



CITY OF BARTOW
CITY COMMISSION WORKSHOP MEETING
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2026 AT 4:30 PM
OR AS SOON THEREAFTER AS POSSIBLE
CITY HALL COMMISSION CHAMBERS
450 NORTH WILSON AVE., BARTOW, FL 33830

AGENDA

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL
2. REVIEW AND DISCUSSION
 - a. 2-Year Communications Plan — Laurie Hayes, Communications Director
 - b. 2026 Citizen Engagement — Mike Herr, City Manager
 - c. Rendering concepts for Public Restrooms Mural Installation — Mike Herr, City Manager & Howard Smith, CRA Director
3. ADJOURNMENT

Please be advised that if you desire to appeal any decisions made because of the above hearing or meeting, you will need a record of the proceedings and in some cases a verbatim record is required. You must make your own arrangements to produce this record. (Florida Statute 286.0105). The City Commission may continue the public hearing(s) to other dates and times as it deems necessary. Any interested party shall be advised that the date, time, and place of any continuation of these or continued public hearings may be announced during the hearing and that no further notices regarding this matter will be published. If you are a person with a disability who needs any accommodation to participate in this proceeding, you are entitled, at no cost to you, to the provision of certain assistance. Please contact the City Clerk's Office at 450 N. Wilson Avenue, P.O. Box 1069, Bartow, Florida 33831-1069 or phone (863) 534-0100 within 2 working days of your receipt of this meeting notification; if you are hearing or voice impaired, call 1-800-955-8771. Posted at City Hall, Bartow Public Library, the City's website: www.cityofbartow.net and Facebook page on January 21 and 29, 2026.

PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.



CITY OF BARTOW COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

COMMUNICATIONS MISSION

Communications advances the City's strategic vision to help position the City as a thriving, healthy, smart and innovative community. The City of Bartow seeks to utilize traditional media, social media, print publications, web and video to inform, engage and inspire our residents, businesses, staff and visitors while supporting the goals of the City as a whole.

COMMUNICATIONS VISION

The City of Bartow strives to provide innovative and creative communications solutions to promote the City's core services, initiatives and mission and foster an informed and engaged community.

COMMUNICATIONS GOALS

- Create modern brand identity for the City.
- Enhance internal and external communications, ensuring that information is shared in an accessible, consistent and timely manner.
- Seek out partnerships and relationships with community groups, civic and business organizations, homeowners associations and individual citizens.
- Focus and expand communications efforts, updating policies and procedures and providing appropriate training for staff as needed.
- Analyze success of communication methods and use this data to make changes and improvements in order to maximize success.

COMMUNICATIONS PRIORITIES 2026 - 2027

WEBSITE

Year One:

- Work with Departments to ensure that content is up-to-date and accurate
- Update site with new logo / branding
- Ensure the website meets accessibility standards, including compliance with accessibility rules including upcoming WCAG 2.2 guidelines
- Continue conversion of PDF forms to web-based, fillable ADA compliant forms
- Contract with a photographer to take headshots of department heads
- **Launch Strategy and Performance Dashboard**

Year Two:

- Create branded pages for Parks & Recreation and the Police and Fire Departments

SOCIAL MEDIA

Year One:

- Incorporate more multimedia elements such as reels, videos and infographics
- Work with various departments - Police, Fire, Solid Waste, Customer Service - to create informational videos on City services to post to YouTube / Facebook
- Establish City NextDoor and Instagram pages
- Increase sharing between the official City page and other City social media outlets
- **Provide monthly engagement analytics to City Manager for sharing with the Commission**

Year Two:

- Create a shared editorial calendar to plan and schedule regular updates, including news, events, and community stories across platforms

Misc. Efforts

Year One:

- Working with IT, enhance Bartow App to include more City information (vs links) about parks, services and City events
- Seek out opportunities for awards/recognition from associations, etc.
- Establish and distribute a weekly news brief for media on projects, services enhancements, etc. as warranted
- **Update Bartow Guide, removing date**
- **Enhance Bartow Now digital flipbook**
- **Apply for and be awarded a stipend from FCCMA for a paid summer intern**

REBRANDING

- **Once logo has been finalized, work with Jeff Clark to create a design standards manual that designates usage parameters to include acceptable fonts, colors (B&W, one color, etc.), sizes and use of tagline.**
- **Determine standardized designs for letterhead, email signatures, PowerPoints, business cards, etc.**
- **Include information and downloadable graphic(s)/templates on intranet**
- **Roll out new logo to the public via press release, social media, Week in Review**
- **Switch out logos on social media, MyBartow app, website, etc**
- Work with departments to form a transition plan and budget for signage, uniforms, vehicles, printed materials

Year Two:

- Implement transition

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Year One:

- Continue to host / promote Town Hall meetings as needed
- Support public outreach to include meetings, focus groups, surveys, etc., on Managing Growth, Budgeting for Outcomes and other topics
- Support Strategic Planning process by assisting in the formation of focus groups, meeting planning, etc.
- **Add at least one community event to the Parks & Recreation roster**
- Forge relationships with various community associations / neighborhood groups
- Seek out opportunities for Community Engagement with Emergency Services
- Develop a sponsorship packet for distribution to local businesses who wish to sponsor programs and events with financial or in-kind donations

Year Two:

- Communicate impact of Property Tax Reform on City Services

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

Year One:

- Working with HR and IT Departments, enhance intranet platform to better foster internal communication
- Post bi-weekly message from the City Manager
- **Support HR in creating / updating NeoGov content**
- Seek out information and new developments across departments
- Hold Department "customer service" meetings
- Launch on-boarding tool for new hires, creating portals for:
 - Fire
 - Police
 - Public Works
 - Utilities
 - Electric

Ongoing

- Facilitate interdepartmental collaboration to identify means to better communicate with both internal and external audiences

PRINT MARKETING MATERIALS

Year One:

- Continue to audit all public facing printed materials distributed by City departments
- Assess publication needs, adding or subtracting as appropriate
- Working with Departments, update with new branding, redesign or create
- Design and order new City giveaways with new logo / branding as needed

PRODUCTION OF A VIDEO MAGAZINE

Year Two:

- identify funding for necessary personnel, materials and equipment
- Create a studio space for conversational interaction
- Produce a monthly, 5 - 10-minute recap of positive news, services and / or programs that is hosted by City Manager and / or Mayor with other department heads or staff
- Incorporate b-roll, graphics
- Release on social media, including YouTube

PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.

CITY OF BARTOW, FLORIDA

TO: City Commission
THROUGH: Mike Herr, City Manager
FROM: Mike Herr, City Manager and Laurie, Hayes, Communications Director
DATE: February 2, 2026
SUBJECT: City Commission Communications Workshop

SUMMARY

This memorandum provides background information for **the February 2, 2026 Communications Workshop with the City of Bartow Commission**. The workshop is designed to align communication priorities, highlight recent initiatives, and outline key community engagement efforts planned for 2026.

The major topics to be covered during the workshop include:

- **Review of the City of Bartow Communications Plan**
FY 2025–2026 through FY 2026–2027, including goals, strategies, and implementation progress.
- **Award of FCCMA Next Generation Intern**
Recognition of the City’s participation in the Florida City and County Management Association’s Next Generation Internship Program.
- **Status of New Logo Roll-Out**
An update on branding implementation, timelines, and next steps.
- **2026 Community Engagement Focus Areas**, including:
 - Impact of Property Tax Reform and Budgeting for Outcomes
 - Strategic Planning Process
 - Public Safety Roundtable
 - Growth Management and Annexation

BACKGROUND

City management staff held a Strategic Communications Workshop with the City of Bartow Commission on February 23, 2024, to develop a two-year Strategic Communications Plan. As a newly established function within the City organization, enhancing communications was identified as a priority by both the City Manager and the City Commission.

The original two-year plan outlined key initiatives guided by the following communication goals:

- Modernize the City’s brand identity to better reflect the community and its values.
- Enhance internal and external communications to ensure information is shared in an accessible, consistent, and timely manner.

- Build partnerships and relationships with community groups, civic and business organizations, homeowners associations, and individual residents.
- Focus and expand communications efforts by updating policies and procedures and providing staff training as needed.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of communication methods and use data-driven insights to make adjustments and improvements to maximize impact.

Attachment A1 outlines the FY 2023-2024 to FY 2024-2025 Accomplishments resulting from this plan.

STAFF ANALYSIS

Having successfully completed the original 2024 Strategic Communications Plan, City Manager Herr directed staff to develop a new two-year plan to guide the next phase of communications for the City of Bartow. This workshop will provide the City Commission with an overview of the proposed plan and an opportunity to offer input on the future direction of the City’s communications efforts.

In addition to discussion of the FY 2025–2026 through FY 2026–2027 Strategic Communications Plan, staff will share information regarding the City’s recent award of an intern through the Florida City and County Management Association (FCCMA) Next Generation Intern Program. The award includes a \$10,000 stipend to support the recruitment of a talented future public service professional and will be presented as a cost-neutral budget amendment on the February 2, 2026 Commission Agenda.

The Communications Workshop will also provide staff with the opportunity to brief the Commission on the roll-out of the City’s recently released updated logo. Additional guidance and discussion regarding future phases of the logo implementation will be included as part of this agenda item.

Finally, community engagement remains an important component of the City’s overall communications strategy. With potential changes resulting from Property Tax Reform, staff recognizes the need for public education efforts to clearly outline the impacts of reduced revenues on service delivery. This topic, along with other key focus areas, will be discussed during the workshop as potential community engagement initiatives for 2026:

- **Impact of Property Tax Reform and Budgeting for Outcomes**
An overview of what taxes and fees fund, along with proposed listening sessions to gather input from residents and businesses on budget priorities.
- **Strategic Planning Process** (see Attachment D: Potential Strategic Planning Process)
Deployment of the 2026 City of Bartow Strategic Planning Process, focused on strengthening community pride and collaboration while developing an updated mission, vision, and organizational goals.
- **Public Safety Roundtable**
A discussion of the Police Chief’s vision for community policing, recruitment, and training, as well as efforts to strengthen community relationships. This session will also include fire services and fire prevention, departmental growth, and the transition to a multi-station service model.
- **Growth Management and Annexation**
A forward-looking discussion on what the City of Bartow may look like in 25 years, addressing key growth considerations and long-term planning concerns.

FISCAL IMPACT

- Not applicable.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment A: City of Bartow Communications Plan – FY 2025-2026 through FY 2026-2027
 - Attachment A1: FY 2023-2024 to FY 2024-2025 Accomplishments
- Attachment B: FCCMA Next Generation Intern Information
- Attachment C: Status of New Logo Roll-Out
- Attachment D: Proposed 2026 Strategic Planning Process



City of Bartow

Polk County's Capital City

Attachment A1: FY2023-2024 to FY2024-2025 Communication Accomplishments

Website and Social Media

- Creation of an updated user-friendly ADA compliant website on www.cityofbartow.net
- Deployment of the MyBartow App for Issue Reporting
- Creation of a Public-Facing Strategy and Performance Dashboard
- Increased activity on City of Bartow Facebook page
 - 2.8 million views
 - 36,100 interactions
 - 104,500 visits
 - 2,100 additional followers

Logo Roll-Out

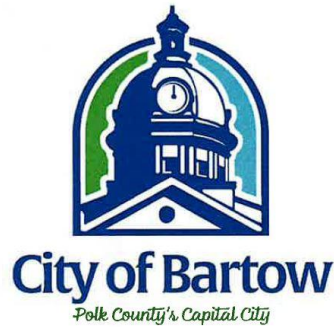
- Completed final art work and design standards
- Implemented new logo on Web Site, social media, intranet, dashboard and all publications
- Creation of templates for email signatutes, powerpoint presentations and letterhead

Publications

- Creation of new publications describing City services to include the 45 editions of Week in Review in 2025 and seven issues of Bartow Now
 - Addition of digital FlipBook in January 2026
- Supported the release of the Bartow Guide by D.R. Media
- Launch of a program budget in FY2025-2026 to increase transparency:
 - Includes advanced descriptions of City services
 - Provides easier to understand financial information
 - Includes information on newly created dedicated funds devoted to Impact Fees, Building, Fleet management, Capital Replacement and others. New fund categories within both the revenue and expenditure framework will allow for clearer tracking of growth-related revenues and corresponding investments in capital improvements
- Development of the Citizens Guide to the Budget

Citizen Engagement and Media Relations

- City engagement efforts through use of Town Halls, Citizen Survey's, Neighborhood Meetings
 - Creation of the City Manager's 2025 State of the City Presentation
 - City Speed Dating Event
 - Wind Meadows Citizen Engagement event
 - Promotion of and on-site support at Parks, Recreation & Cultural Arts events
 - Civic Plaza historical marker
 - City-hosted July 4 celebration
 - Father – Daughter Dance
 - Richland Manor Park Opening
 - Civic Center Tennis Courts
 - Misc. Library programs
 - Creation of Independence Day sponsorship packet
- Improved Media Relations with all news outlets



Attachment B: FCCMA Next Generation Intern Information

Background:

The City of Bartow was one of four local government to be awarded a Next Generation Intern by the Florida City and County Management Association (FCCMA) in December 2025. FCCMA instituted this program in 2024 to provide a \$10,000 grant to a City or County to help cultivate the next generation of talent in public administration.

The City of Bartow was awarded this opportunity with fellow governments including Dunedin, Fort Walton Beach and Jupiter Inlet Colony. Bartow's intern program will focus on Communication techniques and strategies as outlined below.

Department Sponsoring Internship:

City Manager's Office / Communications

Workplan Summary:

- Contribute social media content to official City, Police Department and Parks & Recreation platforms – reels, photos and stories
- Assist with launch and maintenance of City Instagram, YouTube and/or NextDoor platforms
- Add general city content (facilities information, event calendar, etc) to MyBartow app
- Assist with Event Planning for the City and for the division of Parks & Recreation
- Create staff features – video and text / photos for Intranet
- Collect usage analytics, insights and statistics for website and social media for optimization of platform and sharing on city performance dashboard

Intern Timeline:

May 2026 through September 2026

Departments Involved in Workplan:

The intern will have the opportunity to interact with most City departments – CRA, Public Works, Utilities, Public Safety, Sanitation, etc. - as he/she gathers stories and content for

social media and internal messaging. The Intern also would be tasked with assisting with the Division of Parks & Recreation with regards to P&R-specific social media and event planning and management.

Workplan Local Government Focus Areas:

Municipal Management

Municipal Finance & Budgeting

Public Safety

Communications and Community Engagement



Attachment C: New Logo Roll-Out

As of February 2026

Summary

Develop a multi-year implementation plan for the roll out of the newly selected logo and brand. Ensure the roll-out that maximizes the use of existing funding in year one and identifies future funding needs in out years.

Completed Year One Activities

1. Final artwork for logo design
2. Design standards manual for use of approved logo, tag line, fonts and colors
3. Provide artwork to FDOT for Pedestrian Bridge Signage
4. Develop templates for the following:
 - a. Letterhead
 - b. PowerPoint Presentation templates
 - c. Email signatures
5. Apply brand to:
 - a. Cityofbartow.net adjustment to brand
 - b. Social Media sites
 - c. Intranet
 - d. Strategy and Performance Dashboard
 - e. Bartow Now future editions
 - f. Bartow Guide
 - g. Week in Review
 - h. Commission Agendas and Packets
 - i. City Hall scrolling TV

On Hold Year One Activities

1. Applying the brand to:
 - a. Uniforms
 - b. New vehicle purchases (5 vehicles carry-forward from FY24-25)
 - c. Signage (ie. TCS building, Park signs)
 - d. Business cards

Year Two: FY 26-27 Activities

Seeking guidance on community based branding to coincide with release with anticipated completion of the Highway 60 Walking Bridge Summer 2027

FY 26-27 Funding – To Be Determined

- Street lantern lighting (includes painting poles as needed)
- Gateway signage
- City Signage on Facilities
- Any leftover vehicles and equipment
- Road signage
- Any additional items



FOR THE LOVE OF BARTOW

Attachment D: Proposed 2026 City of Bartow Strategic Planning Process

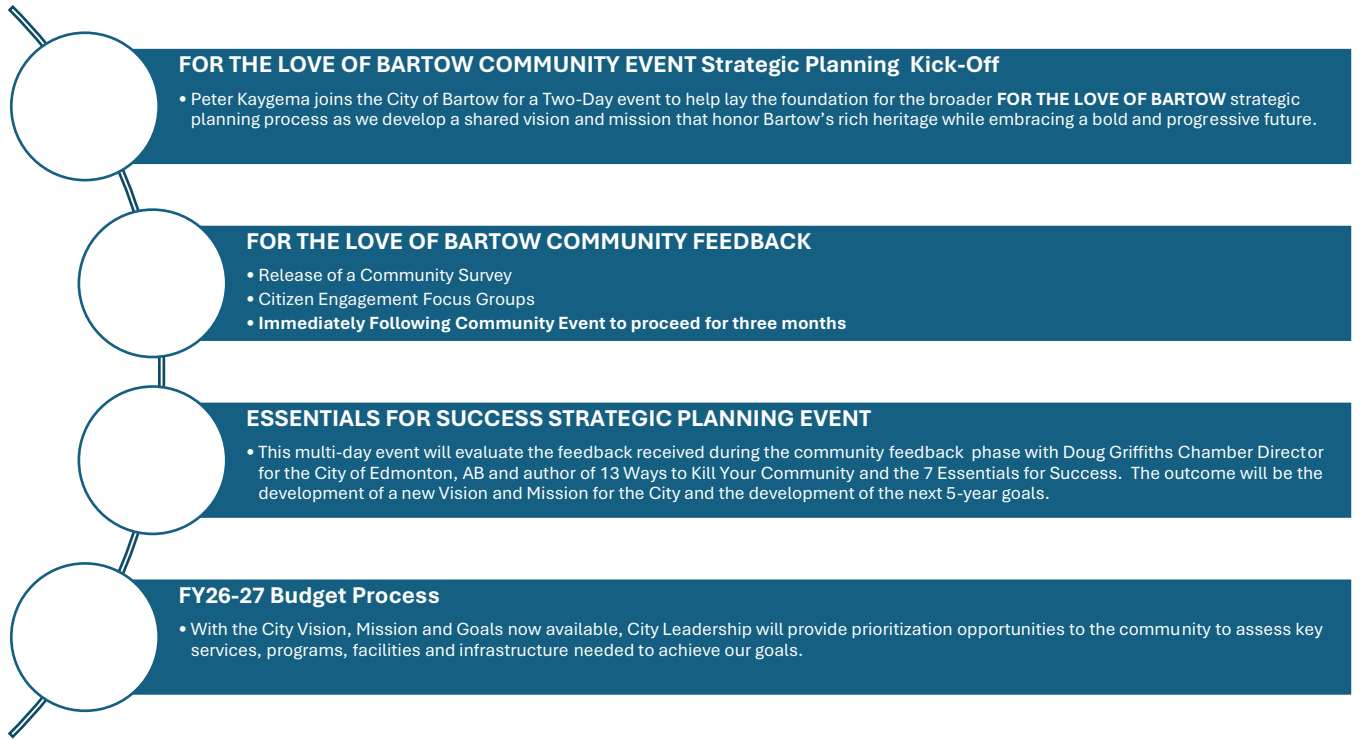
SUMMARY

The City of Bartow's current vision and mission statements expire in 2025. To respond, City Leadership is implementing a Strategic Planning Process in 2026 which will begin with the **FOR THE LOVE OF BARTOW** community event. We will use a variety of creative and thought-provoking engagement methods to gather input from residents, employees, partners, local businesses, workers, and visitors throughout the strategic planning process surrounding the capture of the sentiment behind the Love for Bartow. Our goal is to understand what we can do—together—to strengthen the love for our community.

Throughout 2026, we will welcome two nationally recognized thought leaders and best-selling authors to help guide us through a collaborative strategic planning process. Their insights will support our work as we develop a shared vision and mission that honor Bartow's rich heritage while embracing a bold and progressive future.

In a time when local governments face increasing challenges in delivering services fairly and equitably, it is essential that we co-design our future with the community—ensuring that every voice is heard, valued, and reflected in the path forward.

2026 STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS



FOR THE LOVE OF BARTOW COMMUNITY EVENT: STRATEGIC PLANNING KICK-OFF

Peter Kageyama author of *For the Love of Cities REVISITED*, *Love Where You Live* and *The Emotional Infrastructure of Places* will be on site over the course of two days to help our stakeholders focus on how emotional engagement with places pays long term social, health and economic dividends to a community. Peter places emphasis on the role that we all play as ‘co-creators’ in the broader community and economic development of the city.

FOR THE LOVE OF BARTOW Community Event Schedule – Dates to be determined

- **Day One Event: City Tour with Peter Kageyama**
 - Peter will tour the community to observe and capture local examples that illustrate the love and pride people feel for the City of Bartow. These insights will be incorporated into his conversations and reflections as we highlight the positive stories that shape our community.
- **Day One Event: Dinner with Key Stakeholders – (50 people – more if possible)**
 - This invitation-only event will begin an important conversation: **Why do people LOVE Bartow?** Designed as an intimate meet-and-greet dinner, the gathering will bring together key City of Bartow stakeholders to share and uncover meaningful insights about the deep affinity felt for our community. Your perspective will help lay the foundation for the broader **FOR THE LOVE OF BARTOW** strategic planning initiative as we work together to shape Bartow’s future.
- **Day Two Event: Thought Leader Luncheon – (50 people – more if possible)**
 - We will host a special session with a select group of thought leaders, including the City Commission, the City Leadership Team, and key community partners. This event will feature a luncheon followed by a 60-minute session that blends presentation and discussion. The focus will be on the important role officials play in this process and how they can more effectively communicate and introduce new ideas and concepts to their constituents.
- **Day Two Event: FOR THE LOVE OF BARTOW Community Event - To be held at the Civic Center (500 people)**
 - Peter Kageyama will serve as the keynote speaker for the **FOR THE LOVE OF BARTOW** community event at the Bartow Civic Center. His keynote will introduce the concept of emotional engagement with our community and inspire attendees to consider how they can contribute to this effort. This free, ticketed event will welcome up to 500 participants, helping to engage the broader community in exploring new possibilities and understanding the importance of the strategic planning process the City is undertaking. The keynote will be followed by an audience Q&A session.

FOR THE LOVE OF BARTOW COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

This phase of our strategic planning process will focus on obtaining feedback from the community on **Why do people LOVE Bartow?** Through surveys, focus groups and community meetings we will gather input from residents, employees, community partners, local businesses, workers, and visitors on their perspectives of their love for Bartow and what they recommend for improvements.

Community feedback opportunities will occur over the course of three months utilizing a variety of methods including online and in-person surveys, focus group meeting, community partner events, leadership retreats and Commission workshops. The goal is to provide valuable insights into the community's needs, perceptions, and expectations for the City organization and their community while we heighten the Love for our community.

1. Citizen and Business Satisfaction Survey

Goal: provide valuable insights into the community's needs, perceptions, and expectations for the City organization and their community.

2. Use these findings to serve as a foundation for a series of focused small-group sessions designed to engage stakeholders in the development of a refreshed vision and mission, and clearly defined strategic goals
 - a. Meetings in a Box
 - b. Community Partner Events
 - c. Leadership Retreat
 - d. Commission Retreat
3. Strategic Plan is formally Adopted at second January Commission Meeting that includes: City Vision, Mission, 5-Year Goals, and Major Initiatives for Calendar 2027.
 - a. Portray Commission Reports including Strategic Alignment.
4. Use the Strategic Plan in the next fiscal year budget process | March 2027 Kick-Off.
5. Utilize these guiding elements at the department level and incorporate them into the upcoming budget process, ensuring their operational plans and performance measures are aligned with the City's overarching strategic direction.

PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.

Bartow CRA Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA)

Mural Renderings

Wednesday, January 28, 2026



Rendering Concepts for Public Restrooms

Two Concepts for the Over the Branch Park

715 W. Polk Street Bartow, FL 33830



Rendering Concepts for Public Restrooms

Over the Branch Park Rendering Exhibit A



Rendering Concepts for Public Restrooms

Over the Branch Park Rendering- Exhibit A2



Rendering Concepts for Public Restrooms

Three Concepts for the Downtown Restroom

277 Summerlin Street Bartow, FL 33830



Rendering Concepts for Public Restrooms

Downtown Restrooms Renderings- Exhibit B



Rendering Concepts for Public Restrooms

Downtown Restroom Renderings-Exhibit B2



Rendering Concepts for Public Restrooms

Downtown Restroom Renderings-Exhibit B3

