

S. Central Ave.

S. 4th Ave.

W. Davidson St.



180 Central Ave. N.

S. 3rd Ave.

BARTOW CRA

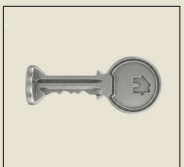


2025 ANNUAL REPORT

E. Church St.



N. Florida Ave.



S. Jackson Ave.

Progress You Can Live In

Prepared in accordance with Sections 163.356(3)(c), 163.371, and 163.387(8), Florida Statutes

Main St

W. Vine St.



E. Lemon St.

N. Wilson Ave.

S. 7th Ave.

S. Flora Ave.

S. 1st Ave.

N. Oak Ave.

E. Wabash St.

Your Guide to the Board

Welcome to the Bartow Community Redevelopment Agency’s Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2024-2025. This report accounts for the CRA’s investments, projects, and progress during a transformative year for the District. Every dollar of public investment detailed in these pages advances the CRA’s mission: to eliminate blight, strengthen infrastructure, and create opportunity within the Bartow CRA District.

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A Message from the Chair



Dear Neighbors and Partners,

It has been my privilege to serve as Chair of the Bartow Community Redevelopment Agency during a year that has demonstrated what committed, community-minded governance can accomplish. The members of this board bring a depth of professional expertise and personal investment in Bartow's future that is reflected in every project, every grant, and every dollar accounted for in this report.

In Fiscal Year 2025, the CRA broke ground on the Innovation Center — a \$3.4M investment that will anchor workforce development and entrepreneurship in our District for decades. We completed all 10 owner-occupied rehabilitation projects, helping longtime homeowners improve their properties and quality of life. We awarded six facade grants that transformed storefronts along Main Street and beyond. And we mobilized 177 volunteers through the IMPACT cleanup project, removing more than 2,600 pounds of debris from our neighborhoods.

These accomplishments are the product of a board that operates with the professionalism and strategic discipline of business leaders — because that is what we are. Each of us serves because we believe in Bartow's potential and because we are willing to put in the work to realize it.

As you review this report, I invite you to see not just what the CRA has done, but what your community has built together. The investments documented here belong to all of us.

With gratitude and determination,

Gordon Greene

Gordon Greene
Chair, Bartow Community Redevelopment Agency



Voices from the Board

The Bartow CRA Board comprises seven community leaders appointed by the City Commission to guide the District’s redevelopment. Here, six members share what redevelopment means to them and to Bartow.



Pictured from left to right: Sandy Mendez, Member, Tom Santarlas, Ph.D., Member, Anthony Ghent, Vice Chair, Gordon Greene, Chair, Cheri Kelley, Member, Shana Bennett, Member, Jerome Corbett, Member.

Anthony Ghent Vice Chair

“Affordability is the biggest priority. When working families can own homes and build equity in the District, everyone benefits – the homeowner, the neighborhood, and the tax base.”

Sandy Mendez, Member

“I took a leap of faith buying a historic building on Main Street and turning it into a restaurant. The CRA is creating the conditions for more entrepreneurs to take that same leap.”

Jerome Corbett, Member

“Affordable housing doesn’t mean subsidized housing. It means mixed-use development that gives people real options to live and work in the community they love.”

Tom Santarlas, Ph.D., Member

“Multi-family housing and affordable homeownership go hand in hand. The CRA’s programs make both possible.”

Shana Bennett, Member

“As a business that has served this community for 26 years, I’ve seen the impact of investing in our hometown. Through my role on the CRA, I’m proud to support efforts that create opportunity, strengthen local businesses, and build a community we’re proud to pass on for generations to come.”

Cheri Kelley, Member

“The CRA plays an important role in strengthening the Bartow community by helping fill gaps in city services and creating an environment that supports redevelopment, growth, and connection.”

How Your CRA Works

What is a Community Redevelopment Agency?

A Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) is a public body created under Chapter 163, Part III of the Florida Statutes to address conditions of blight within a defined geographic area. The Bartow CRA was established on April 16, 1990, following a Finding of Necessity that identified conditions including deteriorating infrastructure, inadequate public facilities, and economic underperformance within the District.

The CRA's mission is to eliminate blight, promote economic development, and improve community infrastructure through strategic investment of public funds. The CRA does not levy additional taxes — it reinvests the growth in existing property tax revenue.



CRA Staff

C. Howard Smith — Executive Director (since July 2023)

Howard brings extensive CRA leadership experience to Bartow, having served in similar roles in Clearwater and Tampa. Under his direction, the CRA has undertaken its most ambitious program of capital investment, community engagement, and strategic planning in the agency's history.



Cheryl Baksh, FRA-RP — Business & Community Engagement Coordinator (since October 2024)

Cheryl manages day-to-day program coordination, grant administration, and community outreach. Her FRA-RP certification from the Florida Redevelopment Association reflects her specialized expertise in redevelopment practice.

How Your CRA Works

How TIF Works: Tax Increment Financing

The CRA is funded through Tax Increment Financing (TIF). When property values within the CRA District increase, the additional tax revenue generated above the base year value is captured and reinvested directly into District improvements. Think of it as reinvesting in the properties on the board – the more we improve, the more resources we generate for future improvements.

Base Year Taxable Value (1990)

\$83,563,055

Current Year Taxable Value:

\$271,937,186

TIF Increment:

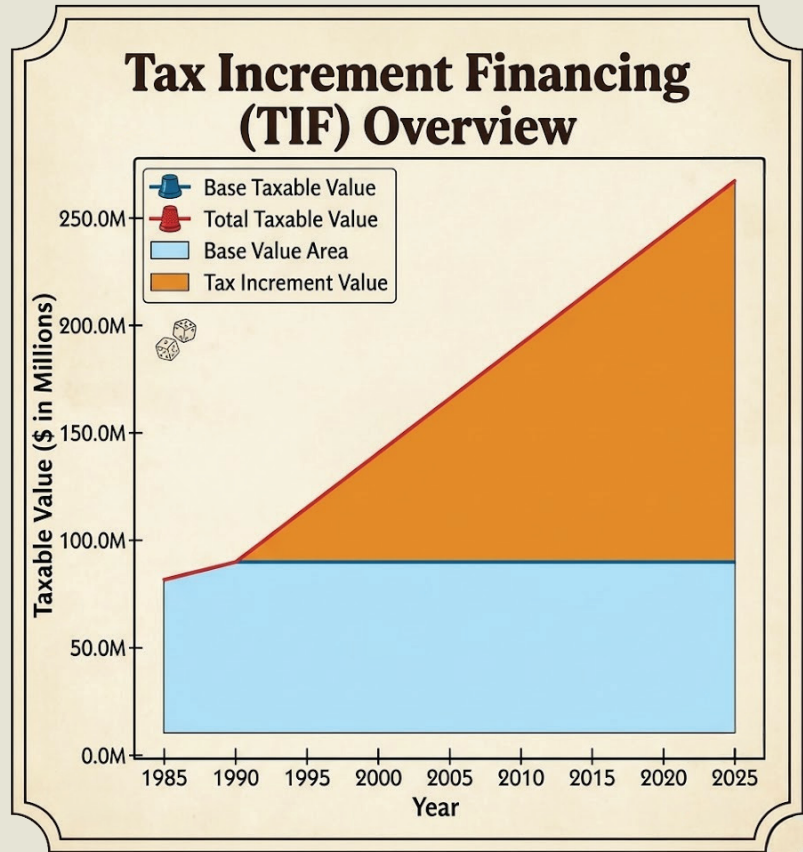
\$188,374,131

FY 2025-2026 TIF Revenue:

\$2,730,108

\$1,304,123/\$1,425,985

(City/County)



TIF Sunset Date: September 2050

Established: April 16, 1990

Area: 2.47 square miles (1,577 acres)

**Boundaries established 2000;
expansions 2005 and 2007**

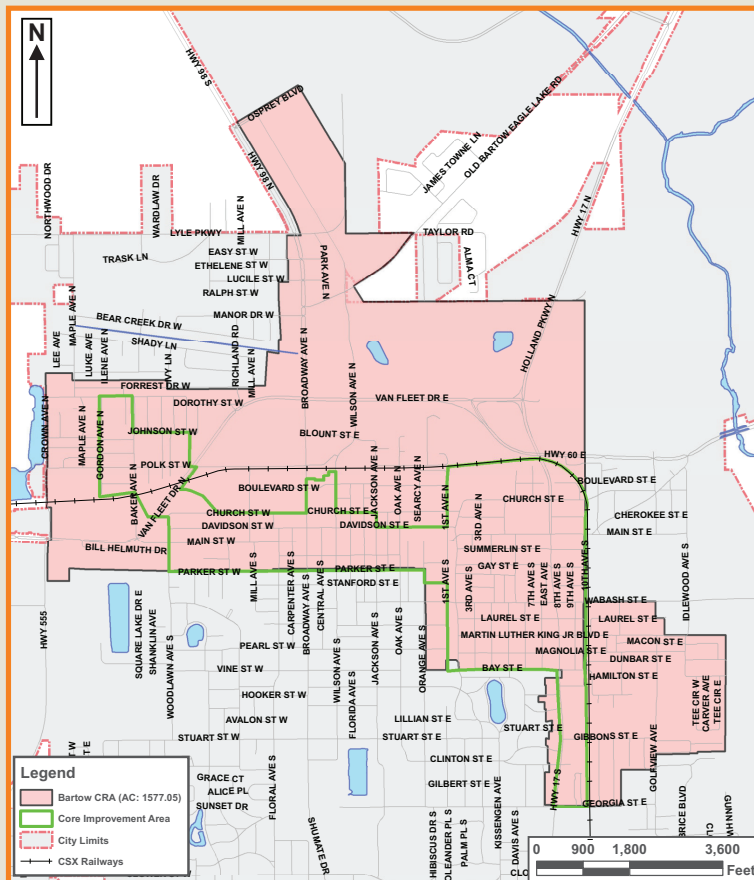
The Bartow Board: Our District at a Glance

The Bartow CRA District encompasses 2.47 square miles in the heart of the city, including the historic downtown core, surrounding residential neighborhoods, and key commercial corridors. The District is home to 4,778 residents, 665 businesses, and 10,405 employees.

With a median household income of \$37,957 and nearly half of all housing units renter-occupied, the CRA's investments in affordable homeownership, commercial vitality, and public infrastructure directly address the District's most pressing needs.

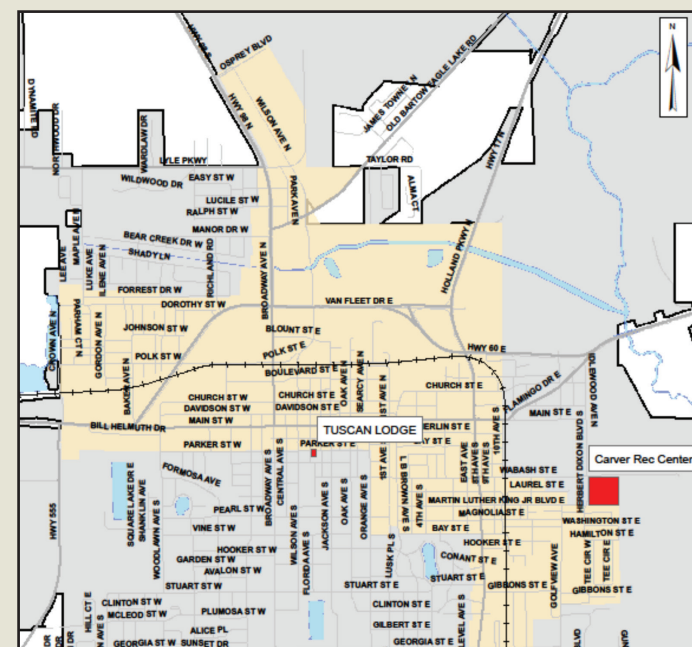
Stat	Value
Population	4,778
Area	2.47 sq mi
Median Age	34.4
Median HH Income	\$37,957
Businesses	665
Employees	10,405
Median Home Value	\$198,993
Owner-Occupied	40.9%
Renter-Occupied	48.5%

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



Boundary Expansion

In March 2026, the City Commission approved the updated Redevelopment Plan, which incorporates two additional parcels into the CRA District. The expansion map below highlights these additions.



Collecting on Our Investments: FY 2025 at a Glance



Fiscal Year 2024–2025 was a landmark year for the Bartow CRA. From breaking ground on the District’s most significant capital project to completing every planned homeowner rehabilitation, the CRA delivered measurable results across all five program areas.

TIF Revenue

\$2,730,108

Innovation Center

\$3.4M under construction

Facade & Commercial Grants

6 awarded

Owner-Occupied Rehab

10 completed
\$235,776

Bartow Squeeze Riders

2,249 served

IMPACT Volunteers

177+ mobilized

Streets Resurfaced

16 streets
2.41 miles

Properties Acquired

2 historic properties / \$241,822

Down Payment Assistance

\$89,000 leveraging \$1.61M (18:1 ROI)

New Homes Built

5 homes \$131,241 leveraging \$1.32M

Requirement	Value
Total TIF expenditures	\$2,730,108
Original assessed value (1990)	\$83,563,055
Current assessed value	\$271,937,186
Total affordable housing expenditures	\$456,017

Acquiring and Constructing Community Assets

The CRA strategically acquires and develops properties to catalyze private investment and create community anchors. In FY 2025, the CRA secured two historic properties and broke ground on its most transformative project to date.

CRA Innovation Center

CRA Innovation Center

180 Central Ave. N.

Construction Contract: Rodda Construction

Total Investment: \$3.4M

Construction Start: March 2025

Target Completion: October 2026

The CRA Innovation Center will serve as a collaborative hub designed to foster innovative partnerships that deliver resources, programs, and services to City of Bartow residents, local businesses, and visitors across Polk County. By co-locating key economic and community-focused organizations, like CareerSource Polk, 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.



The Innovation Center represents the CRA's single largest capital investment and its most visible commitment to Bartow's future. When completed, the facility will provide modern office space, meeting rooms, and community programming space designed to serve as a catalyst for downtown revitalization.

Prince Hall Masonic Lodge

Prince Hall Masonic Lodge

Status: Acquired by CRA

Acquisition Cost: \$141,822

The Prince Hall Masonic Lodge carries deep historical significance for Bartow's African American community. The CRA's acquisition preserves this landmark and opens new possibilities for community programming and heritage celebration.

Acquiring and Constructing Community Assets

Fiscal Year 2024–2025 was a landmark year for the Bartow CRA. From breaking ground on the District’s most significant capital project to completing every planned homeowner rehabilitation, the CRA delivered measurable results across all five program areas.

The Orpheum Theatre

The Orpheum Theatre
330 Main Street
Status: Acquired by CRA
Acquisition Cost: \$100,000

The Orpheum Theatre is a historic property with significant activation potential. The CRA is evaluating multiple concepts for the building’s future use, with three interior design options currently under architectural review. The Orpheum’s location on Main Street positions it as a potential anchor for downtown cultural and commercial activity.

Total FY 2025 Property Investments:

- **Innovation Center construction: \$3.4M**
- **Property acquisitions: \$241,822**
- **Combined: \$3,641,822**









Activating Our District

From neighborhood cleanups to downtown beautification, the CRA invests in projects that make the District a place people are proud to call home and excited to visit. In FY 2025, the CRA launched its most ambitious activation program to date — and the community responded.

CRA IMPACT Cleanup Project (September 20, 2025)

The CRA IMPACT cleanup project mobilized the community for a single day of concentrated neighborhood improvement. Partnering with Keep Polk County Beautiful, the City of Bartow Solid Waste Department, and four community organizations, the CRA organized volunteers to clean, plant, and beautify 12 homes across the District.

By the Numbers:

-  177+ volunteers signed in
(additional volunteers unsigned)
-  2,620 lbs of debris removed
-  47 plants and shrubs planted
-  410.5 volunteer hours contributed
-  \$18,500+ in-kind value generated
-  12 homes served

Community Partners: Keep Polk County Beautiful, Liberty Link Foundation 360, Mt. Gilboa Church, St. James AME Church, Dream Center, City of Bartow Solid Waste

IMPACT Year 2 is planned for April 25, 2026, building on the momentum and expanded partnerships established in Year 1.

Scan the QR code to
watch the IMPACT
cleanup video



Before
& After



Activating Our District



Block by Block Clean Team (launched October 2025)

The CRA contracted a dedicated downtown cleaning team to maintain the District's commercial core and public spaces on an ongoing basis. With a \$120,000 annual investment, the Block by Block Clean Team provides twice-weekly service including street cleaning, public restroom maintenance, and litter removal throughout the District.



Community Policing

The CRA invested \$111,509 in a dedicated community policing officer for the District. The community policing program bridges law enforcement and neighborhood engagement, fostering trust and visibility in the areas where CRA investments are concentrated.

Since the CRA's investment there has been a **23% increase** in Park Walk and Talks in the district.



Activating Our District



Arts in Public Places

The CRA invested \$202,795 in public art initiatives during FY 2025, including:

- Mamie Hewing Banner Pole: honoring a notable African American community leader through the CRA's heritage banner program (featuring 145 total banners across the CRA district)
- One Nation Many Stories Mural: partnership with Polk County History Center celebrating Bartow's diverse heritage
- Zest Mural / Citrus Bee: adding vibrancy and visual identity to the downtown streetscape

These installations transform public walls and poles into landmarks that celebrate community identity and draw visitors downtown.



BARTOW



Mamie L. Hewing

**CIVIC & COMMUNITY
LEADER**

Investing in Bartow's Storefronts

The CRA partners with local businesses to improve commercial spaces, strengthen storefronts, and attract new investment to the District. Every CRA dollar invested in commercial redevelopment leverages private capital and creates lasting improvement — transforming vacant facades into vibrant business properties.

Facade Grant Program

The CRA's Facade Grant Program supports exterior improvements including painting, signage, lighting, doors, and windows. The program provides full funding up to \$5,000 and 50% matching funds up to \$50,000 for larger projects. In FY 2025, the CRA awarded six facade grants:

Recipient	Grant Amount
The UPS Store	\$19,802
Meeks Realty	\$9,770
The Wine Stable	\$33,631
Brenda's One Stop	\$5,000
Palace Pizza	\$18,158
Sweet Magnolias Cafe & Gift Shop	\$5,000
Total Facade Grants Awarded	\$49,428
Total Investment in CRA District	\$94,361

Facade grant ROI: 1.82 to 1 — every dollar of CRA facade investment generated \$1.82 in private property improvement.



Investing in Bartow's Storefronts



Commercial Enhancement Grant

1 Grant Awarded

The Commercial Enhancement Grant supports interior and exterior renovations that reduce commercial vacancies and strengthen existing businesses. In FY 2025, the CRA awarded one Commercial Enhancement Grant:

- 545, 535, and 525 E. Main Street (bank building complex)
- CRA Investment: \$39,247 expended
- Property assessed value increased from \$200,931 to \$300,000 — a 2:1 return on investment

The Commercial Enhancement Grant program offers 50% matching funds up to \$200,000 per project, enabling substantial private investment in commercial property upgrades.



Before & After



Infrastructure That Serves Everyone



The CRA invests in the shared spaces and infrastructure that serve every resident, business, and visitor in the District — from the streets we drive to the facilities where families gather.

Street Resurfacing Program

The CRA resurfaced 2.41 miles of road across 16 west Bartow streets that had fallen below a Pavement Condition Index (PCI) of 51%. This \$483,121 investment addresses years of infrastructure deterioration and improves safety, accessibility, and curb appeal for neighborhoods throughout the District.

Total Investment: \$483,121

Public Restrooms

The CRA constructed two outdoor ADA-compliant public restroom facilities at key locations within the District:

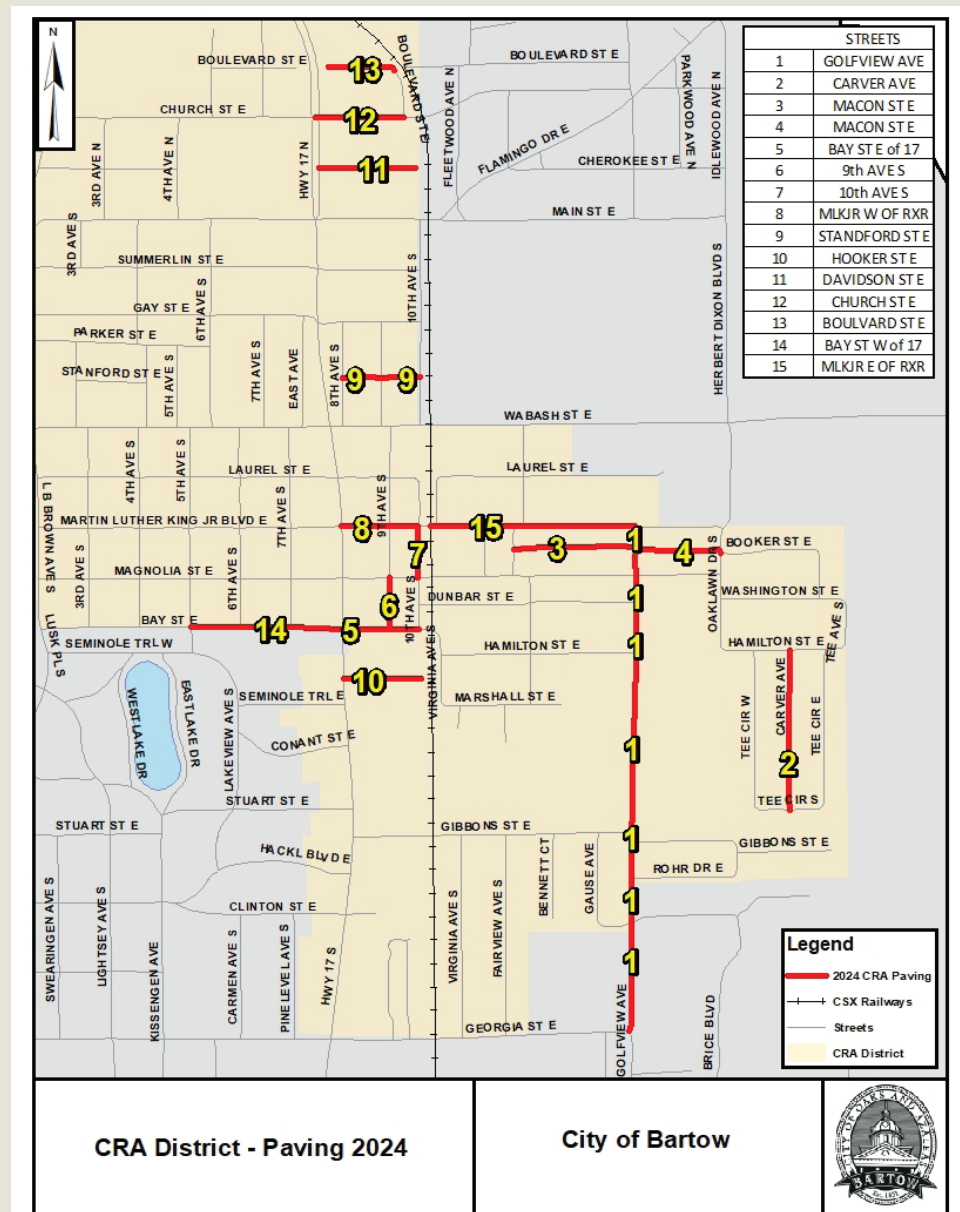
- Summerlin Street restroom
- Polk Street / Over the Branch Park restroom

Total Investment: \$701,000

These facilities address a longstanding gap in downtown public amenities, supporting both residents and visitors to the commercial core.

MADVAC Street Sweeper

The CRA acquired a dedicated MADVAC street sweeper for the District at a cost of \$85,000. The sweeper operates twice weekly throughout downtown, maintaining clean sidewalks and streetscapes in support of commercial vitality and community pride.



Infrastructure That Serves Everyone



Bartow Squeeze Micro-Transit

The CRA piloted the Bartow Squeeze micro-transit service from August 2024 through January 2026, serving 2,249 passengers at a total cost of \$31,720. The program demonstrated significant community demand for District mobility solutions and informed future planning for transit connectivity.

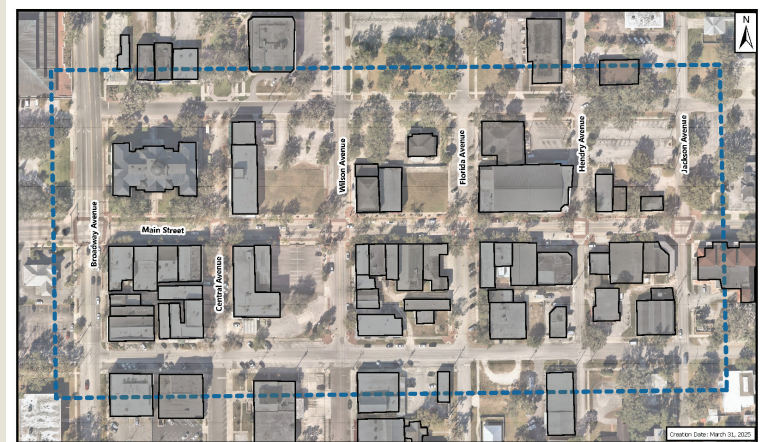
The Bartow Squeeze demonstrated that residents want accessible, affordable transportation options within the District. This data will guide the CRA's investment in future micro-mobility and transit partnership initiatives.



Main Street Streetscape Study

The CRA commissioned and completed a streetscape study for Main Street, presenting alternative traffic calming and beautification concepts to the CRA Board and City Commission in January 2025. The study establishes the implementation framework for future pedestrian safety and aesthetic enhancements along the District's primary commercial corridor.

Total Public Spaces Investment (FY 2025): \$1,300,841

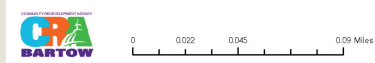


City of Bartow Main Street Streetscape Conceptual Design

Project Study Area

Legend

- Project Study Area
- Buildings



Building Homes, Building Futures

The CRA creates pathways to homeownership, preserves existing housing stock, and incentivizes new residential construction — ensuring the District’s neighborhoods are safe, attractive, and attainable for working families.

Residential Development Incentives

The CRA awarded development incentives for five new single-family homes within the District, investing \$131,241 in CRA funds that leveraged \$1,322,765 in private construction investment. These new homes expand the District’s housing stock, increase property values, and strengthen the residential tax base.

Down Payment Assistance Program

The CRA’s Down Payment Assistance (DPA) program awarded \$82,000 in FY 2024–2025, helping five families achieve homeownership within the District. Those five investments leveraged \$1.61 million in private home purchases — an extraordinary return of approximately \$18 in private investment for every \$1 of CRA funding.

The DPA program exemplifies the CRA’s philosophy: strategic public investment that catalyzes far greater private economic activity. At an 18:1 leverage ratio, the DPA program delivers among the highest returns of any CRA initiative.



**Before
& After**



**Before
& After**



Building Homes, Building Futures

Owner-Occupied Rehabilitation Program

The Owner-Occupied Rehabilitation (OOR) program is the CRA's most direct investment in the District's existing homeowners. In FY 2025, the CRA invested \$235,776 to complete improvements on all 10 enrolled homes — a 100% completion rate.

Improvements included:

- Air conditioning unit replacement
- Interior and exterior painting
- Porch repair and structural reinforcement
- Walkway improvements
- ADA accessibility modifications
- Roof repair and replacement

Each rehabilitation project increases the property's assessed value, reduces blight conditions, and improves the homeowner's quality of life — all while preserving existing affordable housing stock within the District.

Total Residential Investment (FY 2025): \$449,017

Total Private Investment Leveraged: \$2,932,765

Combined Leverage Ratio: ~\$6.53 in private investment for every \$1 of CRA residential funding



Full Accountability

This financial summary satisfies the requirements of Sections 163.356(3)(c) and 163.371(2)(b), Florida Statutes, providing a complete accounting of CRA revenues, expenditures, and fund balances for Fiscal Year 2024-2025. Every dollar is accounted for within the adopted budget framework and invested according to the priorities established in the CRA Redevelopment Plan.

The CRA's financial statements are audited annually as part of the City of Bartow's comprehensive annual financial report. (Purvis Gray, 2024)

Florida Redevelopment Association Do & Don'ts

The CRA CAN:

- Invest in infrastructure improvements within the District
- Provide grants and incentives for commercial and residential property improvements
- Acquire and develop strategic properties
- Fund community policing and public safety within the District
- Support placemaking, public art, and beautification projects
- Partner with other agencies and organizations for District improvement

The CRA CANNOT:

- Fund projects outside the CRA District boundaries
- Fund operating expenses for the City (CRA funds are legally separate)
- Fund social events that do not serve a redevelopment purpose
- Bypass state reporting and transparency requirements
- Incur debt without board approval and proper statutory process

Bartow Community Redevelopment Agency		
Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Annual Budget		
Account Number	Description	FY25/26
Estimated Revenues		
	City	1,304,123.00
	County	1,425,985.00
	Total TIF	2,730,108.00
	CRA Incurred Debt	-
	Accumulated Balance	2,730,108.00
	Unassigned Carryforward Funds FY 24/25	-
	Cash	2,300,000.00
TOTAL REVENUES & BALANCES		5,030,108.00
Expenditures		
Obligations		
559201-881-052	CRA Construction Building Projects	2,700,000.00
559201-991-001	Bond (Debt Service)	-
Sub-Total		2,700,000.00
Contractual Services		
559201-334-900	Personnel	275,028.00
559201-334-905	Community Policing	113,892.00
559201-334-900	Property Maintenance	40,000.00
559201-334-900	Main Street Bartow	60,000.00
559201-334-900	Marketing & Communication Services	2,000.00
559201-346-055	Main Street Custodial	80,000.00
Sub-Total		570,920.00
Policy and Project Programs		
559201-881-033	Property Acquisition	1,000.00
559201-334-008	Demolition/Code Enforcement	60,000.00
559201-881-009	Banner Pole Project	8,000.00
559201-881-030	Arts in Public Places	50,000.00
559201-633-019	CIP- Flood Mitigation and Drainage	100,000.00
559201-663-020	CIP- Sidewalk Enhancement	100,000.00
559201-663-021	CIP- Smart City Program	1,000.00
559201-881-051	Quality of Life & Community Improvements	10,000.00
Business Retention Grant		
559201-881-043	Commercial Enhancement Grant	200,000.00
559201-881-028	Small Business Incentive	1,000.00
559201-881-053	Anchor Tenant Grant	1,000.00
559201-881-044	Facade Grant	150,000.00
Housing and Grant Incentives		
559201-881-027	Permit and Impact Fees Assessment	60,000.00
559201-881-045	House Rehab Program	500.00
559201-881-054	Down Payment Assistance	60,000.00
559204-881-049	Future Initiatives/Projects	100,000.00
Sub-Total		902,500.00
Operations		
559201-348-002	Advertising	1,000.00
559210-332-100	Audit & Accounting	7,000.00
559201-345-010	Insurance	5,100.00
559201-354-001	Dues and Subscriptions	4,000.00
559201-331-100	Legal	35,000.00
559201-331-300	Consulting Services	300,000.00
559201-349-001	Miscellaneous	30,000.00
559201-346-002	Office Furniture & Equipment	6,000.00
559201-351-001	Supplies	10,000.00
559201-341-012	Postage	500.00
559201-347-010	Printing & Binding	2,000.00
559201-341-004	Telephone / Internet	2,695.00
559201-341-000	Utilities - CRA Building	1,019.00
559201-344-004	Office Lease	70,000.00
559201-340-100	Travel/Training - STAFF	20,000.00
559201-340-101	Travel/Training - BOARD	15,000.00
559201-349-801	Allocated City Commission	40,670.00
559201-349-803	Allocated City Clerk	20,345.00
559201-349-805	Allocated Human Resources	3,765.00
559201-349-806	Allocated Purchasing	594.00
Sub-Total		574,688.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES		4,748,108.00
Budgeted Fund Balance, End of Year (September 30)		282,000.00

Partnerships That Power Progress

The CRA’s impact extends beyond dollars and projects. It is measured in the partnerships formed, the volunteers mobilized, and the community pride strengthened across the District. No CRA investment succeeds in isolation – every project documented in this report reflects collaboration with organizations, businesses, and neighbors who share the CRA’s commitment to Bartow’s future

Key Partnerships (FY 2025):



Keep Polk County Beautiful
IMPACT cleanup partnership; volunteer coordination and materials support



Liberty Link Foundation 360
Community engagement and resident outreach



Dream Center
IMPACT cleanup community partner



Mt. Gilboa Church
IMPACT cleanup community partner



St. James AME Church
IMPACT cleanup community partner



Main Street Bartow
Downtown coordination and programming



Bartow (EDC)
Innovation Center co-location partner



OD Jones
Developer partner for residential and commercial projects



Habitat for Humanity Lakeland
Affordable housing partnership



Citrus Connection
Transit and mobility partnership



City of Bartow
Municipal partnership



City of Bartow Solid Waste
IMPACT cleanup partnership



Bartow Police Department
Community policing program



USF Access 3D Lab
Bartow Unframed AR project

Partnerships That Power Progress

“Working with the Bartow CRA on the IMPACT cleanup showed us what a community can accomplish when neighbors, organizations, and local government come together with a shared purpose.”

— Katie Hayes, Executive Director, Keep Polk County Beautiful

FRA Conference Recognition:

The Bartow CRA’s work was featured at the 2025 Florida Redevelopment Association Annual Conference in West Palm Beach. Robert Allen of HCP Associates, Renee Jadusingh of Delray Beach CRA, and Brenda Thrower of the City of Tampa presented “The Business of the CRA vs. The CRA Brand” on October 15, 2025 — highlighting Bartow’s approach to strategic branding and community communication as a model for CRAs statewide.



Florida Statute Compliance

This report is prepared and filed in accordance with the annual reporting requirements of Chapter 163, Part III, Florida Statutes. The checklist below identifies where in this report each statutory requirement is satisfied.

Statute	Requirement	Location in Report
163.356(3)(c)	Complete financial statement of all assets, liabilities, income, and operating expenses	Page 19
163.371(2)(b)(1)	Total number of projects started and completed	Pages 8–18
163.371(2)(b)(2)	Total amount of TIF expenditures for the fiscal year	Pages 8, 19
163.371(2)(b)(3)	Original assessed value of taxable property at time of CRA creation	Pages 6, 8
163.371(2)(b)(4)	Current assessed value of taxable property	Pages 6, 8
163.371(2)(b)(5)	Total amount expended for affordable housing	Pages 17–18, 19
163.371(1)	CRA map posted online	Page 7, CRA website
163.387(8)	Annual budget filed with County and available for public inspection	Page 19

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BARTOWCRA

About This Report

This Annual Report covers the Bartow Community Redevelopment Agency’s activities during Fiscal Year 2024-2025 (October 1, 2024 – September 30, 2025). It is filed with the Polk County Board of County Commissioners and the City of Bartow City Commission, and made available for public review.

Where to Find More:

- Adopted Budget: Available for public inspection at Bartow City Hall
- Financial Audit: Purvis Gray(2024)
- CRA Redevelopment Plan: Updated and approved March 2, 2026
- CRA Board Meetings: Last Wednesday of each month, 8:30 AM, Bartow City Hall

Looking Ahead

Building Tomorrow's Bartow

Three-Year Strategic Work Plan (FY 2026–2029)

In January 2026, the CRA Board adopted a comprehensive three-year strategic work plan organized around four pillars:



Pillar 1: Property Acquisition

- Complete Innovation Center construction — target October 2026
- Inventory all vacant and underutilized parcels by Q4 2026
- Execute 2+ strategic property acquisitions annually (Bond Series 2026)
- Advance Orpheum Theatre activation (330 Main Street)
- Advance mixed-use development on East/West Corridors



Pillar 2: District Activation & Placemaking

- Sustain Block by Block Clean Team (\$120K/year)
- Expand IMPACT cleanup program (Year 2: April 25, 2026)
- Sustain community policing investment (\$112K/year)
- Advance trail, gateway, and wayfinding signage
- Develop micro-mobility and smart city initiatives
- Launch Bartow Unframed AR experience (USF partnership)

Looking Ahead

Building Tomorrow's Bartow



Pillar 3: Commercial & Public Spaces Redevelopment

- Expand facade and commercial enhancement grants (6+ /year target)
- Launch Business Retention Toolkit
- Continue street resurfacing and public infrastructure investment
- Launch standalone CRA website and District communications
- Establish formal partnerships for commercial support



Pillar 4: Residential Redevelopment

- Sustain Owner-Occupied Rehabilitation Program (8+ /year target)
- Continue Down Payment Assistance (2+ /year target, maintaining 18:1 ROI)
- Develop infill residential initiative
- Advance workforce housing through public-private partnership incentives



Capital Investment Horizon

With the \$18 million CRA Bond Series 2026 — approved by the Board at a special meeting on March 4, 2026 — the CRA has secured the capital to execute its most ambitious program of property acquisition, construction, and infrastructure investment in the agency's 35-year history.

Key upcoming capital projects include:

- CRA Innovation Center — completion October 2026
- Orpheum Theatre activation — design and renovation
- East End Vision — mixed-use development opportunities
- Main Street Streetscape implementation — pedestrian safety and beautification
- Strategic property acquisitions — per bond schedule

BARTOW COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

1 PROPERTY ACQUISITION & CONSTRUCTION

Evaluate strategic properties within the district to catalyze mixed-use development and eliminate blight. (Develop initiatives for revitalization in CRA District)

- Inventory all vacant and underutilized parcels in the CRA District by Q4 2026
- Prioritize development (commercial/residential) that complements existing Downtown Businesses within East and West Corridors
- Execute 2+ property acquisitions on priority corridors by Q4 (Bond Series 2026)
- Create and Deploy Developer Incentives for Mix Use to attract private investment for Long Term Development
- Complete Innovation Center construction (CRA-CMAR), \$2.65M — target Oct 2026

KEY METRICS

Metric	Baseline	3-Year Target
Innovation Center	Under construction	Complete Oct 2026
Properties Acquired that align with Redevelopment Plan	2 (\$210K FY25)	2+/year
Annual reduction in vacant parcels within the District (% C/R)	2 (FY26)	6+ over 3 yrs
Annual Capital Improvement Projects funds expended (%)	Bond issued (\$18M)	Per bond schedule
Develop an Inventory Parcel within the CRA district by Q4	No inventory	Complete Dec 2026

3 COMMERCIAL & PUBLIC SPACES REDEVELOPMENT

Strengthen the commercial core, improve commercial properties, and invest in public spaces that supports connectivity. (Retain current businesses and attract new ones)

- Expand walkable and connected public spaces within Core Areas of Downtown to increase pedestrian activity within the commercial core
- Launch Business Retention Toolkit
- Continue street resurfacing and public infrastructure improvements
- Launch standalone CRA website and district communication strategy
- Establish formal partnerships that enhance resources (financial, communication, branding) to support commercial business (retention/expansion)

KEY METRICS

Metric	Baseline	3-Year Target
Number of commercial properties improved annually	6 (\$49K FY25)	6+/year
# of public space improvement projects initiated/completed	1=(\$50K FY26-29)	2+/year
Commercial Businesses Award Funding (budget %)	2+	1+/year
Net Reduction in vacant commercial storefronts	% (FY25)	3+/yearly
# of businesses supported through partnership programs	3+	15

Three-Year Strategic Work Plan

FY 2026 – 2029



Progress You Can Live In

Driving investment, improving public spaces, and strengthening neighborhoods within the CRA District.

CRA DISTRICT

2.47 sq mi | 4,778 residents

665 businesses | 10,405 employees

\$5M annual budget

- Acquisition
- Placemaking
- Commercial
- Residential

2 DISTRICT ACTIVATION & PLACEMAKING

Transform the district's public realm into a connected, walkable destination that draws residents and visitors downtown. (Increase awareness of the district as a destination point)

- Develop/initiate programs to maintain a clean and vibrant CRA (Commercial and Residential) District
- Strengthen community policing initiatives to improve public safety and foster positive interactions
- Expand the Arts in Public Places installations throughout the district
- Advance trail, gateway, and wayfinding signage initiatives
- Develop micro-mobility options and smart city initiatives
- Apply for awards that highlight to out-of-market visitors the appeal of Bartow

KEY METRICS

Metric	Baseline	3-Year Target
IMPACT Projects Completed	2,620 lbs (FY25)	1+/year
Block by Block Clean Team	\$120K (Oct 2025)	Sustain annually
Community Policing	\$112K (FY25)	Sustain annually
Arts in Public Places	\$50K (FY25)	Sustain annually
Senior Connection Mobility Project	100k (FY 2026)	Operational Y1

4 RESIDENTIAL REDEVELOPMENT

Expand homeownership opportunities, improve housing stock, and strengthen the district's residential base.

- Provide assistance via programs to support improving the homes of owner-occupied residents in the CRA District
- Encourage additional development with developer incentives to spur new housing construction
- Develop an infill residential initiative to increase the district's housing stock
- Advance workforce housing initiatives through targeted incentives for Public Private Partnership (P3)
- Increase in residential property values within CRA District neighborhoods

KEY METRICS

Metric	Baseline	3-Year Target
Homes improved in the CRA District per permit office	10	8+/year
Down Payment Assistance	5 (\$82K, 18:1 ROI)	2+/year
New Homes Built (Dev. Incentive)	5 (\$131K → \$1.3M)	2+/year
Median home sale price growth	200K (FY25)	250K (FY 26)
Program investment in residential redevelopment	236K (FY25)	100K/year



Bartow Community Redevelopment Agency

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