



## City of Bessemer

### Economic & Community Development Department

As a recipient of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Office (HUD), the City of Bessemer is planning to use a CDBG tool to support community revitalization. The city is preparing to submit a Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area (NRSA) application to HUD for a defined target area within the city. The NRSA will provide additional affordable housing and economic opportunities and new and innovative ways to increase investments through the city's CDBG funds and attracting other public and private funding. The boundaries of the target area are 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the west, 22<sup>nd</sup> Street N to the south, Dartmouth Avenue to the east, and 35<sup>th</sup> Street N to the north.

The city of Bessemer's Office of Economic and Community Development is seeking public comment on the proposed NRSA application to HUD between July 1, 2022 and July 15, 2022. The detailed NRSA application can be found at <https://www.bessemeral.org/community-development-announcements>. A copy is also available at the Economic and Community Development suite on the second floor of Bessemer City Hall. Written comments can be sent to the Economic and Community Development Department, c/o Mr. Toraine A. Norris at 1700 Third Avenue North, Bessemer, AL 35020 or via email at [tnorris@bessemeral.org](mailto:tnorris@bessemeral.org). Oral comments will also be accepted between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:45 p.m., Monday thru Friday, by contacting Community Development at 205-424-4060.





CITY OF BESSEMER, AL  
NEIGHBORHOOD  
REVITALIZATION  
STRATEGY AREA (NRSA)

June 2022

Department of Community  
Development  
City of Bessemer, AL



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>I.</b>	<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>II.</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>III.</b>	<b>HISTORY OF THE COMMUNITY .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>IV.</b>	<b>NRSA APPROVAL REQUEST AND BOUNDARIES .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>V.</b>	<b>NRSA REQUIREMENTS .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>VI.</b>	<b>DEMOGRAPHIC AND PRIMARILY RESIDENTIAL CRITERIA .....</b>	<b>7</b>
	Demographic Criteria.....	7
	Primarily Residential.....	7
<b>VII.</b>	<b>BENEFITS OF A HUD-APPROVED NRSA .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>VIII.</b>	<b>DEMOGRAPHICS AND ECONOMICS – NRSA .....</b>	<b>9</b>
	Demographics.....	9
	<i>Population</i> .....	9
	<i>Population by Race</i> .....	10
	<i>Population by Ethnicity</i> .....	11
	<i>Population by Age</i> .....	11
	Households.....	12
	<i>Low-and-moderate Income households</i> .....	13
	<i>Median household Income</i> .....	14
	Economics.....	16
	Planning for the Future .....	16
	Healthcare/Social Service Investments .....	17
	<i>Labor Participation and Unemployment</i> .....	18
	<i>Bessemer Occupations and Wages</i> .....	18
	<i>Local Business Composition</i> .....	20
<b>IX.</b>	<b>COMMUNITY CONSULTATION.....</b>	<b>22</b>
	<i>Public meetings</i> .....	23
	<i>Stakeholder Consultations</i> .....	24
<b>X.</b>	<b>ASSESSMENT OF ECONOMIC AND NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTERISTICS .....</b>	<b>24</b>
	Housing Conditions .....	26

<i>Total Housing Units</i>	27
<i>Housing Tenure</i>	27
<i>Residential Structures – year Built</i>	28
<i>Vacancy</i>	29
<i>Building Activity</i>	30
<i>Median Home Value</i>	31
<i>median Gross Rent</i>	32
<b>Quality of Life .....</b>	<b>33</b>
<i>Education</i>	33
<i>crime rate</i>	33
<i>vacant land</i>	35
<i>access to transportation</i>	35
<b>XI. HOUSING AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES/EMPOWERMENT STRATEGY.....</b>	<b>37</b>
Empowerment Strategy .....	37
<b>XII. 2022-2026 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT BENCHMARKS.....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>XIII. NRSA COORDINATION STRATEGY.....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>XIV. MONITORING AND REPORTING .....</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>XV. STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS .....</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>XVI. CURRENT AND FUTURE LEVERAGED RESOURCES IN THE NRSA .....</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>XVII. FINANCING SOURCES FOR HOUSING, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT .....</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>XVIII. APPENDICES.....</b>	<b>56</b>
Attachment A: NRSA Community Assets Map .....	57
Attachment B: NRSA Demographic and Primarily Residential Criteria	58
Attachment C: NRSA Public Notices and Public Comments.....	59
Attachment D: Documenting Impact .....	63

## I. Executive Summary

The City of Bessemer's (COB) amendment to its 2020-2024 Consolidated Plan for using federal housing funds includes strategies to create a Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area (NRSA).

The NRSA approach is to focus its federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, deploy them more flexibly than possible, and leverage them for a more significant impact. Job creation would be more manageable, and public service funding and housing activities would be less restrictive under the CDBG program. The CDBG national objective of principally benefitting low- and moderate-income persons will still be met.

Maps of the area covered, details of the proposed NRSA program, and NRSA demographics are contained in the following Plan. As required in the NRSA rule, the City's Department of Community Development (DOCD) conducted a robust community participation process. DOCD received community input through public meetings and surveys and included residents, businesses, nonprofits, institutional partners, the private sector, and governmental entities. DOCD published the draft plan for a 15-day comment period. DOCD staff also consulted with HUD field office staff in preparing the NRSA application. The criteria for the NRSA are low-income and primarily residential, levels of existing and planned investments, a business corridor, partners working in the neighborhoods, neighborhood assets, and the availability of community-based development organizations to help implement the NRSA strategy. Below is a summary of the goals and benchmarks the city plans to provide in the Bessemer NRSA.

**GOAL 1: Affordable Housing. *Benchmarks:*** Build 25 affordable housing units and repair 40 owner-occupied single-family houses to increase the housing supply for residents and improve the housing stock. Acquire and rehabilitate 15 vacant properties for homebuying and rental. Pursue interest in creating a land bank to acquire properties, reduce speculation and retain affordability.

**GOAL 2: Economic and Human Capital Development: *Benchmarks:*** Create/retain 16 F/T jobs through assistance to 3 small businesses/microenterprises. Support Business District through funding for neighborhood businesses in the commercial corridor. Increase workforce development in the NRSA by training 75 persons for jobs to meet increased demands from recent business investments.

**GOAL 3: Neighborhood Improvements and Capacity Building. *Benchmarks:*** Increase public services through assisting 7 community-based development organizations (CBDOs) and non-profits to support the NRSA strategies. Demolition of 25 unsafe structures and developing a working group coordinated by DOCD staff to assist with implementation in the Bessemer NRSA. Beautify the NRSA by creating 4 public spaces such as pocket parks, community gardens and tree planting. Design and implement at least 2 community safety programs.

## II. Introduction

The City of Bessemer, AL, is an “entitlement” recipient of formula grant funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) under the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). To receive CDBG grant funds, the City must prepare a Consolidated Plan every five years to assess the City’s housing and community development needs; analyze the City’s housing market; establish housing and community development priorities, goals, and strategies to address the identified needs; identify the resources to address them and stipulate how the allocation of funds to housing and community development activities. The City must update the Consolidated Plan by preparing an Annual Action Plan to use the formula grant funds received from HUD. The city is amid its FY2020-2024 Consolidated Plan period and anticipates receiving \$2.8 million in total CDBG funding grants over the five years.

The City’s five-year priority needs, and goals based on data analysis and community and stakeholder participation were to:

- Increase housing affordability through owner-occupied home repair and down payment assistance
- Improve neighborhoods by investing in public infrastructure, including parks and playground improvements and the Multi-Use Trail Extension.
- Provide economic opportunity for low-and-moderate income families through support of job creation and retention programs and assistance to small and medium enterprises.
- Transportation needs
- Offer technical assistance for small business entrepreneurs who want to establish a new microenterprise or business and for owners seeking to strengthen or expand their existing small business.
- Street Improvements in areas where at least 51% of the population are low-to-moderate-income households.

Many of the City’s neighborhoods have experienced significant decline and disinvestment with older housing stock, slum and blighted conditions, vacant properties, and high-cost burden for both renters and homeowners. Due to high construction costs, availability of land, and incomes not keeping pace with rent and home prices, affordable housing is limited. The federal grants received by the city are not enough to meet the needs of the City’s neighborhoods.

One of the tools available under the CDBG program to focus the scarce federal resources and attract and leverage other public and private sector funding is the designation of a geographic area as a Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area (NRSA) per 24 CFR 91.215(g) and 24 CFR 570 Subpart C.