning tennis courts into pickleball, making the spring by the Iron belle more accessible (2), making Bluff Valley

Park handicap accessible, move the skateboard park to the RC areas, having an ice skating rink downtown, installing a splash pad (2) , cleaning up the pond at Bluff Valley Park, and restrooms.

Amenities

Several comments were about amenities in the community. There were positive comments about having the county seat, sheriff's department, and hospital. There were two comments about internet. One has a weakness of the community is we don't have affordable, reliable internet. Another thought a future focus should be on town wi-fi. One concern is that we would defund police protection. Another felt there is a lack of community wellness and education.

Businesses

There were many comments about businesses. The city received 5 comments suggesting we bring in more businesses, six saying the city should be business friendly, one saying we should support existing businesses, and four saying we have a lack of small businesses. There were three concerns about a loss of businesses, one on a loss of jobs, and one for a loss of restaurants. There were four comments about lack of career opportunities with benefits and good pay and one stating a lack of jobs for young people. Many comments focused on specific businesses respondents would like to see including grocery store (11), restaurants (7), coffee shop, hair salon, senior living, recreational businesses, local foods, upscale apartments (2), drug stores, small farm and agriculture, professional community (lawyer, accountant, dentist, barber), affordable housing, electricians, plumbers, and handymen. Two respondents said they want a hotel and one saying the town doesn't need one. Two comments specifically stated bringing in businesses due to the Iron belle Trail with one specifying eating/ drinking/ snacking. One comment was excited about the mine reopening and 3 about a Dollar Store. One comment specified the city should focus on tourism. Some specific suggestions are to work with neighboring communities to grow economy and attract people, impose tax on big box stores, lower taxes for businesses, no more antique stores, attract business – popup shop doesn't work, not letting in thrift stores, unsightly businesses on US-2, and a concern with a car repair yard with vehicles and tires exposed.

People

A common thread is the wonderful people in Bessemer. Seven people mentioned the wonderful people and two the sense of community. There were positive comments about the Friends of the Trail, positive attitude of groups, new people and

new ideas moving here, and children feeling safe to live here. Some future focus items are on retention/ attraction of residents, keeping young people in the area (7), and bringing new people to the area. Some concerns are loss of population (3), gentrification, civil disobedience, people leaving when they retire, families dissolving, lack of empathy for youth, negative attitudes of residents, people that don't want to work, lack of economic growth due to unemployable workforce (2), type of people moving in, closed political views (white supremacy), no illegal aliens, political parties, negative people that complain and never offer positive thoughts, lack of involvement from community, patriarchal view of long-term residents, lack of taking care of long term residents, the old guard, and aging population. Some ideas are to attract boomers with tax cuts and to focus on our culture and that we are a quiet community for retired people.

Built Environment

One of the most talked about topics is blight. Eighteen commented about cleaning up blight with one person mentioning it is improving. Some related concerns are houses sold to absentee landlords and the community appearance on US-2. One comment was positive about the housing market and another was concerned about rising property values. Six commented negatively about US-2 becoming 3 lanes.

Miscellaneous

Some comments didn't fit in an above category. These include stop speed traps, cars are too fast on the highway, jay braking, future focus on the arts, the town can only get better, no pool, given the shutdown, it's hard to see the future, sleepy town nothing excites, and the Moore St light is too long.

Appendix B

Survey 2 results

January 25th, 2021 1240 surveys were mailed to 620 addresses. Tuesday January 26th, 2021 210 surveys dropped off to 105 multi-unit dwellers.

We received 238 responses after sending out 1,450 surveys. This is a 16% response rate. I will note that we sent out 2 surveys to every home and many people only have 1 person per home so the response rate is artificially low.

Demographics:

Gender

We had a fair representation based on Gender.

- 52% of respondents were male. This is close to representational with 51.3% of our population being male.
- 47% of respondents were Female. This is close to representational with 48.7% of our population being male.
- 1% were other. The Census doesn't track this.

Age

This survey skewed towards older respondents. We had more responses from Gex X, Baby Boomers and the Silent Generation than we did from Gen Z and millennials representational to our population.

- 1% of respondents are Gen Z and are 19-24. About 11% of our adult population is an adult Gen Z. This population was dramatically underrepresented.
- 11% of respondents are millennials and are 25-40. . About 13% of our adult population is a millenial. This population was slightly underrepresented.
- 21% of respondents are Gen X and are 41-56. About 28% of our adult population is Gen x. This population is over represented.
- 47% of respondents are Baby Boomers and aged 57-75. . About 36% of our adult population is a Baby Boomer, This population was dramatically overrepresented.

- 20% of respondents are Silent Generation and 76 years or older. This population if over represented with this group making up about 11% of our adult population.

Course of Residency

I am curious about the 5% who said none of the statements applied to them.

- 27% of respondents were born here and lived here their whole life.
- 17% were born here but have returned from living elsewhere.
- 36% moved here from another location
- 15% are property owners but live elsewhere
- 5% said none of these statements apply to them.

Ranking Priorities

Respondents ranked Improving city infrastructure and job creation/ expansion as the top two things for the city to focus on. The rest are rated in the order as follows: Downtown Improvements, Improving housing quality/ availability, improving parks and outdoor recreation, community engagement projects for all age groups, and promoting the arts and culture of the area.

Given limited funding people rated their priorities as follows:

1. Downtown
2. Residential
3. highway-2 corridor
4. industrial areas
5. trails/ parks.

Recreation

When asked to choose the top 5 things in Bessemer the priorities were as follows:

1. community center

2. having bathrooms open at the park
3. hiking walking trails
4. events
5. outdoor skating/ hockey rink
6. arts/ cultural development
7. community garden
8. Iron Belle Trail Access
9. sledding hill
10. picnic shelter
11. dog park
12. snowshoeing
13. bike lanes on roads
14. playgrounds
15. mountain biking trails
16. motorized trails
17. cross country skiing
18. ice skating
19. (other)
20. meet-up groups

Trailhead

When asked about the trailhead behind city hall, the support is ranked as follows

1. 92% Pavilion with bathrooms
2. 77% Ice Skating Rink
3. 76% Warming Shack
4. 75% Young children's bicycle park
5. 69% Mountain Bike track along Bessemer- Ramsay IBT
6. 55% Pickleball Courts

Residential

For blighted structure millage, 162 of 238 said they would support it with 66% supporting 2 mills, 29% 4 mills and 8% 6 mills.

People responded that they have collectively spent $3,025,694 on their properties in Bessemer over the last 5 years with an average response of $19,775.78.

People from the area who have lived here their whole lives were the most likely to not recommend the city to visitors or new residents with 15.6% of the responses being no. While those who were born here, lived elsewhere and returned had 8.5% say no, and those who moved here from somewhere else had 4.6% say they wouldn't recommend the town.

- 50% of respondents responded neither agree or disagree when asked if the quality of residential living environment has increased.
- 46% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they are satisfied with the appearance of their neighborhood. 37% disagreed or strongly disagreed.
- 46% agreed or strongly agreed that they are satisfied with code enforcement and 32% disagreed or strongly disagreed.
- 57 of 238 respondents said they had issues finding housing in the past 5 years. 58% of the 57 respondents said they had issues with the quality of housing, 46% with the availability of housing, 28% with the cost, and 14% finding the size of house they were looking for.
- Most people feel safe in their neighborhood with 81% agreeing or strongly agreeing to the statement. Only 8% strongly disagreed or disagreed.
- 76% of people agreed or strongly agreed that they feel welcome in the community. 5% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Infrastructure

Roads 185 out of 238 responses said they would support some sort of road millage with 60% of the 185 saying they would support 2 mills, 32% 4 mills, 15% 6 mills.

- 93% of respondents ranked improving streets as very important or important.
- 79% of respondents ranked improving our water and sewer system as very important or important.
- 79% of respondents ranked improving the visual appeal of downtown as very important or important.
- 74% of respondents ranked improving visual appeal on highway 2 as important of very important.
- 66% of respondents ranked improving internet as important or very important.

Business

- 92% of people rated improving the variety of shopping and restaurant services as important or very important.
- 92% of respondents rated encouraging new business development/ growth as important or very important.
- 89% rated working with existing businesses to promote job growth as important or very important.
- 84% rated promoting tourism as important and very important.
- 78% rated preserving historic sites and structures as important or very important.
- 91% would support expanding industry in Bessemer
- 83% support tax breaks for larger businesses to locate here
- 74% support coworking spaces for remote workers and business start-ups
- 69% support continuing and expanding the PopUp Shop program
- 67% support creating a space for community artists and crafters to advancetheir skill and display their works.
- 65% support a public digital media center within City Hall.

110 respondents indicated they have struggled to fins a dentist or are concerned about finding a dentist in the future.

58 indicated issues finding contractors. People responded they have issues with finding the following types of contractors: all; roofing; repairmen; All - drywall, plumbing, regular construction, etc. - not enough of them to come in timely manner, general, roofers, electrical, plumber, handyman; general; general; electrician; electrician; Plumbing, heating, appliance repair, electrical, concrete repair; Electrician and HVAC fitting into a schedule; home repair; All....electrician, plumbers,

roofer, insulation, HVAC....only 1 option most times but even with multiple choices its difficult to even get someone to call you back let alone come out to give you an estimate; Electrical, Plumbing, Heating; Heating/cooling; hvac; furnace plumbing; roofing, electrical, flooring, masonary; genral contractor; plumbing, heating and air; plumbing, heating; mason; roofers; Heating. Pest control.; painters/construction; Siding for my house; general and electrical; furnace, electric plumbing; plumber/maintenance; carpenters; construction – all; General; Heating Cooling Plumbers; windows; electrician; home repairs; general construction; hvac, plumbing, electrical, etc.; all; Home improvement; Roofing; plumbing and electric; plumbing, heating; plumber/ furnace; general; Furnace; general; general

Essentially, virtually all types of contractors are in high demand.

34 have issues or are concerned about finding mental health services in the future

25 indicated current issues or perceived future issues finding child care.

City Staff and Elected Officials

- Our Library is considered the most trustworthy and professional department with 76% agreeing or strongly agreeing.
- 73% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the public works is trustworthy and professional.
- 69% of respondents agreed city administration is trustworthy and professional.
- 58% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the city council is trustworthy and professional.
- 56% of respondents felt council members are easily accessible.
- 54% felt their opinions matter to the city. 51% feel that if they have an issue with the city it is properly resolved.

Do note in the comments some people noted they responded neither agree or disagree because they felt they hadn't interacted enough with the various departments to properly judge.

Local foods, environment, community

- 83% of respondents indicated they would shop at a local grocery store
- 54% stated they would shop or participate in a supervised community garden.

- There wasn't much support for a traveling grocery store and many commented they didn't know what it was. Further education would be necessary for a traveling grocery store.
- 72% of residents supported a tree planting initiative, 57% wetland protections, and 56% landscaping parking lots.
- 72% of participants support community events or meet-ups, 65% support creating a community gathering place, and 59% increasing the presence of arts and culture in Bessemer. This is interesting because the top response to the choosing your top 5 things for the city was a community center. It seems a select portion of the community really wants it but not everyone would support it.

Overall feedback

- This survey met most people's needs. 78% agreed or strongly agreed that the survey included most of what they would like to see in the City of Bessemer and is an accurate way to receive community feedback.
- 43% agreed or strongly agreed that it increased their interest in becoming more involved. 16% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Appendix C

Housing Surveys

The City of Bessemer has recently sent out 3 surveys pertaining to housing. The first is to local landlords, the second to large business owners, and the third to local real estate agents. The results indicate a strong need for rentals and housing.

Landlord Survey

On 4/2/19 the City of Bessemer sent out 26 surveys to local landlords who owned over 2 rental units. We received ten back and these ten respondents collectively own 46 units. This survey indicates long waiting lists for rentals and a shortage of nicer apartments.

1) How many units owned:
    a. Median response 3.5 indicating most people own a small amount.
    b. Range: 1 to 13 units
2) Rent per unit
    a. 1 bedroom
        i. Number of units in study: 29
        ii. Range: $420-$525
        iii. Average: $453.62
        iv. Median: $425
    b. 2 bedroom
        i. Number of units in study: 11
        ii. Range: $450 - $600
        iii. Average: $493.36
        iv. Median: $465
    c. 3 bedroom
        i. Number of units in study: 6
        ii. Range: $475-$900
        iii. Average: $616.67

    iv. Median: $587.50
  d. 4 bedroom
    i. Number of units in study: 1 and rental rate wasn't given
  e. 5+ bedroom: 0 units in study
3) Respondents indicating rent includes utilities in their units
  a. No utilities included in rent: 4*
  b. All utilities included in rent: 5*
  c. Heat and water included in rent: 2
  d. *One person noted that some of their rentals include utilities and some don't.
4) Respondents indicating rent includes outside maintenance (mowing/ snow removal)
  a. Outside maintenance included: 7*
  b. Outside maintenance not included: 4*
  c. *One person noted that some of their rentals include outside maintenance and some don't.
5) Waiting list
  a. Range: 0-6+ people on a waiting list
  b. 4 respondents indicated that they had a waiting list
  c. 6 respondents didn't have a waiting list
  d. Of the respondents with a waiting list, the average list had 3.87 people on it
6) Number of inquiries per month
  a. Range: 0-20
  b. Average number of inquiries is 3.9/ month
  c. 4 respondents stated that they get zero inquires per month. Most receive inquiries.
7) Length of time renters are looking to stay
  a. Long term: seven people responded to this question and of these, 5 stated renters want to stay 12-24+ months.
  b. One respondent stated people are looking for 6-12 months and another 3 months.

Business Survey

The City of Bessemer sent out surveys to the largest employers in the area asking about a need for housing in February of 2020. We received 6 responses back and one phone call to go into more depth about the survey. This survey shows a strong need for nicer apartments with businesses indicating they are losing workers due to a lack of apartments. Many struggling to find apartments make good money. This survey also indicates the types of apartments desired. Below are the results

1) Do any of your employees struggle to find rentals?
    a. Yes: 4
    b. No: 2
2) Do any of your employees (or possible employees) struggle to find higher-end apartments?
    a. Yes: 3
    b. No: 3
3) If yes to question 2, how many employees (or possible employees) are struggling to find higher end apartments?
    a. 5, 2-4 at any time, 5-8/ year
4) Do you feel the rental market harms your ability to attract workers?
    a. Yes:3
    b. No:3
5) Have you ever had a potential employee not take a job because of housing issues?
    a. Yes: 2
    b. No: 4
6) For which income bracket do you see your workers struggling to find rentals? (check all that apply)
    a. Under $20,000 1 response
    b. $20,000 - $39,999 : 4 responses
    c. $40,000 - $59,999: 4 responses
    d. $60,000 - $79,999: 2 responses
    e. $80,000 - $99,999: 2 responses
    f. $100,000+ : 2 responses
7) How many workers do you think struggle to find housing in the following brackets? Estimates are fine

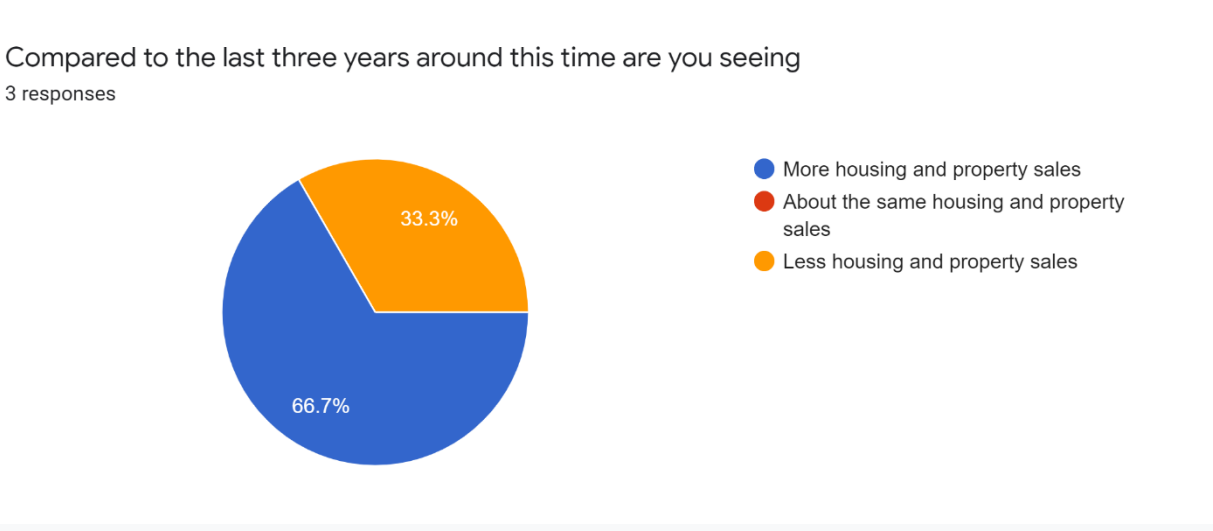
   a. Low income rentals: 2, 15-20/yr
   b. Mid range rentals: 15, 2-3, 15/yr , check mark
   c. Higher end rentals: 5, 2/yr, check mark
8) What is the make-up of those looking for housing? Check all that apply
   a. Single, no kids: 4 responses, one indicated a need for 15 units
   b. Single, with kids: 1 response
   c. Married, no kids: 3 responses, one indicated a need for 2-4 units
   d. Married, with kids: 3 responses , one indicated a need for 2-4 units
9) Have you ever looked into corporate apartments for executives
   a. Yes: 0
   b. No: 6

General comments:

- We have multiple summer seasonal employees who struggle to find housing – sometimes rescinding acceptance because they can't find any. New permanent employees have the struggle as well. Sometimes having to buy something in a hurry that's not up to standard so as to not be homeless.
- They need clean, non-smoking apartments, Amenities like snow plowing/ grass cutting, and Garages
- Had an employee who spent 2 years in a trailer with a combined $90,000 income because they couldn't find housing
- People moving to the area are expecting to pay $800+. This is cheaper than they would pay elsewhere.

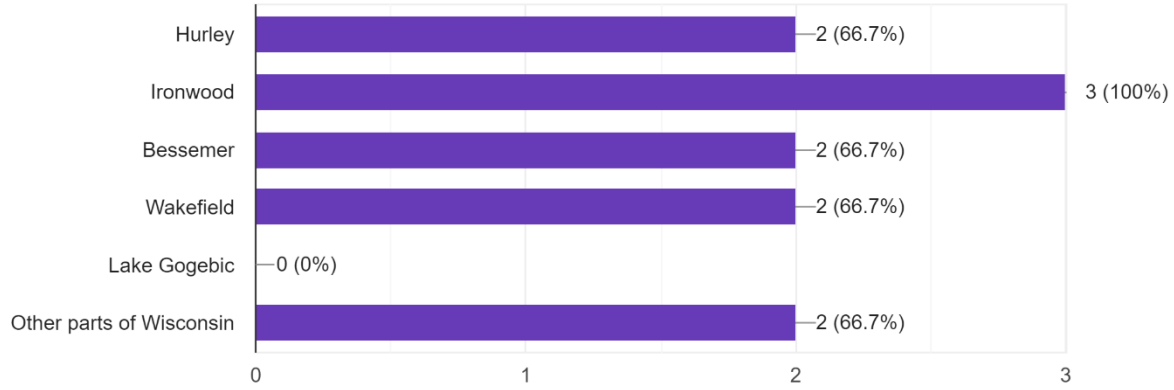
Real Estate Survey

In July of 2020 we asked locals in the housing industry about what they are seeing in housing sales. We received 3 responses. Two thirds of respondents said they are experiencing more housing and property sales compared to the last 3 years around this time. They are seeing houses sell from under $30,000 to $120,000 and from $150,000 to $300,000. Buyers are locals moving to a new home, people who lived here in the past returning, people who lived here in the past buying a second home, people from other areas moving here, and people from other areas buying a second home. Most people are moving from Chicago, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. One respondent said “We have a shortage of homes for sale at this time. Some homes are selling fast sometimes with multiple offers. Sometimes over the list price. It is taking 2 months to close a mortgage loan. See some buyers that are looking to move to a more rural area with less exposure to covid.” Another said “Lack of Housing in the local area is not unique to the Gogebic Range Communities. It's nationwide and based on market trends on the East and West Coast the trend will likely continue for another year or two. I'm seeing many turn down local jobs due to the lack of housing and rental inventory. This trend began about 2 years ago.”



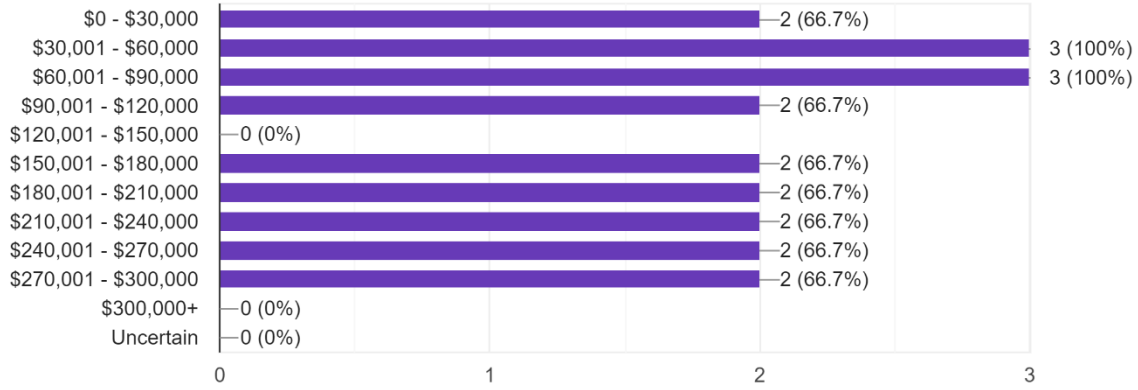
In which communities are you seeing the most sales

3 responses



What price range of houses is selling well?

3 responses

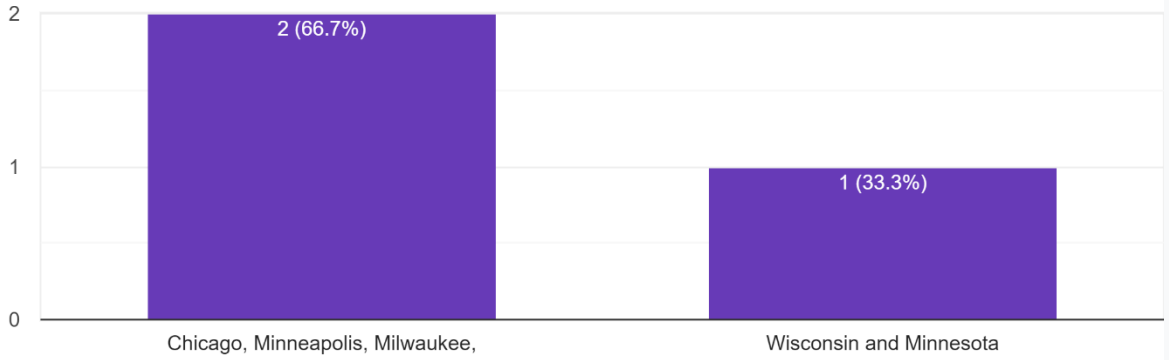


What type of customers are you seeing

3 responses

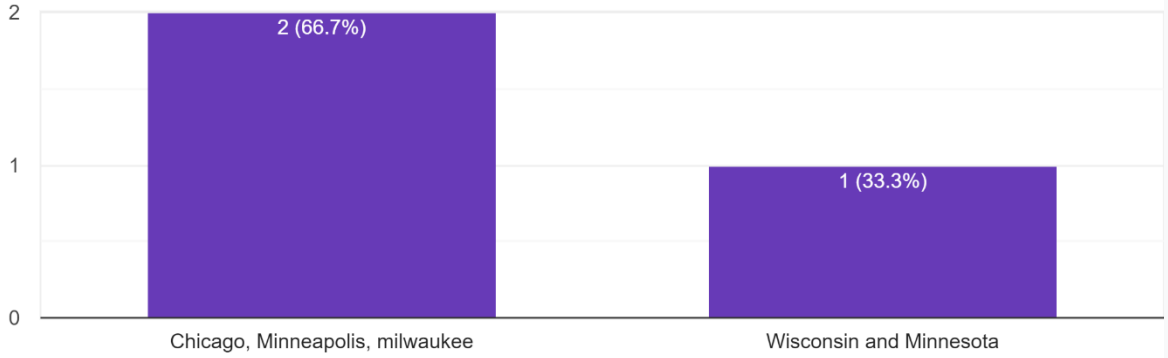
If you are seeing people move here from outside the area, where are they coming from?

3 responses

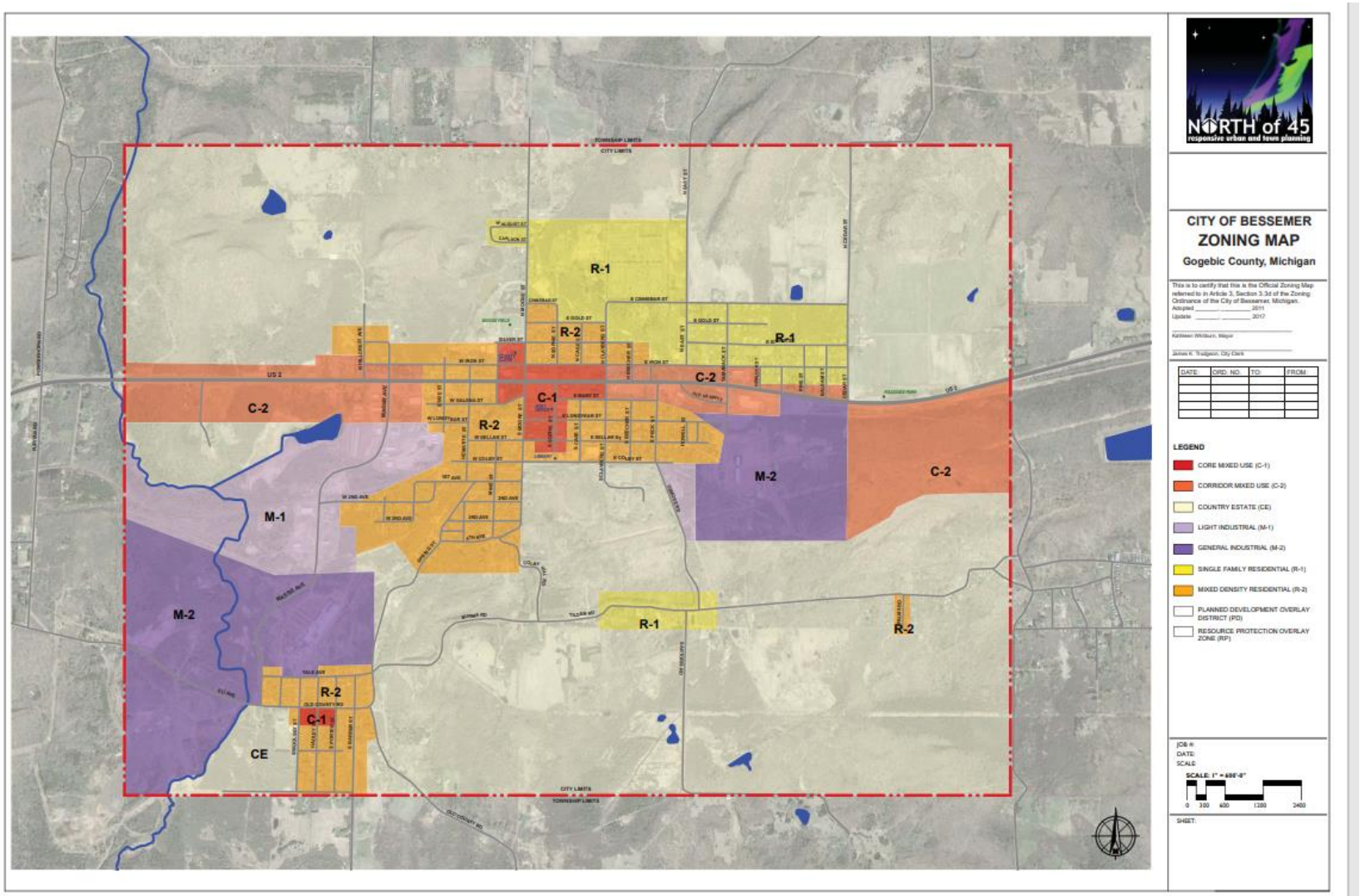


If you are seeing people buy a second home here, where are they coming from?

3 responses

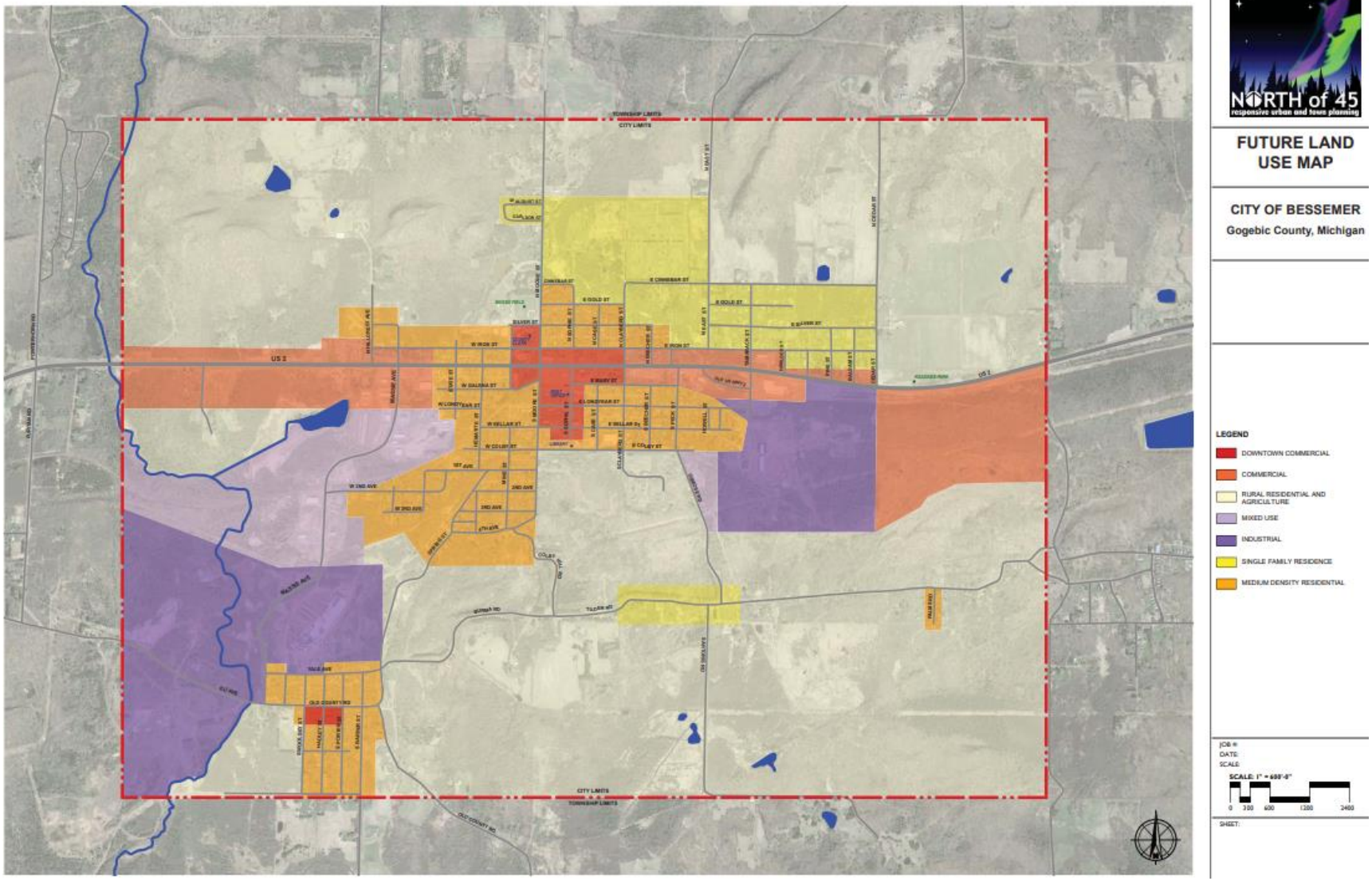


Appendix D
Current Zoning


R-1
R-2
C-2
C-1
M-1
M-2
CE
NORTH of 45
responsive urban and town planning
CITY OF BESSEMER
ZONING MAP
Gogebic County, Michigan
LEGEND
CORE MIXED USE (C-1)
CORRIDOR MIXED USE (C-2)
COUNTRY ESTATE (CE)
LIGHT INDUSTRIAL (M-1)
GENERAL INDUSTRIAL (M-2)
SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL (R-1)
MIXED DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (R-2)
PLANNED DEVELOPMENT OVERLAY DISTRICT (PD)
RESOURCE PROTECTION OVERLAY ZONE (RP)

Appendix E

Future Land Use


US 2
US 1
LEGEND
DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL
COMMERCIAL
RURAL RESIDENTIAL AND AGRICULTURE
MIXED USE
INDUSTRIAL
SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENCE
MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
NORTH of 45
responsive urban and town planning
FUTURE LAND USE MAP
CITY OF BESSEMER
Gogebic County, Michigan
JOB #:
DATE:
SCALE:
SCALE: 1" = 600'-0"
0 300 600 1200 2400
SHEET: