



City of Bronson 2019 Annual Report



The Bronson Creed

I believe in Bronson and its responsibilities; and I shall do my part to make it a better place in which to live.

I believe in good government for Bronson, and I shall assume my share of the civic responsibility that rest on the shoulders of all our citizens.

I believe in supporting local enterprises that make for community development, and shall contribute my moral support and energy to any worthy cause championed by them.

I believe in patronizing home merchants, for they are greatly responsible for our having good schools and churches, better roads and promotion of the general welfare of this community.

I believe in making Bronson clean and attractive, for a healthy atmosphere is an inducement to honest and right-thinking citizens.

I believe in boosting my home town at every possible opportunity; that thinking, talking and acting progress is the quickest and surest way to bring permanent prosperity to Bronson - the best town in America -because it is MY HOME!

From the Bronson Journal- 1924

City of Bronson City Council Information:

The City of Bronson has a Council-Manager form of government. The City Manager is charged with the day-to-day operation of the municipality and is appointed by and answers directly to the Council. The Council meets at the Bronson City Offices at 5:00 PM on the second Monday of every month.

The City of Bronson is governed by a five-person, elected City Council. Three seats on the Council are open every two years. Two seats are four-year terms and one is a two-year term. Following each election, the Council elects from its members a Mayor and Vice-Mayor.

Mayor: Mayor Larry McConn (term expires November 2020)

Vice-Mayor: Jim Kenny (resigned as of December 9, 2019)

Council: Bill Earl (term expires November 2020)
Matt Watkins (term expires November 2022)
Joe Duke (appointed on December 9, 2019, term expires November 2022)
Rick Johannes (term expires November 2020)

Bronson Area Fire Association Representatives:

Councilman Bill Earl
City Manager Mersman

Bronson Community Foundation Representative:

Alicia Cole
City Manager Mersman

2020 City Council Meeting Schedule:

The following are the meeting dates for 2020:

January 13, 2020

February 10, 2020

March 9, 2020

April 13, 2020

May 11, 2020

June 8, 2020

July 13, 2020

August 10, 2020

September 14, 2020

October 12, 2020

November 9, 2020

December 14, 2020

City Council Goals & Objectives (from 2019-2020 Fiscal Year Budget)

Goal: Business Retention and Attraction

- Continue strategy of focusing on current employers and businesses and working with them to see expansion
- Continue to Implement benchmarks of the Redevelopment Ready Communities Program and engage related MEDC resources

Goal: Enhance and Undertake Bronson “Place-Making” Activities

- Look for ways to implement the Walkability Study performed by MDOT in September 2013
- Develop the recently purchased former Northeastern Rail Line for non-motorized trail usage.
- Work towards the implementation of the goals set forth in the 2016-2020 Parks and Recreation Master Plan
- Continue working with and supporting the Downtown Development Authority
- Work with community partners (DDA, Chamber of Commerce, Polish Festival, etc.) and businesses to expand and better market downtown activities:
 - August Memorial Park Concert Series
 - City Wide Garage Sales/US 12 Sales
 - Polish Festival
 - Farmer’s Market
 - Bronson Theater
 - Other new events

Goal: Infrastructure Improvements

- Work with DEQ programs surrounding the SAW Grant
- Apply for infrastructure grants as they become available (MEDC Infrastructure Capacity Enhancement Grants & MDOT)
- Work towards implementation of improvements outlined in the City’s recently adopted Capital Improvement Plan
- Continue collaboration with Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study and Branch County Road Commission for street improvement targets and work
- Increase annual road preventative maintenance work using additional General Fund contributions
- Continue coordinated approach for infrastructure improvements

Goal: Optimize Organizational Efficiency

- Consider energy-efficiency projects in coordination with Michigan Gas Utilities and Consumers Energy to improve facility efficiency
- Work with Consumers Energy on potential street-lighting improvements as programs become available
- Better plan for equipment purchases and uses across departments
- Enhance information and outreach efforts using the City’s website, Facebook pages, and Instagram

City of Bronson 2019 Annual Report Introduction:

This report provides a brief summary of City projects and accomplishments for the year 2019. As a community we have made significant progress in addressing infrastructure, facility improvements, and equipment upgrades during the year. In 2019, the City was awarded an MDOT Category B Grant to mill and resurface Corey and Grant Streets from Wayne Street to Matteson Street. Sidewalk ramps were also improved and brought up to ADA compliance.

The City was also awarded a MSHDA grant for exterior home improvements in the Washington Street and Winona Street neighborhoods. The City was able to award six (6) grants to homeowners for work that included; new roofs at two homes, new siding at two homes, a new front porch (one home), and new porch windows and a new garage roof at another home.

In 2019, the City Council approved a new/revised parking ordinance for the City and approved an opt-out ordinance for the new recreational marijuana law. In 2019, the City Council also had the City ordinances re-codified and updated with new ordinance changes.

Respectfully submitted.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Brandon Mersman", is displayed on a light gray rectangular background.

Brandon M. Mersman

City Manager

Highlights of 2019 Projects & Accomplishments:

Community Development:

MSHDA Grant- In 2019, the City of Bronson was awarded a grant in the amount of \$40,000 from the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) for exterior home improvement grants. The City received funds designated for the Washington Street and Winona Street neighborhood which is one of the oldest neighborhoods in the City. The City applied for this grant in order to assist homeowners with exterior home improvements and to reduce blight in this neighborhood. Through this grant the City was able to award six (6) grants to homeowners for work that included; new roofs at two homes, new siding at two homes, a new front porch (one home), and new porch windows and a new garage roof at another home.



(Before and after photos of a siding project at 268 Washington)

The City was named a high performer by MSHDA and is now eligible to apply for additional funds up to \$20,000. The City will be applying for these additional funds in 2020 to extend this program to complete a few more projects in the neighborhood. The funds received to date has greatly improved the appearance and curb appeal of these homes and in turn benefits the entire neighborhood. This public grant investment of \$40,000 has resulted in \$22,600 of private investment by these homeowners through the City's interest free loan program.

[Click here to view a short video about this project which provides an overview of the work](#)

Parks & Recreation:

Park Improvements



Greenwald Park: New security cameras were installed to cover the Bronson's Backyard playground equipment, the baseball field, and the restroom building. The cameras will serve as a deterrent to the vandalism issues we have had there and allow us to identify responsible parties. The investment in cameras will allow us to protect the community's investment in this park.

Kiwanis Park: During the summer of 2019, City staff repainted the restroom building at Kiwanis

Park and installed new doors on the building.

Memorial Park: The gazebo at Memorial Park was re-stained during the summer of 2019.

All Parks: Our seasonal (summer) Department of Public Works (DPW) employees performed some additional painting improvements throughout our parks on playground equipment, pavilions, and other equipment.

Police Department:

Police Department- In Car Camera/Laptop Upgrades:

The Police Department in-car camera system and in-car laptops were replaced in 2019. Body cameras were also purchased for the first time.

Police Department Police Officers Association of Michigan (POAM) Contract Update

In 2019, the City's contract with the Police Officer's Association of Michigan was renewed for a period of three (3) years. There were some minor updates and the contract will cover the full-time police officers (non-management). There will be a wage re-opener each year coinciding with the adoption of the new budget. The contract will expire June 30, 2022.



[See the Police Department 2019 Annual Report for More](#)

Downtown Improvements:

Farmers Market:

The home at 7 Foy Court was purchased and demolished in 2019 to remove Downtown blight and to provide a home for the Farmers Market. The photos below show the before and after.

The City plans to construct a pavilion on the site that will serve as a permanent location for the Farmers Market.



Infrastructure (Water, Wastewater, Roads):

Road Maintenance/Improvements- During the summer of 2019 the City worked with the Branch County Road Commission to perform preventative maintenance on City streets. The following roads had overlays along the edges (where needed) and had a chip and seal treatment:

McKinley
Roosevelt
York
South Lincoln
Division
Jackson
W. Grant
Mill Street
Washington
Winona
Cynthia
Matteson Street (crack filling)
Cemetery Asphalt Drives (seal coated)

Corey and Grant Street Mill & Fill

In 2019, the City of Bronson was awarded an MDOT Category B Grant in the amount of \$105,713.30 to mill and resurface Corey and Grant Streets between Wayne Street and Matteson Street. The project included milling down 2-inches of asphalt and replacing with new asphalt. As a part of this project the City decided to improve the sidewalk ramps at each intersection. The total project cost was \$241,355.60 with \$105,713.30 being covered from the MDOT grant. Both of these roads are heavily traveled with school traffic and is a tremendous help in the City's effort to preserve and improve our road network.



Sidewalk Ramp Improvements (throughout the City)

During the summer of 2019, the City also worked with contractors to improve sidewalk ramps at intersections throughout the community. The City is working to improve the walkability and bikeability for our residents with the goal of improving sidewalk ramps each year. In 2019, the City was able to improve 15 ramps at intersections listed below (in addition to the sidewalk ramps improved during the above-mentioned Grant and Corey Street road and sidewalk ramp project):

- Ruggles & Union
- Walker & Union
- Washington & Fillmore
- Douglas/Compton
- Ruggles/Compton
- Mowry/Rudd
- South Street/Shaffmaster
- Fillmore/Buchanan
- Washington & Railroad (all four ramps)
- Walker/Grant



Wastewater (Wastewater & Storm Sewers). In 2018 the City was awarded a Stormwater, Asset Management & Wastewater (SAW) Grant from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality in the amount of \$1,620,107. The grant will allow us to create an inventory of our systems, create Asset Management Plans (AMP), televise and clean lines, conduct rate analyses, and many other valuable tasks for both sanitary and storm sewers. Prein & Newhof is the City engineer for this project. During 2019 the City worked on the following items for this grant:

- Smoke Testing of Sanitary system
- Prepared smoke testing report
- Continued data input into the GIS system for sanitary and storm networks
- Confirmation of existing data and obtaining missing utility data.
- Completed cleaning and CCTV of sanitary system and began cleaning and televising of the storm sewer system.

Work under this grant will take place over a three-year period.

Well Study- Work is continuing on a well study which is being conducted by Prein & Newhof to assist the City in identifying a location for a new City potable (drinking) water well. The engineering firm has been gathering and reviewing area well data, groundwater data, and potential contamination sites. The information will be used to identify potential properties to further study and evaluate to determine potential drinking water well locations.



Water Tower Updates- During 2019, the City Council had discussions on constructing a new water tower or rehabilitating the existing tower. Following the water tower inspection done in 2018 by Nelson Tank, it was recommended that the interior of the tower be repainted at a cost of approximately \$74,000 along with some additional safety upgrades and repairs. Nelson Tank is also recommending the City repaint the exterior in the next five years at a projected cost of \$260,000.

Prein & Newhof assisted City staff in obtaining an estimate for a new water tower:

- 250,000-gallon x 140' TCL Waterspheroid- \$1,290,000
- 300,000-gallon x 140' TCL Waterspheroid- \$1,375,000

In 2019, the City Council decided to make repairs to the existing tower as it is still in good condition and additional capacity is not needed at this time. This was also the recommendation of the City Engineer. In 2020 the interior will be repainted along with some safety repairs and upgrades.

SCADA System (Water & Wastewater)- In 2019, the City purchased SCADA system software which stands for a supervisory control and data acquisition system. The system allows City staff to monitor equipment functions at both of the City wells, the Wastewater Treatment Plant, and sewer lift stations. This system provides alerts if there is an issue with either of the City's two lift stations, two wells, water tower, or the wastewater treatment plant. The system will send a notification to staff if for example the main well pump is causing a pressure loss and we need to switch over to the City's second well pump to avoid a larger drop in pressure. Staff will be notified if there was a loss of power at any of the lift stations or the Treatment Plant so staff can respond with our backup generators. The system will greatly improve our staff's ability to respond to emergencies and prevent some potential issues with pressure drops in the water system.

Motor Pool- During 2019 the City made a couple of upgrades and new purchases to its vehicle and equipment motor pool. The City purchased a mini excavator to be used in the cemetery and for the replacement of lead service lines as required by the DEQ. The smaller piece of equipment will allow staff to maneuver and work in tighter spaces. The City also purchased a new WWTP/Water pickup truck used by the Utilities/DPW Director.



City Hall:

City Hall Landscaping Improvements:

The City Hall landscaping and irrigation system was updated in the summer of 2019 by Backyard Kreations of Bronson and adds a fresh new look to the exterior of the building.