

The City of Bowie Economic Development Strategy Report

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Executive Summary

The City of Bowie retained the Maryland Business Research Partnership of the University of Baltimore and the firm of Lipman, Frizzell, & Mitchell to prepare an analysis of economic and real estate conditions in the City as part of the City's economic development plan. As part of this analysis, five separate analytical steps were undertaken. These steps were:

- 1) An economic data-based, targeting analysis to identify industries for potential recruitment efforts;
- 2) A survey of City of Bowie residents' perceptions of economic development issues;
- 3) A survey of City of Bowie businesses' perceptions of economic development issues;
- 4) An elite interview-based analysis of the perceptions of the City in both the real estate development and economic development communities; and
- 5) An analysis of City and regional real estate market conditions and analysis of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats facing the City.

A summary of the findings of each of these steps and of the recommendations for future action is presented below. An implementation plan is also included at the end of the report.

1.0 Targeting Analysis

The Maryland Business Research Partnership of the University of Baltimore analyzed the structure of the City of Bowie economy and compared the City's economy to the County, State, and nation in order to identify key industries for the City to target in its economic development efforts. This targeting effort also draws on the economic development strategy of the County and the State.

1.1 The Economic Structure of the City of Bowie Economy

- The City of Bowie is currently primarily a commuter based "bedroom community" for the Greater Washington region. In 1990, the City accounted for 5% of the County's population but only 1% of employment.
- The current industrial structure of the City is consistent with its status as a residential-based community. Fifty-six percent (56%) of City employment is in the Services sector, compared to 35% of County employment and 40% of State employment.

- The “export base” – or industries that are likely to sell products regionally or nationally – of the City economy is relatively small and accounts for only 17% of total City employment. In comparison, 23% of County and 25% of State employment is in “export base” industries.

1.2 Target Sectors

Planned and potential developments, most importantly the development of the Bowie New Town Center and the planned development of the University of Maryland Science and Technology Center (UMSTC), will reshape the City’s economy. A primary issue in this development is the identification of the industries that are most likely to be attracted into the City. Some of the key industries that represent the most likely candidates for recruitment into the UMSTC, and the City in general are as follows. This analysis excludes most manufacturing and wholesale/distribution industries on the grounds that these were determined by City government to be inappropriate for the City. This analysis also largely focuses on non-retail businesses because the development of the Bowie New Town Center is expected to meet the City’s retail needs.

- High technology industries are still viable candidates for the UMSTC. The site offers substantial infrastructure resources (both road and telecommunications), the City and the region offer access to a highly educated and skilled workforce, and the City offers substantial quality of life amenities. All of these are vital to technology companies.
- Within the high technology market, the best candidates for recruitment are information technology and telecommunications companies. These are industries in which Prince George’s County has a high level of employment concentration. For example, the County has a location quotient of 2.66 in Computer and Data Processing Services, signifying that the County’s employment concentration is 2.66 times the national average, although this industry accounts for only a small share of employment in the City of Bowie.
- A key potential comparative advantage for the City and the UMSTC is the broadband fiber optic cable being installed along Route 50. The City should seek a connection to this line. This will be of vital importance in attracting information technologies businesses.
- Research and Testing Services, such as research laboratories, also represents a potential high technology industry to target for recruitment. While the County has a higher share of employment in this industry than the national average, its share is lower than that of the State. This industry is also significantly under-represented in the City.
- Biotechnology industries are unlikely to represent a significant potential market at this time. This industry is highly concentrated in Montgomery County and in the Baltimore Metropolitan Area. While there is a shortage of available space for biotechnology firms in existing markets, the City and UMSTC do not offer access to the specialized workforce and other infrastructure that this industry requires.

- Defense electronics (part of Maryland’s Defense and Aerospace Cluster) represents a potential industry for targeting to the site. However, there is relatively limited potential for this industry in the near term. The County does not have a high concentration of employment in this sector and, within the County, this industry is clustered in the Greenbelt area, in close proximity to the Goddard Spaceflight Center.
- In addition to the high technology industries discussed above, there is strong potential for the corporate and “back office” operations of non-high technology companies. The City’s close proximity to major employment centers makes it attractive for the office support, sales, and other corporate functions of major regional employers. Furthermore, the City offers many of the amenities, most importantly access to highways, a substantial telecommunications infrastructure, and access to a high quality workforce, that are most important to these types of facilities. Given tight conditions in major office centers, the City of Bowie and UMSTC in particular, may be a very attractive location for the attraction or regional consolidation of the corporate and back office functions of major regional employers. This pattern of development is consistent with the State’s efforts to promote employment opportunities closer to residential areas. While these corporate facilities may not have “high technology” industry classifications, they typically employ high levels of professional and technical personnel and offer most of the economic development advantages of high technology firms.
- There are several other industries where the City or the County appears to be relatively under-served that may represent attractive industries for targeted recruitment. These include Banks, Non-Bank Financial Institutions, and Hotels and Other Lodging Places. Based on the location quotient analysis, there may be potential City and regional demand for the services provided by these firms. However, the development of Bowie New Town Center and the UMSTC may meet a substantial portion of this demand.

2.0 Bowie Resident Economic Development Survey

The Maryland Business Research Partnership conducted a survey of City of Bowie residents for the City of Bowie Department of Planning. The survey collected information on City residents’ perception of economic development and recent development. The major results of the survey are as follows.

2.1 Resident Demographics

- Seventy percent (70%) of surveyed residents have a bachelor’s degree or higher.

2.2 Resident Employment Information

- Seventy-eight percent (78%) of residents were employed at the time of the survey.
- Three out of every four surveyed residents are employed outside of Bowie, with 62% of these residents working elsewhere in Prince George’s County.

- Sixty-two percent (62%) of working residents are employed in professional, paraprofessional, and technical occupations.
- Of the surveyed residents who are working, 18% work for the federal government, 16% work for business/professional services, and 14% work for the state/local government.
- When asked if they would consider changing employers if a similar job in terms of pay, responsibilities, and benefits were available in Bowie, sixty-five percent (65%) of residents replied that they would change employers.
- When employed residents were asked if they would be interested in telecommuting, 46% said that they would and 10% already telecommute.

2.3 Resident Perceptions of the City of Bowie

- Eighty-seven percent (87%) of residents rate the quality of life in Bowie as very good or good while only 4% rate it as bad or very bad.
- Thirty-two percent (32%) of residents feel that the recent development in Bowie has improved the quality of life in Bowie for several reasons, including having additional places to shop (33%), more to do/greater choices (18%), and more restaurants (13%).
- Forty-three percent (43%) of residents feel that the development has made the quality of life in Bowie worse, with the major reason for this view being the traffic congestion (59%).
- Residents listed the best things about living in Bowie as the community/neighborhood (31%), the location (22%), and the amenities of the community (12%).
- The worst things about living in Bowie listed by residents included the traffic/congestion (40%) and the City being overdeveloped (19%).

2.4 Resident Views on Economic Development

- Seventy-two percent (72%) of residents feel that efforts to promote economic development in the City of Bowie are important while only 11% feel that this is not important.
- The most frequently cited businesses that residents feel should be attracted to the City of Bowie include high technology (62%), business services (41%), and retail/shopping (38%).
- Eighty percent (80%) of residents believe that high technology businesses should be attracted to the UMSTC. Of those who feel there should be another use of the property, 32% feel that it should be used for retail and 26% feel that it should be left as parks/open space.
- Policies that residents feel are important in developing Bowie's plan include promoting business retention (79%) and promoting high technology development (69%).

- The most important factors that residents feel that the City should take into account in developing its economic development plan are to improve traffic/infrastructure (31%) and to create additional parks/open space/recreation areas (14%).

3.0 Bowie Business Economic Development Survey

The Maryland Business Research Partnership conducted a survey of businesses in the City of Bowie for the City of Bowie Department of Planning. The survey collected information on businesses' perceptions of Bowie's business climate and on recent economic development in the City of Bowie. The results of this survey are as follows.

3.1 Company Information

- Companies that responded to the survey were relatively small (under 25 employees), locally owned firms that have been operating in the City of Bowie for less than 15 years.
- The greatest percentage of the sales/customer base of surveyed businesses is in Bowie and Prince George's county.
- The employees of the businesses surveyed live primarily in the City of Bowie.

3.2 Businesses Perception of Bowie's Business Climate

- The greatest advantages to doing business in Bowie are location and quality of life. The greatest disadvantages are the business environment and the traffic/congestion.
- Fifty-six percent (56%) of businesses rated Bowie's business climate as being pro-business or business friendly. Only eleven percent (11%) rated the business climate as anti-business or unfriendly to business.
- Sixteen percent (16%) of firms cited improving traffic/parking as the most important step to improve Bowie's business climate and 8% cited reducing taxes.
- The most frequently cited issue that should be taken into consideration in developing Bowie's economic development plan was improving the traffic and roads (19%). The second most frequently cited issue was balancing future development (16%).
- Quality of life (84%), community image (83%), traffic/congestion (74%), and City taxes were seen as the most important business environment factors by surveyed firms.
- Of the business environment factors, Bowie was seen as most competitive in its quality of life (61%), real estate availability (51%), real estate costs (50%), and community image (47%).

3.3 Economic Development Issues

- Bowie firms cited high technology businesses (84%), business services (57%), and retail (39%) as industries that Bowie should target for attraction.
- Ninety-six percent (96%) of firms believed that high technology businesses should be attracted to the UMSTC.
- The most frequently cited actions or policies that the City could implement to attract new businesses were to provide business incentives (14%), improve education (13%), and reduce taxes (12%).
- When asked about the actions or policies that the City could implement to help their own business expand, 11% of firms responded that Bowie’s infrastructure needed improvement and 10% responded that Bowie could reduce taxes or provide business incentives.
- Eighty-five percent (85%) of businesses cited business retention as the most important economic development plan policy, followed by attracting new businesses (82%), and creating local jobs (77%). Growing residential areas (19%) was seen as the least important policy that the City of Bowie could implement in its economic development plan.

4.0 Interviews with Economic Development and Real Estate Development Leaders

The Maryland Business Research Partnership conducted interviews with ten economic development leaders and eight real estate development professionals active in regional and high technology development. The goal of the interviews was to collect information on:

- 1) how the City of Bowie and UMSTC are viewed in the real estate and economic development marketplace;
- 2) what issues should be taken into account in forming an economic development strategy; and
- 3) what are the most important issues in attracting high technology companies.

The results of these interviews are as follows.

4.1 Economic Development Interviews

Interviews were conducted with ten economic development professionals, including the directors of the economic development departments in Anne Arundel, Howard, and Prince George’s Counties, the Director of the Maryland Technology Development Corporation, and the leaders of the Maryland and Greater Baltimore Technology Councils. The results of these interviews are as follows:

- The UMSTC is seen as a highly attractive site for development.
- The key advantages to the location are its highway access, telecommunications infrastructure, and ability to draw from a strong local and regional labor pool.

- The lack of development at the UMSTC was attributed to the problems associated with divided ownership and lack of infrastructure (sewer, stormwater drainage, etc.) on the site.
- Several persons interviewed perceived the site’s development covenants as too restrictive.
- The consolidation of ownership and plans to address infrastructure issues are viewed as positive developments that should speed the development of the site.
- Maintaining a high technology focus for the UMSTC was considered to be viable by every person interviewed. However, broadening the focus of the UMSTC was considered as increasing the attractiveness of the site.
- Several interviewees questioned the concept of a campus-style science and technology park. High technology companies are considered to favor locations with both a diverse assortment of amenities – such as restaurants, daycare, retail, personal services – and clusters of related high technology firms. The development of a mixed-use (residential, retail, commercial, and office) development like Reston Town Center was suggested as a means of improving the attractiveness of the location for high technology firms.
- The availability of “spec” real estate (speculatively built space) was seen as critical for attracting high technology companies. Also, high technology companies favor flexible (“flex”) space.
- The speed of project approval was viewed as one of the most important factors in high technology business location decisions. High technology companies operate with fast project timelines. One respondent said, “Delays kill deals.”
- The City of Bowie was seen as having a too restrictive view of what can be located on the site and the City’s project approval process was viewed as both too long and unpredictable. These factors substantially limit the attractiveness of the site.
- Interviewees also reported difficulties in dealing with the County on projects, and viewed dealing with the City of Bowie as adding an additional layer of complexity.
- The lack of a tie to a major research university reduces the attractiveness of the UMSTC for small, start-up, high technology businesses.
- Small high technology companies are looking for existing space. Speculative space would be essential for the attraction of small, entrepreneurial, high tech companies.
- The County’s school system was seen as a weakness in attracting high technology businesses to the City.

4.2 Real Estate Developer Interviews

Interviews were conducted with seven real estate developers, all of whom were active in the City of Bowie or the Northern Prince George's County markets. The heads of the three companies associated with the UMSTC were interviewed.

- The real estate development community had a generally negative view of the City of Bowie.
- The City was seen as overly restrictive on development, too demanding of businesses, and too slow in project review.
- While other locations are offering incentives to businesses, the City of Bowie was seen as trying to extract things from companies.
- The UMSTC's development covenants were viewed as overly restrictive.

5.0 Real Estate and SWOT Analysis

Lipman Frizzell & Mitchell (LF&M) has analyzed the potential of the City of Bowie to attract high technology and knowledge-based employers as part of its economic development plan. LF&M's analysis proceeds from an examination of relevant local/regional economic and demographic trends within the development environment, through a review of office market trends and a focus on the real estate assets of the City, culminating in the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis of the City's competitive position. Special attention is given to the University of Maryland Science & Technology Center, which is potentially one of the City's most important real estate assets for attracting knowledge-based companies.

5.1 Development Environment

Within the context of the Washington MSA's regional residential and employment markets the City has established a competitive niche based on its human and physical assets. First, we examine forecasted growth trends as the logical outcome of the City's competitive position within the region, and then we focus on certain key City assets in greater detail.

- **Population Growth Trends** – According to WashCOG, the City of Bowie is estimated to grow from approximately 37,800 persons in 1990 to approximately 42,000 persons in 2020. Most of that growth (90%) took place during the decade of the 1990's, with a net increase of 332 persons projected for the 2000-2020 period. The City's growth rate will be significantly slower than that of the County as a whole. The population growth rate for both Montgomery County and the Washington MSA as a whole are outpacing all areas of Prince George's County. The *WashCOG* statistics seem to be unduly conservative, especially when they are compared with population estimates independently calculated by using MNCPPC forecasting models, which estimates that Bowie's population grew from 37,642 persons in 1990 to 49,729 persons in 2000. Further increases of population to 52,042 in 2005 are projected. The City's estimate for 2000 is already 18.4% higher than the *WashCOG's* forecast for 2020.

- **Employment Growth Trends** - According to WashCOG, the City of Bowie is estimated to grow from approximately 4,628 jobs in 1990 to approximately 10,898 jobs in 2020. Most of that growth (69%) is forecast to take place during the 2000-2020 period--almost all of it in the portion of the City below US Route 50 (CAD 265) due to the Bowie New Town Center and related development. Bowie is forecasted to grow at an average annual rate of 2.9% from 2000 to 2020. Though its growth rate is projected to be two to three times higher than all other levels of comparative geography, due to the fact that the City's baseline employment numbers was so low. It should be noted that in 1990 the City contained about 1% of the County's workers, but over 5% of its residents. This imbalance between employment and population is very typical of a suburban "bedroom community." Reinforcing our point, despite the City's high forecasted rate of employment growth, it will still lose ground in the metropolitan job market: declining from holding .13% of MSA jobs in 1990 to .11% of those jobs in 2020. This could change if the UMSTC takes off.

Prince George's County is projected to increase its share of the Washington MSA employment market, but the Northern Prince George's County area will grow less quickly. Much of the Northern County growth will be focused in the New Carrollton/Lanham, College Park/Greenbelt and Konterra areas. Bowie is not listed as a major growth area.

- **High Technology Employment** - High technology employment constitutes approximately 8.5% of Prince George's County total private sector employment according to a 1998 update of Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation statistics. High tech jobs actually declined by 4.1% to 19,045 for the entire County between 1997 and 1998.
- **University of Maryland Science & Technology Center** - The UMSTC land is not forecast to have dramatic employment growth by the *WashCOG* planners. The Center is located in CAD 264D, which is seen as having 313 jobs on-site in the Year 2000, growing to 437 in 2010 and 871 in 2020. (Those numbers are included in the City totals above.) Clearly, development of this property to its potential offers the opportunity to significantly boost the City's capture of a much larger share of Prince George's employment growth.
- **Other Development Environment Issues** - The City of Bowie's competitive niche within the Washington MSA development environment is affected by other elements of its environment. Its location is generally favorable within Prince George's County and the Washington MSA particularly for residential development, but somewhat removed from the highest employment concentrations. Its zoning regulation involves both County and City input, resulting in additional complexities. The City's transportation linkages to the Washington MSA are very good, particularly through US Route 50, and MD Route 214 (Central Avenue) provides a link to the District and development along the Chesapeake. North-south linkages are provided by Route 3/301, which is an important alternate route to I-95. Public transportation linkages are not optimal. Bowie's workforce is very high quality, but companies must understandably look at the larger employment markets of Prince George's County and the MSA's Maryland suburbs, for their employee pool. Supporting retail and service amenities are now solid and properly sized.

5.2 Bowie Office Market

The working environment for most knowledge-based firms is an office building. Though there will always be some small proportion of workers who toil in either home-office or more industrial settings, we have focused our analysis on the type of space occupied by an estimated 90% of knowledge-based employees. LF&M analyzed market conditions that affect the development of office space in Bowie. The City of Bowie's Department of Planning & Economic Development reports (as of 5/00) a supply of office space in Bowie of 731,417 square feet with a reported vacancy rate of 5.0%. The City's survey covers all office space in Bowie, not just Class A office space included in other sources.

- **Office Market: Historic** - LF&M has analyzed office market trends for the City of Bowie, Prince George's County and the Washington MSA over the past decade to better understand the role which the City plays in the regional office market. According to the *Spaulding & Slye Report*, City properties' 14.8% vacancy rate for Class A space was slightly higher than that of the County's office inventory overall at 13.2%. The \$19.50 per square foot average lease rate asked by Bowie property owners was almost \$2.00 higher than the Prince George's County average lease rate. Bowie office properties represent only about 1.0% of the Prince George's County market. The County submarkets with the highest concentration of office space are Lanham and Greenbelt, which each representing about 20% of the Prince George's inventory. All in all, Prince George's County office product is playing at a competitive disadvantage to Montgomery County and Northern Virginia: smaller inventory, higher vacancies, lower pricing.
- **Office Market: Bowie in Detail** - According to *CoStar Realty Information*, LF&M estimates the total "Class A" office supply in Bowie area as 18 properties containing approximately 833,300 square feet of space. As of May 2000, about 49,400 square feet of that space was unoccupied for an overall vacancy rate of 11.1% for multi-tenant properties. Almost half (46.7%) of City office space is in office condominium properties, a phenomenon which can occur in "bedroom community" locations where professional firms servicing an area's residential base predominate.
- **Office Market: Annapolis** - Conditions in the Greater Annapolis office market may have some influence on the possibilities for office development in Bowie since there are numerous knowledge-based and high technology companies in the Annapolis area with expansion or relocation needs. The US Route 50 corridor is a perfect location for them, with Bowie offering a site which is very convenient to both Annapolis and federal agencies in the District or Suburban Maryland. According to the Colliers Pinkard *Office Market Review*, the Greater Annapolis office market is the tightest in the Baltimore Metro area. The 2.15 million square feet supply of office space had a 12/31/99 vacancy rate of only 2.49%. There were no office spaces greater than 10,000 square feet available.
- **University of Maryland Science & Technology Center** - The UMSTC was originally envisioned as a high density office and R&D park, with a combination of low, mid- and high-rise development totaling 6.4 million square feet of space. The development was also seen to include a hotel and a core area with conference facilities, retail and restaurants to serve the Center's employment base. At maximum build-out, UMSTC could contain employment of

up to 13,000 persons. The University of Maryland has never taken an active interest in the property, depriving the Center of a technology "magnet." Only two lots in the Center have been developed. No arms-length sales transactions have taken place over the past 15 years. LF&M judges that, in order for the UMSTC site to be established as an employment center, it must contain a critical mass of office uses in the order of 2.0 million square feet. In our opinion that concentration--equating to perhaps 16-20 office buildings of 100-125,000 sq.ft. each--will generate sufficient business activity and employment (up to, say, 8,000 jobs) that UMSTC can be perceived as a corporate center and support the ancillary services (hotel, daycare, convenience retail, etc.) which are vital to corporate office development.

5.3 Assessable Tax Base

Commercial development is critical to the health of the City's assessable tax base, already contributing an estimated \$768,000 per year in real estate taxes alone to the City budget. Maryland Department of Assessment & Taxation records indicate that, as of 1999, the City had only 158.8 acres of designated "Commercial Use" land (108.6 acres in Bowie New Town) and 322.4 acres of designated "Industrial Use" land (315.2 acres in UMSTC) which were undeveloped. That shrinking inventory of land represented about one-half (54%) of the limited amount of employment land available in the City. The development of the City's remaining land assets at their highest and best use will further build and diversify the City's tax base without a corresponding increase in City expenses--benefiting the residential taxpayers.

5.4 Financial Viability of Bowie Office Market

The Bowie office market is now financially very viable, experiencing high occupancies and offering good returns to ownership while yet providing real estate product meeting tenants' needs. Incremental additions to the City's office space inventory and incremental reinvestment will be made as owners/investors respond to the demand for office space, which, apart from the UMSTC site, is primarily population-serving: professional offices, small businesses, etc.

The critical economic development issue is that the City can elevate its status to a completely different plane by encouraging the development of Class A, corporate-style office space. The City needs to be supportive of the private sector, understanding the heavy investment requirements and high risk associated with such speculative development projects. The City's limited economic development budget should not, however, be spent on financial incentive programs for developers or their tenants.

5.5 Redevelopment Sites

LF&M finds that the City of Bowie has several older shopping areas. We do not believe that the City has an over-supply of retail space, but rather that property owners need to continually update and upgrade their centers in order to respond to the demands of a very dynamic retail marketplace. As new retail (e.g., Bowie New Town Center) and office development continues to expand, the City should focus attention on its older centers to help them remain vital and viable centers of commerce and employment.

Also, the City has adopted a plan to help revitalize the Old Town (Huntington) area, the 1999 "Master Plan for Redevelopment of Old Town Bowie." The goal of the City plan is to expand retail and employment options by turning a declining area into an attractive and valuable village center. To attract new businesses to the area, there is a need to make improvements in appearance and infrastructure, invest in the Community Center and Railroad Museum, develop prime properties (e.g., City Park, Amtrak parking lot), add parking, slow traffic and market the area in new ways. This effort should continue to receive City support.

LF&M sees the above redevelopment planning efforts as complementing this study's focus on knowledge-based employment: using the existing real estate assets of the City in building a diverse economy and employment base which includes market-responsive improvements to the retail and service sectors.

5.6 Development Economics

UMSTC must compete for tenants against dozens of business parks better located to the clustering of high technology employers in Northern Virginia and Montgomery County. The competition offers fast track approvals and "ready-to-go" development sites within attractive, mixed use projects. High technology companies have represented only a portion of the demand.

The EIA zoning of UMSTC permits a wide variety of employment uses within a high quality, mixed use (Office, Retail, Hotel) development plan. Given the relatively small segment of the Prince George's County private economy represented by high technology and the competition already offered by more broadly based business parks, it is important that UMSTC be established as a business location, and development momentum be built by affirmatively marketing the site to a wide range of office users. Once a critical mass of office development has occurred (or is committed), supportive commercial and hospitality services are feasible.

"Time is money" issues dominate real estate development analyses. Relatively predictable public regulatory outcomes within a reasonable ("fast track" or otherwise) timeframe are essential for potential developers and space users. Financial institutions will not fund speculative development without the assurance of a clear and broad potential demand for the product in the near- and long-term. Developers must seek the path of least resistance in order to compete effectively and profitably for tenants.

5.7 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT)

Lipman Frizzell & Mitchell and the Jacob France Center have thoroughly analyzed the City of Bowie's competitive position for attracting knowledge-based employment within the context of the Washington-Baltimore CMSA, particularly as regards the City's primary asset in that regard: the University of Maryland Science & Technology Center. Our analysis sees the following strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats within the City's competitive positioning:

Strengths

- Location- Strong "crossroads" location at US Route 50 and 3/301, midway between Annapolis and the District of Columbia.
- Residential - Good quality of resident life with upscale demographics and skilled workforce.
- Amenities - Good supportive retail and professional services.
- Public Sector - Perceived competitive tax rates, combined with high satisfaction rating regarding public services from businesses and residents.
- Quality of Life - The City is seen by its residents as providing a very high quality of life. This is an important factor in attracting high technology and corporate facilities.
- Metro Washington Growth - Continued strong growth of the regional economy will benefit all jurisdictions' population and employment growth.
- UMSTC - The site is well located, has all infrastructure and is ready-to-go. Its well-designed campus offers an attractive corporate location.

Weaknesses

- Scale - City alone does not have sufficient critical mass to assert an identity independent of Prince George's County in the eyes of decision-makers.
- Lack of High Tech Clusters - High tech businesses favor locations proximate to other technology firms. The City is not located near County or regional high tech clusters.
- Prince George's County - Weaker projected growth in population and number of jobs compared to other Metro Washington jurisdictions. Negative perception of County and its public school system in particular. However, present school construction programs may improve this perception.

Opportunities

- Entrepreneurial Development - At UMSTC the City can capture demand for office space due to its attractive large scale, mixed use (Office, Retail, Hotel) environment which Greater Annapolis cannot fill. A private developer should be properly financially motivated to promote the site and attract development opportunities for knowledge-based office space users.
- Tax Base - The City can increase its assessable tax base with the development of Bowie New Town Center and the University of Maryland Science & Technology Center, building tax revenues with low associated demand for new services.

- Employment Close to Home - The City and County can reduce the burden put on highways by commuter traffic by developing an employment center at UMSTC which is close to Bowie's residential concentration.
- Upscale/Executive Housing - If upscale/executive residential uses are developed at UMSTC, they may offer unique housing product for the City of Bowie and the Northern Prince George's County markets. A very important element in the attraction of well-paid high tech and executive talent to any location is the availability of housing appropriate to their economic status and lifestyle.
- Strong Local Business Community - The City of Bowie has a strong base of retail and personal services firms who have a favorable view of the City and local market. The close proximity of the UMSTC site to these businesses makes the City better able to meet the needs of both commuting and resident workers than many competing business park locations. The City should work with these businesses in order to assist them in meeting the needs of the City's expanding employment base as UMSTC is developed.

Threats

- Economic Development Agencies - In the multiplicity of economic development agencies and jurisdictions within the Washington area and Maryland, the message of the City may tend to be submerged in communications with potential space users.
- Competition - There is a plentiful supply of well-located office development land available in the Washington-Baltimore region and, therefore, no compelling need for an employer to locate in Bowie.
- Economic Cycle - The current economic expansion is almost ten years old. With typical office development requiring 2 years or more of planning, there is a risk of missing this economic cycle completely--thereby delaying development another five or more years until the subsequent recovery phase.
- Data Sources – The City should work with the major regional sources of data used by the commercial real estate community (e.g. WashCOG) to ensure accurate data is being disseminated.