

COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY



**2025 ANNUAL
PERFORMANCE
STANDARDS REPORT**





Purpose

In 2024, the Florida Legislature passed HB 7013, which, among other things, required all special districts to adopt goals and objectives for each program and activity undertaken by that district, as well as performance measures and standards to determine if the district's goals and objectives are being achieved by October 1, 2024. Following this initial date, each special district must publish an annual report on the goals and objectives achieved by the district by December 1 of each year thereafter.

The purpose of this document is to satisfy those statutory requirements by formally: 1) reporting on the goals and objectives achieved by the Bartow CRA outlined in the October 1, 2024 report, 2) reporting performance measures and standards used by the CRA to make this determination, and 3) detailing which goals and objectives the district did not achieve in fiscal year 2025.



Bartow CRA Overview

The Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) is a government agency created by the City of Bartow in 1990 to rehabilitate and redevelop the community. Its mission is to eliminate blight and promote the redevelopment of the property within the CRA district. It achieves these goals through public-private partnerships and improvements of the public infrastructure.

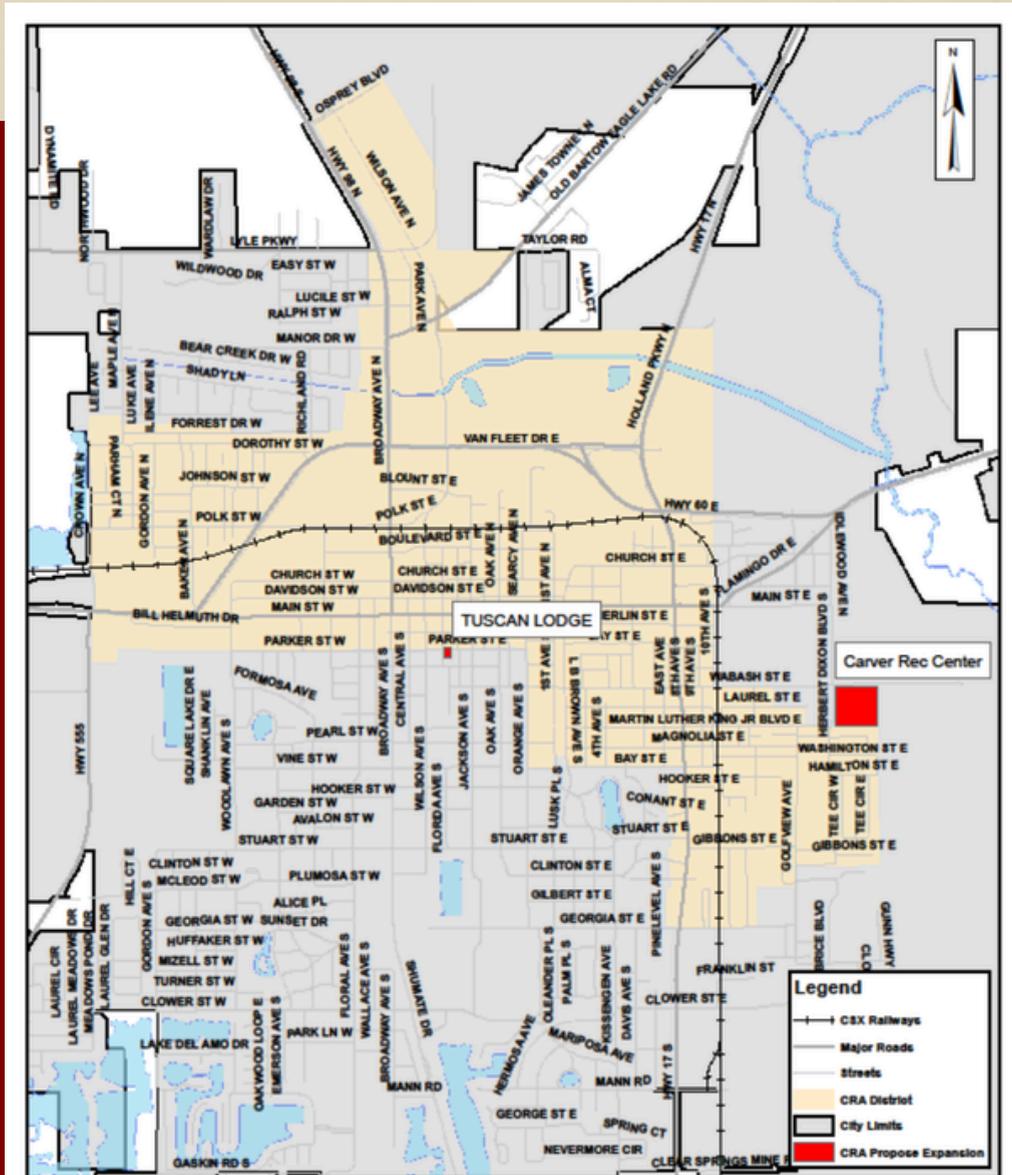
**Source: ESRI(2024,2029) Esri Data Axle (2024)*

2.47
square miles*

34.4
median age*

4,778
population*

Bartow CRA Map



Bartow CRA Map with proposed expansion areas (highlighted in red)

Mission

The mission of the Bartow Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) in Bartow Florida, is to eliminate blight within the designated CRA district and promote redevelopment by encouraging investment that improves neighborhoods and drives economic growth while preserving the community's history. The agency works through public-private partnerships and targeted improvements to public infrastructure to rehabilitate and revitalize the area within the redevelopment boundaries.

Bartow CRA FY25 Highlights

\$18 Million

In Transformative
Redevelopment Incentives

2,620 LBs

In Trash Removed via the
IMPACT Beautification Project

\$200,000+

In Commercial
Enhancements Committed

\$235,000+

In Residential
Renovations Committed

Bartow CRA Board



The Bartow CRA operates under the guidance of a seven-member Board of Directors, appointed by the City Commission. Board members serve four-year terms with a two-term limit, and appointments are staggered to ensure continuity.

The Board's primary responsibilities include setting policies, approving budgets, and overseeing redevelopment projects within the CRA District. They work closely with the Executive Director to implement community redevelopment activities outlined under the Community Redevelopment Act.



Gordon Greene
CRA Chairperson



Anthony Ghent
Vice Chairperson



Shana Bennett



Jerome Corbett



Sandy Mendez



Cheri Kelley



Tom Santarlas, Ph.D

Introduction

Fiscal Year 2025 marked a transformative period for the Bartow CRA. Building on the strategic framework established in FY 2024, the CRA executed an ambitious agenda of capital improvements, incentive programs, and community investments that delivered measurable results across all five program areas.

This Standards & Performance Report documents the CRA's achievements against the goals and objectives adopted in October 2024, fulfilling the requirements of Florida Statute 189.0694. The pages that follow present each program area, the performance measures used to evaluate progress, and the results achieved during the fiscal year.



Key Wins

- 1. Sustained Downtown Investment and Infrastructure Advancement**
 - Continued public investment reinforced downtown's physical environment, improving functionality, aesthetics, and confidence among property owners and private investors.
- 2. Expanded Placemaking and Community Identity Efforts**
 - Creative placemaking initiatives further strengthened downtown Bartow's sense of place, using public art, activation, and storytelling to enhance the visitor and resident experience.
- 3. Meaningful Support for Business and Property Reinvestment**
 - Bartow CRA advanced incentive programs and redevelopment tools that encouraged business growth, property improvements, and reinvestment aligned with long-term redevelopment goals.
- 4. Strategic Clarity and Alignment on Redevelopment Priorities**
 - Clear focus on housing access, economic development, and reinvestment ensured that CRA actions in 2026 remained aligned with adopted plans and measurable community outcomes.

Bartow CRA Objectives and Goals

Property Acquisition and Construction

- Support acquisition and development of CRA-owned assets to remove blight, increase taxable value, and enable strategic redevelopment. Includes capital projects and opportunistic site control, all aligned to the Work Plan's property acquisition and construction goals.



District Activation & Placemaking

- Enhance vibrancy, safety, and identity of the CRA district through policing, beautification, public art, events, and marketing. Supports the Work Plan's marketing and public space activation strategies.

Commercial Redevelopment

- Encourage business retention, attraction, and property improvements to reduce vacancies and improve the commercial environment, aligned with business assistance goals.



Public Spaces Redevelopment

- Improve public infrastructure to support walkability, connectivity, and safety, complementing city capital projects. Includes Smart City features for technology-enabled public spaces.

Residential Redevelopment

- Support stable, attractive housing stock through fee assistance, down payment support, rehabilitation, and new housing initiatives.



Bartow CRA Objectives, Goals, and Performance Standards

Property Acquisition and Construction

Goal: Advance construction of the Innovation Center

- **Measurement:** Awarded construction contract in FY2025
 - Total project cost: \$2,650,090
 - Completion target: October 2026

Goal: Acquire strategic properties supporting redevelopment goals

- **Measurement:** Two (2) properties acquired in FY2025
 - The Orpheum Theatre and Prince Hall Masonic Lodge
- **Measurement:** \$241,822 expended for strategic property acquisitions

Goal: Secure capital for major projects

- **Measurement:** \$18 million in transformative redevelopment bonded for major capital initiatives for FY25-26

Bartow CRA Objectives, Goals, and Performance Standards

District Activation & Placemaking

Goal: Elevate the cleanliness of the CRA District through supplemental projects

- **Measurement:** Hosted a community cleanup project with 180+ volunteers; Removed 2,620 pounds of trash from the CRA District
- **Measurement:** Acquired an outdoor vacuum sweeper to enhance Downtown Bartow's cleanliness with frequent sweeping services
- **Measurement:** Contracted for a clean team program to improve the beautification of the CRA District; services begin in FY26

Goal: Enhance the safety of the CRA District through a dedicated law enforcement presence

- **Measurement:** \$111,508.58 expended for a dedicated community policing officer active in the district

Goal: Invest in public art and other installations to improve placemaking in the CRA District

- **Measurement:** \$202,794.75 invested in public art initiatives

Bartow CRA Objectives, Goals, and Performance Standards

Commercial Redevelopment

Goal: Support exterior improvements through the Commercial Façade Grant Program

- **Measurement:** Six (6) Façade Grants awarded in FY25
- **Measurement:** \$49,428 expended for Façade Grants in FY25
- **Measurement:** 1.82 to 1 ROI on the CRA's Investment

Façade Grant Recipients: Total Project Cost (\$91,361)

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. The UPS Store (\$19,802) | 4. Brenda's One Stop (\$5,000) |
| 2. Meeks Realty (\$9,770) | 5. Palace Pizza (\$18,158) |
| 3. The Wine Stable (\$33,631) | 6. Sweet Magnolias (\$5,000) |

Goal: Support interior/exterior renovations through the Commercial Enhancement Grant Program

- **Measurement:** One (1) Commercial Enhancement Grant awarded in FY25; \$39,247 expended for the Commercial Enhancement Grant
- **Measurement:** Property's assessed value increased from \$200,931 to \$300,000 following the improvements, representing a 2 to 1 ROI on the CRA's Investment

Bartow CRA Objectives, Goals, and Performance Standards

Public Spaces Redevelopment

Goal: Enhance the walkability and connectivity within the Bartow CRA

- **Measurement:** \$31,720 expended for the Bartow Squeeze Micro-Transit service from August 2024 to March 2025; 2,249 passengers served
- **Measurement:** Advanced the Golfview Avenue sidewalk project to procurement in FY25
- **Measurement:** 2.41 miles of streets repaved across 16 streets; \$483,121 expended for street repaving
- **Measurement:** Alternative streetscape and traffic calming concepts presented to the CRA Board/City Commission in January 2026

Goal: Improve recreational and other public facilities

- **Measurement:** New baseball field lighting installed at Carver Recreation Center; \$52,000 expended for enhancements
- **Measurement:** Constructed two (2) ADA-accessible public restroom facilities; \$701,000 expended for ADA restroom enhancements

Bartow CRA Objectives, Goals, and Performance Standards

Residential Redevelopment

Goal: Assist homeowners with weatherization and repairs through the CRA's Owner-Occupied Rehabilitation Program

- **Measurement:** Ten (10) homes improved with roofs, exterior doors, painting, and ADA improvements
- **Measurement:** \$235,775.75 expended through the Owner-Occupied Rehabilitation Program

Goal: Help eligible buyers achieve homeownership through the Down Payment Assistance Program

- **Measurement:** Five (5) buyers helped through the program
- **Measurement:** \$82,000 expended through the Down Payment Assistance Program

Goal: Encourage new housing construction through residential development incentives

- **Measurement:** Five (5) new single-family homes constructed
- **Measurement:** \$131,241 expended through CRA awards; successfully leveraged \$1,322,765 in private home purchases, demonstrating a strong ROI relative to the CRA's contribution

Looking Ahead: FY 2026 Priorities

As the Bartow CRA enters Fiscal Year 2026, the agency is positioned to build on the momentum established in FY 2025. Several transformative projects will reach completion or advance significantly in the year ahead:

CRA Innovation Center

The CRA Innovation Center, located at 180 Central Ave N., will serve as a collaborative hub designed to foster innovative partnerships that deliver resources, programs, and services to the City of Bartow residents, local businesses, and visitors across Polk County. By co-locating key economic and community-focused organizations, including organizations, including the Bartow EDC, the Innovation Center will support entrepreneurship, workforce development, business growth, and community engagement while strengthening Bartow's role as a regional center for innovation and economic opportunity.



East-End Vision

Building on planning work completed in FY 2025, the CRA will advance the East End Vision concept, exploring opportunities for mixed-use development that complements downtown and creates new housing and commercial options along the Main Street corridor.



Looking Ahead: FY 2026 Priorities

Main Street Streetscape Implementation

Following the presentation of alternative streetscape and traffic calming concepts in January 2025, the CRA will work with city departments to refine designs and advance implementation planning for downtown Main Street improvements. These enhancements will improve pedestrian safety, enhance aesthetics, and support the overall downtown experience.

Continued Incentive Program Deployment

The CRA will maintain its commitment to residential rehabilitation, down payment assistance, and commercial improvement programs that leverage private investment across the district. Based on the exceptional return on investment achieved in FY 2025, these programs remain central to the CRA's strategy for eliminating blight and increasing taxable value.

District Activation Expansion

With the Block by Block Clean Team starting enhanced cleaning services in October 2025 and public art investments maturing, FY 2026 will focus on expanding activation efforts, including potential new mural installations, enhanced event programming, and continued beautification initiatives.

COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY



Bartow Community Redevelopment Agency

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