



# HONORING THE PAST WHILE RACING TO THE FUTURE

## A COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR BOWIE STATE UNIVERSITY

Produced by Margrave Strategies and CLD Partners

on behalf of Bowie State University

August 2021

**MARGRAVE**  
STRATEGIES

CLD PARTNERS

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# Executive Summary

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In November 2020, Margrave Strategies and CLD Partners were awarded a contract by Bowie State University (BSU) to serve as program management and economic development consultants. The core deliverable of the engagement is the creation of an economic development plan for BSU – a strategic document that encompasses a variety of goals, actions and implementation strategies to guide sustainable and measurable economic growth.

First presented to Bowie State University leadership in June 2021, and finalized in August 2021, *Honoring the Past While Racing to the Future: A Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for Bowie State University* outlines strategies and recommended actions to achieve the document’s vision statement:

**CAPITALIZING ON ITS HISTORY AS MARYLAND’S FIRST HBCU, BOWIE STATE UNIVERSITY WILL CREATE AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN THAT HONORS THE UNIVERSITY’S HISTORY WHILE PREPARING BSU FOR THE FUTURE. THE PLAN WILL CREATE A MEANINGFUL SENSE OF PLACE, BUILD COMMUNITY, GROW THE INSTITUTION AND LEVERAGE THE UNIVERSITY’S FOCUS ON INNOVATION TO ENSURE A POSITIVE, LASTING GENERATIONAL IMPACT.**

Through the development of strategies tied to the themes of placemaking, community, growth and innovation, the document recommends 22 actions BSU can undertake over the course of the next five years to grow the University’s influence and role as an economic generator in the County and region. The recommended actions encompass a broad range of activities

from suggestions on internal policies/ organizations, creating partnerships and setting up workgroups, to new real estate development projects.

An implementation matrix aligns with each recommended action to provide tangible guidance on how to implement each item. The matrix provides details on the parties involved and budget necessary to achieve each item. The project team recommends an annual review of the implementation matrix to assess progress by counting how many items have been completed, are in progress or have not yet begun. The timeframe noted on the implementation matrix can also be used when planning for budgets, staffing work plans and setting institutional priorities.

The document also includes a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis of the four thematic areas of the plan: placemaking, community, growth and innovation. The SWOT identifies areas where BSU excels, opportunities to catalyze progress, internal challenges and external factors that could threaten success.

The key to the success of this plan and the strategies outlined within it relies on being treated as a living document. In practice, an economic development plan should act as a “road map” for any given organization to ensure they are prioritizing goals and strategies presently and in the future. This is a document that should be constantly referenced and periodically updated to ensure it continues to meet the goals of Bowie State University as the institution evolves over time.

**BOWIE STATE UNIVERSITY IS AN OASIS OF OPPORTUNITY,  
NESTLED IN NATURE.**





# Overview & Background

## BACKGROUND

In September 2020 Bowie State University published a request for proposals (RFP) for a program management and economic development consultant. Margrave Strategies (Margrave), coupled with CLD Partners (CLD), were awarded this engagement in November 2020 and began working on a list of defined deliverables and goals, including the drafting of an economic development plan.

An economic development plan is a strategic document that encompasses a variety of goals, actions and implementation strategies to guide sustainable and measurable economic growth. Economic development plans are guiding documents that help an organization determine where they want to go and how they will get

there. Economic development plans typically cover a relatively short period of time, in the case of this document, 5 years, and provide practical, actionable recommendations to achieve an organization's goals. In practice, an economic development plan should act as a "road map" for any given organization to ensure they are prioritizing goals and strategies presently and in the future. The key to a successful economic development plan is that it must constantly be updated – the team recommends a formal update to this document every 3-5 years, but until then, this document should be referred to often in order to measure progress.

## BSU CURRENT TRENDS

BSU has seen a steady uptick in student enrollment over the past 10 years. Since 2012, there have only been two years where total enrollment (undergraduate and graduate) declined, and even in those instances, it was only by a marginal amount. In Fall 2020, the university saw an increase in undergraduate enrollment by 2.4% when the University System of Maryland (USM) as a whole saw decreased undergraduate enrollment, largely as a result of uncertainty tied to the Covid-19 pandemic. The University's *2020 Facilities Master Plan* anticipates up to 15% growth in enrollment over the next 10 years. To keep up with growing enrollment, BSU has also seen an increase of faculty and staff by 22% over the last decade and the *Facilities Master Plan* anticipates these numbers continuing to rise to meet 2029 projections.

The vast majority, nearly 86%, of BSU students are in-state students. The school has relatively high number of transfer students. Approximately 50% of transfer students come from the community college system within Maryland, 14% come from other higher education institutions within the state and 36% transfer from out of state. 77% of BSU's students are enrolled full time. The median

age of BSU's undergraduate students is 21, while the median age of its graduate students is 30.

As of FY2020, BSU's largest academic programs have been business and management, communications, computer and information sciences, education, health professions and public affairs. Enrollment numbers generally align with the programs that have historically been BSU's strengths, as well as align with many of the programs the University has identified as areas for improvement and continued growth.

The *2020 Facilities Master Plan* projects an increase of on-campus housing so that more than 50% of undergraduate students may live on campus. Currently, the University only has ~1,350 beds on campus. This number will increase to ~1,900 beds when the Entrepreneurship Living Learning Community opens in Fall 2021, but even with that building accounted for, only about 35% of undergrads have the option to live on campus. Increasing the number of residential beds on campus will be key to meeting the goal set out in the *Facilities Master Plan*, as well as creating a more vibrant campus community.

## COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The team would be remiss not to mention that this economic development plan was crafted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through careful consideration of the incredible impact anchor institutions have on community and the economy, it is important to note the unprecedented stress the COVID-19 global pandemic has put on all anchors, specifically educational institutions, like Bowie State University.

Universities in particular are under significant budgetary strain. As institutions of higher education moved to a virtual environment, they suffered both a loss of revenue and incurred additional expenditures, creating a budget deficit. With the temporary closure of campuses, negative fiscal impacts were incurred as a result of a loss in room and board fees, refunds of student and parking fees, and loss of revenue from sporting events and other large-scale events on campus. At the same time, universities have incurred increased expenses when it comes to technology to enable a virtual learning environment, COVID-19 testing, frequency and rigor of cleaning, and loss of productivity. As plans emerge for the full return to campus, implementation of social distancing practices in residence halls, classrooms and campus gathering spaces are likely to continue to create economic challenges as the world slowly begins returning to normal.

In response to the pandemic and in an effort to offset and restabilize the economy, government entities have begun unveiling funding and infrastructure plans in an attempt to return to full capacity learning and make up for revenue losses incurred in the past year. At the federal level, the Biden Administration passed the American Rescue Plan, a robust stimulus package intended to restart the economy. The State of Maryland anticipates receiving up to \$3.9 billion through the American Rescue Plan, and has dedicated a large portion of that money to the safe reopening of schools. The plan also includes infrastructure improvements

and funding to address pandemic related costs. Additionally, more than \$10 million is anticipated to come to Bowie State University as a result of the FY2021 Omnibus and COVID-19 Relief and Response Act's Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund.

This funding presents both opportunities and challenges for BSU. The University must determine a strategic and equitable way to spend these funds, which can be daunting, but it will also have money that can be dedicated to student support and aid, necessary campus infrastructure improvements, strengthening curriculums and making wise investments pertaining to economic development. While the recommendations in this document are intended to be evergreen and not tied to the specific challenges stemming from the pandemic, lessons learning and recovery funds could be utilized to implement many of the plan's suggestions.

**Universities in particular are under significant budgetary strain. As institutions of higher education moved to a virtual environment, they suffered both a loss of revenue and incurred additional expenditures, creating a budget deficit.**

## SOCIETAL & CULTURAL EQUITY

Unequivocally, the pandemic underscored the plight and inequity of people of color in American society today. Galvanized by the murders of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and the subsequent peaceful protests on behalf of groups like Black Lives Matter, society has begun to recognize the inequality and inequity facing people of color. As a result, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) have seen an influx of support and opportunities from private and public organizations. In December 2020, billionaire MacKenzie Scott announced a donation of \$25 million to BSU, the largest gift in the university's history. In March 2021, Maryland Governor, Larry Hogan signed a measure to settle a 15-year-old federal lawsuit related to the underfunding of Maryland's four HBCUs. The \$577-million-dollar settlement from this lawsuit will be used between the four HBCUs to support scholarships, financial aid services, faculty recruitment and development, and fund academic programs. Bowie State University is now at a critical point where it has the ability and means to shape its economic future.

The current upward trajectory of BSU's population, combined with COVID-19 pandemic and the current social justice movement, have heightened necessity and importance of how Bowie State University will need to begin to think more broadly about economic development: **How can BSU begin to leverage momentum and ensure success by holistically planning for the future?** It is the objective of the economic development plan to deliver on the thematic goals of the University through **placemaking, community, growth and innovation.**





# Framework

## PLAN ELEMENTS

This economic development plan consists of the following sections:

- **Executive Summary** – a high level summary of the findings of this document.
- **Overview & Background Information** – outlines current BSU trends, as well as notes the impact of the coronavirus pandemic and social justice movement on this document.
- **Framework** – elements of the plan and how to use this document.
- **Plan Development** – planning process, vision statement and major themes.
- **SWOT Analysis** – strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats assessment.
- **Recommended Actions** – suggested actions to spur economic development.
- **Implementation Matrix** – need to know information to implement the plan.

Within the document there are references to themes and recommended actions that support the overarching vision statement for Bowie State University's Economic Development Plan. These elements of the plan nestle within one another, with each action tied to one or more themes and four core themes building the vision statement for the economic development plan.

Each of the recommended actions were developed through the team's analysis, in collaboration with university leadership, to capitalize on Bowie State University's many assets and opportunities and guide the University's economic development strategy. Achieving the vision of this plan will require new approaches to real estate development, communications and marketing, community engagement, strategic partnerships and internal processes and resources to secure the University's future as an anchor institution in the community.

## HOW TO USE THE PLAN

*Honoring the Past While Racing to the Future* is the guiding principle behind all actions proposed in this document. BSU has a rich history with a focus on diversity, culture and academic success. Under the leadership of Dr. Aminta Breaux, "Racing to Excellence" has become fully ingrained and entrenched in BSU's way of life. In reaching back to history and remaining true to the long-held values of BSU, honoring the past and staying true to the identity of the University is just as important as racing to the future.

Those who learn, work and live at Bowie State University have a vested interest in a high quality of life and quality of education, however, this vitality does not happen by accident. The purpose of this document is to act as a "road map" for BSU leadership when it comes to actions related to economic development. It is

not a plan that should be put on a shelf, but rather should be actively and intentionally referenced for guidance to ensure BSU is making progress on this vision.

The bulk of this document is divided into two sections: Recommended Actions and an Implementation Matrix. The "Recommended Actions" section of this document lists each of the individual actions the team is recommending BSU carry out. Each action is listed with a brief description of the action and/or how it can be achieved, along with the rationale for the action item that outlines why the action is being suggested. Additionally, each item refers to the theme that the action item helps to achieve.

The "Implementation Matrix" section of this document consists of tables providing practical

guidance on how to implement each of the actions. This matrix contains the following information:

- Action Item
- Related Theme
- Budget Impact (yes or no)
- Lead Agency/Department
- Potential Partners
- Timeframe to Implement
- Additional notes

A quick checklist of the implementation matrix can assess how much progress BSU has accomplished on these specific items over a period of time by counting how many items have been completed, are in progress or have not yet begun. The timeframe noted on the implementation matrix can also be used when planning for budgets, staff work plans and setting institutional priorities.





# Plan Development



## PLANNING PROCESS

*Honoring the Past While Racing to the Future* was carefully crafted through a process that lasted approximately six months. The plan was developed in six unique phases:

- PHASE**
- 1** Research and analysis period evaluating past studies and planning documents created by, or impacting, BSU.
  - 2** Exploratory period involving meetings with BSU leadership and engagement of internal and exterior stakeholder groups.
  - 3** Strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats analysis to identify major areas to target action items; identification of vision and themes.
  - 4** Research and development phase looking into best practices and case studies of success at other universities.
  - 5** Drafting the narrative of the economic development plan, seeking input from leadership along the way.
  - 6** Plan presentation and feedback to incorporate edits and changes into the finalized document.

Phase 1 of this plan involved the Team reviewing the latest documents, studies and reports created by, or referencing, Bowie State University. This review included the following documents: *2006 Bowie & Vicinity Approved Master Plan and Sectional Map Amendment*; *2010 Approved Bowie State MARC Station Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment*; *2016 Bowie State University Facilities Master Plan*; *2018 BSU Fresh Eyes Report*; *2019 Bowie State University Traffic and Parking Study*; *2020 Bowie State University Facilities Master Plan*; *2020 ULI Bowie State MARC Technical Assistance Panel Report*; and *Racing to Excellence: FY19 - FY24 Strategic Plan for Bowie State University*. During this phase, the team reviewed each of these documents in depth, noting specific references to growing BSU's influence as an anchor institution and any elements pertaining to economic development.

Phase 2 of the planning process involved a series of interviews with internal and external stakeholders. Primarily taking place between January 2021 and March 2021, the team met with more than 20 individuals or groups to solicit feedback and ideas. Many of the stakeholders were internal to BSU, including the Athletics and Recreation, University Relations and Marketing, and the Entrepreneurship Academy, among others. It was also important to engage external stakeholder groups to better understand the challenges and opportunities they may see for BSU. The team interviewed

representatives from the City of Bowie, Prince George's County and the Bowie Business Innovation Center to get this insight. Finally, the team also met with various consultants who have worked with BSU, including Hord Coplan Macht who drafted the University's most recent Facilities Master Plan, Balfour Beatty Campus Solutions, developer of the Entrepreneurship Living Learning Community, and Capstone On-Campus Management, managers of the Christa McAuliffe Residential Community and the Entrepreneurship Living Learning Community.

The information gathered in Phases 1 and 2 informed the creation of a Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis. Presented on page 20, the SWOT outlines the University's successes along with areas in need of improvement in order for BSU to maximize its potential. The SWOT analysis was first presented to BSU leadership in April 2021. In alignment with the SWOT analysis, the team established the four themes governing the economic development

plan - placemaking, community, growth and innovation - along with the document's vision statement.

Phase 4 and Phase 5 occurred concurrently with one another. The team used their collective experience working at other universities to determine a list of recommended actions, tailored to BSU, that could bring the themes of this document to life. The result of this assessment is the list of Recommended Actions and subsequent Implementation Matrix. Finally, the last phase of the process took place in summer 2021, as a draft of the entire economic development plan was shared with University leadership. Upon receiving feedback, the team incorporated changes into a final document, which was presented to BSU in August 2021.



## VISION STATEMENT

A vision statement is key to the success of any aspirational plan. It is important to set out, from the onset, the reason why the document is being created and how it will help the University. Through careful consultation with BSU leadership, the Margrave and CLD team has crafted the following vision statement to guide this economic development plan:

**CAPITALIZING ON ITS HISTORY AS MARYLAND'S FIRST HBCU, BOWIE STATE UNIVERSITY WILL CREATE AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN THAT HONORS THE UNIVERSITY'S HISTORY WHILE PREPARING BSU FOR THE FUTURE. THE PLAN WILL CREATE A MEANINGFUL SENSE OF PLACE, BUILD COMMUNITY, GROW THE INSTITUTION AND LEVERAGE THE UNIVERSITY'S FOCUS ON INNOVATION TO ENSURE A POSITIVE, LASTING GENERATIONAL IMPACT.**

## MAJOR THEMES

The vision statement informs the four themes that will be carried throughout this document: placemaking, community, growth and innovation. These themes represent the areas of focus for BSU – both historically and in the present day – that have been responsible for the institution's successes to date. Continued focus and expansion on these thematic areas will build on the momentum inside of BSU and ensure its success and longevity in the future.

Each proposed action in the list of Recommended Actions is tied to at least one of the themes. The themes are used as a check and balance to ensure all of the suggested actions are aligned with the document's vision.

### PLACEMAKING

Placemaking is defined as, "a multifaceted approach to the planning, design and management of public spaces." At BSU this means capitalizing on existing assets and adding new resources to create a strong sense of place for BSU students, faculty and staff. Through real estate development, reconfiguration and activation of on campus buildings, open spaces and amenities BSU can enact changes that promote health, happiness, well-being and

comfort for any user of its spaces.

Built in 1910, BSU's campus has undergone many changes and additions over time. According to the *2020 Facilities Master Plan*, the overall campus is made up of 300 acres, with 23 buildings totaling 1,535,000 gross square feet. Though the University has buildings with recent renovations, newly constructed buildings and planned future additions to campus, there are still many placemaking strategies that need to be implemented in order to meet the needs of the on-campus community and visitors. Based on the figures quoted on the *Spring 2019 Traffic and Parking Study*, Bowie State University still operates, primarily, as a commuter school with only 25% of the undergraduate students living on campus. In order to pivot from being a primarily commuter campus to a true destination to live, study and grow, the University will need to focus energy and resources into strategically enhancing on campus amenities and growth of the built environment to create a stronger sense of place.

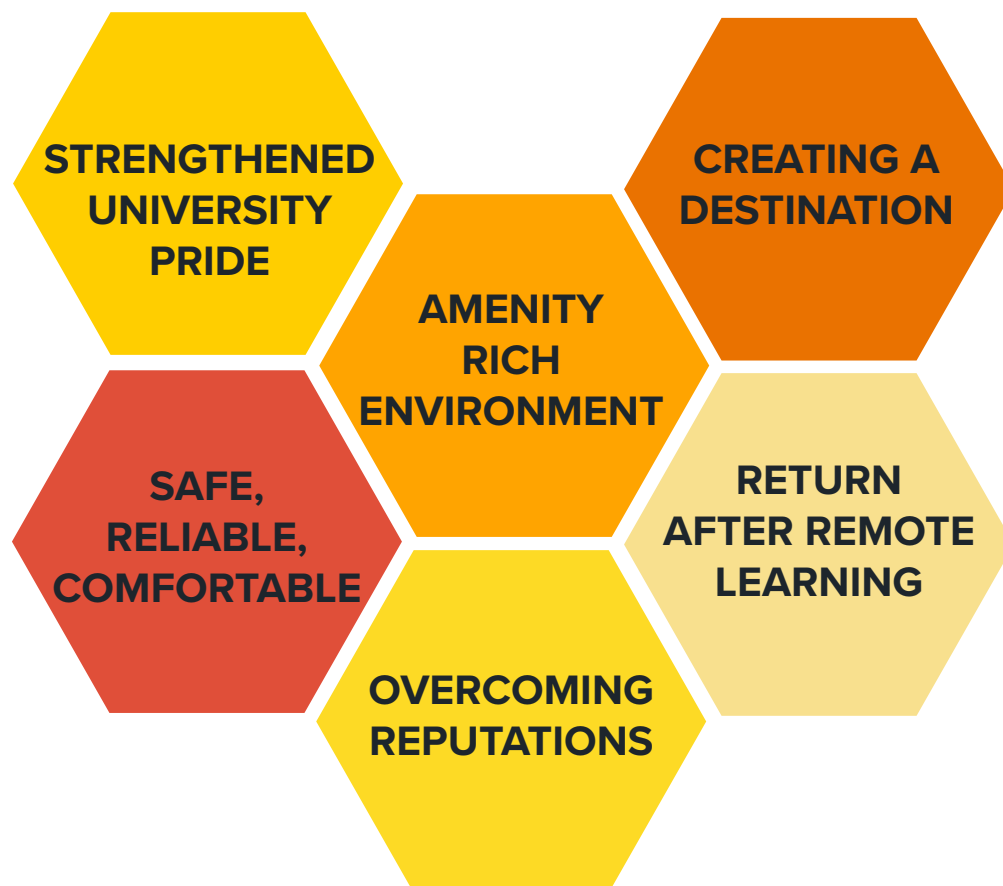
Placemaking is at a critical place given the Covid-19 pandemic. As colleges and their students have grown accustomed to online learning, there may be a large percentage

of students who choose to continue their education online, even once the pandemic has subsided and in-person activities can safely resume. For colleges and universities, this is a threat that impacts many elements of the university community and revenue streams. To have a strategic advantage over online programs, Bowie State University must make a compelling case why returning in person is the most advantageous way for a student to complete their degree. Strong elements of placemaking and strategic decisions around the built environment are key to creating a campus community that safely welcomes back students

Placemaking, although physical in nature, represents the growth of an area and inspires renewed sense of pride. This people centered approach generates a closer connection to BSU's values and reinforces its role in the community. Beyond the built environment, placemaking also focuses on attracting

the community and potential partners and collaborators to campus. By reaching out to external groups, BSU becomes a more visible, recognizable, and notable institution to the masses. Bowie State University must begin to cultivate a more intentional and permanent relationship with outside stakeholders such as the local neighbors, corporations, sponsors and research institutions by inviting them to be a part of the BSU ecosystem.

By creating an amenity rich environment, more internal and external stakeholders will begin to view BSU as an oasis of opportunity, nestled in nature. Creating space for additional residences, dining, service-oriented retail, shared fitness and recreation spaces, open areas, meeting rooms and reliable technology will help BSU become a center of focus and true destination in the region.





## COMMUNITY

Community is the cornerstone to any successful anchor institution. Anchors must create a strong relationship with their internal community, and in turn, also create ties that connect with the external, local community. Anchors that are embedded in and have strong relationships with both of these communities have a strong sense of place that helps to recruit and retain the brightest students, faculty, staff and consumers and are better positioned to share their mission and values.

The core of creating community is to build partnerships and working relationships. These relationships can be formal or informal. Formal relationships can take many shapes, with a few examples being: student discounts at local businesses and restaurants, sponsorship of activities (community sponsoring BSU activities or vice versa), advisory groups to help solve challenges or the sharing of space by inviting a community organization to have a presence on campus. Informal relationships can be as simple as inviting members of the local community onto campus to attend events, performances and games, or simply by keeping the external community aware of BSU's activities and sharing news of the types of activities, academic or nonacademic, that are happening on campus. Both of these relationships can put more eyes on the school, open up opportunities for students and generate income for BSU.

With Bowie State University, there are many untapped local community stakeholders that could become more engaged with the University's activities, such as local neighbors in the immediate vicinity, the City of Bowie and Prince George's County. BSU has connections to each of these stakeholders, yet interaction is often ad hoc or rooted in one specific issue instead of being a mutually beneficial relationship that is intentionally nurtured year round. Looking more regionally, there are also opportunities for BSU to strengthen its presence and relationships in Baltimore, Annapolis and Washington DC to extend institutional reach.



## GROWTH

The third theme guiding the BSU Economic Development Plan is growth. "Growth" in part is referencing the expansion of the University's physical footprint, but it also references growth of the University's name recognition, visibility and extension of BSU's institutional reach.

In order to adequately plan for the future and the vision Dr. Breaux would like to see realized at the University, BSU must have a growth mindset. The University has its sights set on growing its student population – both graduate and undergraduates – and along with an increased enrollment comes increases in the faculty and staff supporting the University. The university community can also expand and grow by bringing in strategic partners to support the great work already being done at BSU. This could range from corporate partners to philanthropists to engaged guest lecturers, and results in having more individuals and organization connected to and serving the University community.

To anticipate and prepare for growth, there needs to be attention to streamlining internal administrative operations and processes. Though they may seem small, these changes can result in increased efficiencies which greatly impact the speed and ability of an institution to grow over time. Further, restructuring

operations and expanding the number of employees can bring in new and additional bandwidth to lay the ground work and adjust to growth. Preparation for growth with intention and planning will allow for the University to act quickly when opportunities arise.

There is a physical factor associated with growth as well. BSU's *2020 Facilities Master Plan* outlines a series of targeted improvements to be made on campus over the next 10 years. The master plan forecasts the University's enrollment growth and suggests building more learning, lab and research space on campus. Additionally, the Master Plan anticipates and plans for a growing residential community on campus. At the time the Facilities Master Plan was written, BSU only had 1,347 beds to serve its ~5,200 undergraduate students. Due to the limited supply and high demand, these beds are filled year after year, leaving many students who desire a traditional, residential collegiate experience without a place to live on campus. The master plan envisions the addition of 900 more beds of student housing, plus the 557 beds in the Entrepreneurship Living Learning Community, which is key to transforming the university into more of a residential campus. However, after taking older, outdated units offline, this results in a net gain of only 547 beds, leaving unmet demand for on campus housing.

Though not explicitly referenced in the Master Plan, the team strongly believes that the university should continue to grow towards the

**INCREASING  
PHYSICAL  
FOOTPRINT**

**PLANNING FOR  
THE FUTURE**

**INCREASING  
VISIBILITY**

**EXPANDING  
UNIVERSITY  
COMMUNITY**

**ACTING ON  
OPPORTUNITY**

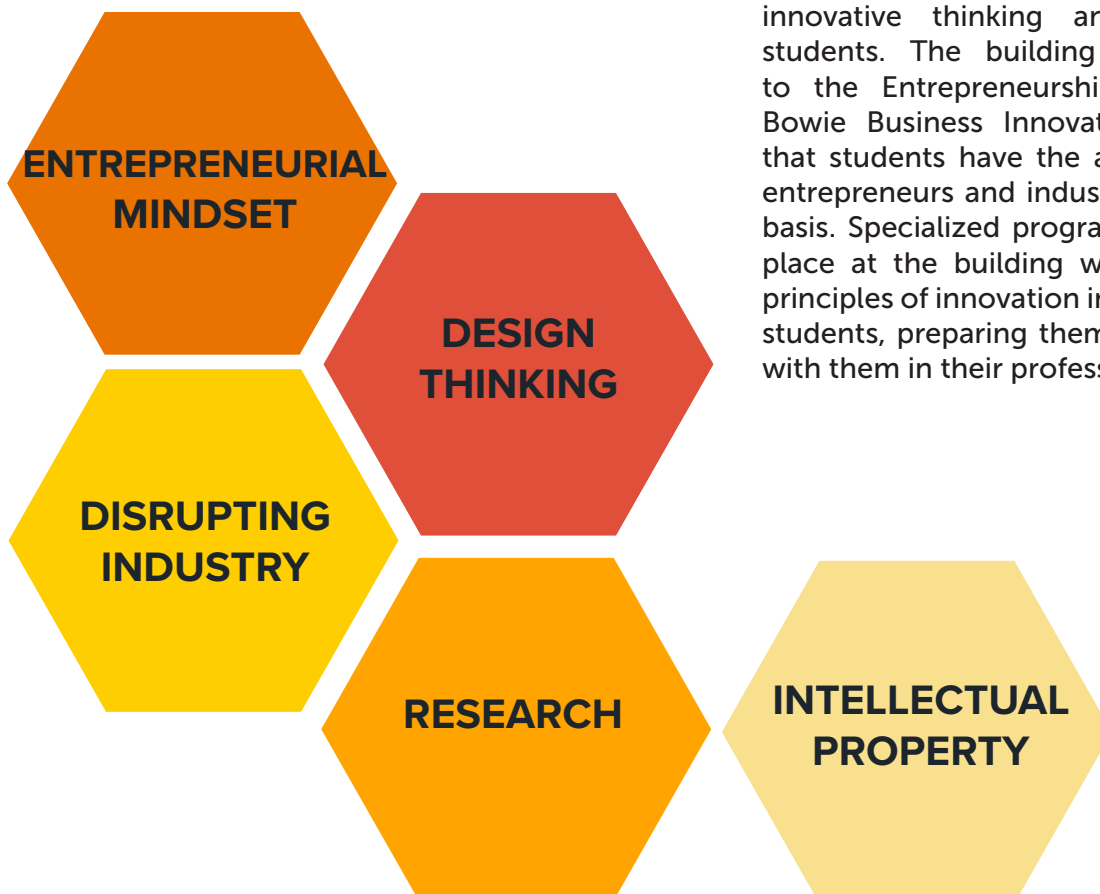
**EXTENDING  
INSTITUTIONAL  
REACH**

MARC station and near the Bowie Race Track. Growth in these directions creates a more prominent, visible edge of the university and can solve some of the space deficiencies noted in the Master Plan, while also making a bold statement for the community and passersby, increasing visibility and awareness of the University.

Together, all of these growth elements help Bowie State become more competitive with its peer institutions, elevating the status of the University, strengthening its reputation, creating brand recognition and extending its institutional reach.

## INNOVATION

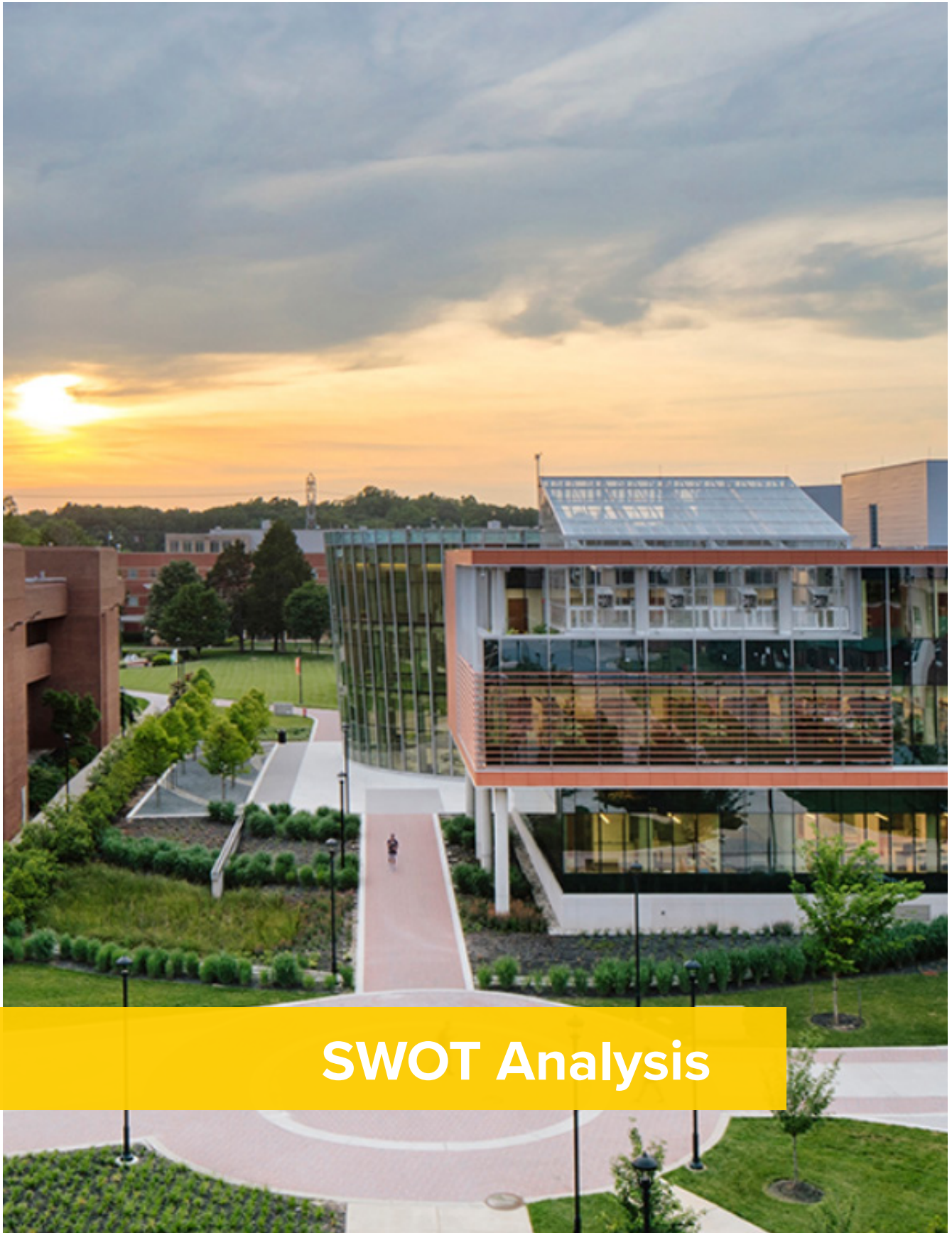
If there is one word to summarize Dr. Breaux's tenure at Bowie State University so far, that word would be "innovation." Under her leadership, the University has made huge strides in educating its students about innovation and entrepreneurship, as well as incorporating innovative ideas into university leadership and management. As a result, innovation, is one of the four themes driving this engagement.



Innovation can mean many different things and realize itself across campus in various ways. BSU is embedding its students with an entrepreneurial mindset, largely as a result of the great work stemming out of the Entrepreneurship Academy. This group teaches students, as well as faculty and staff, design thinking principles to come up with creative and innovative solutions to a wide set of problems.

As the University grows its research enterprise and strives to become a R2 university on the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, the school will likely begin developing intellectual property that should be celebrated and protected. The recently launched Bowie Innovation and Intellectual Property Initiative seeks to expand BSU's capacity to support innovation through the creation of a technology transfer program to translate ideas into commercialization opportunities that can disrupt industry.

Innovation is also tied into campus life. The Entrepreneurship Living Learning Community located at BSU's main entrance is an intentional residential community designed to support innovative thinking and ideas from BSU students. The building will also be home to the Entrepreneurship Academy and the Bowie Business Innovation Center, ensuring that students have the ability to interact with entrepreneurs and industry partners on a daily basis. Specialized programs and classes taking place at the building will further ingrain the principles of innovation into the daily life of BSU students, preparing them to take those talents with them in their professional careers.



# SWOT Analysis



## SWOT ANALYSIS

A strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis is a commonly used strategic planning technique to begin any sort of assessment on an organization's current operating conditions and to develop new strategies. A SWOT reviews areas where an organization is excelling, opportunities for improvements, organizational vulnerabilities and any obstacles that could jeopardize success. Typically, strengths and weaknesses are internal to an organization, while opportunities and threats are external factors that still have an impact on the organization. This brainstorming exercise provides an assessment of an organization's current condition and begins to outline future opportunities, or in this case,

recommendations for actions to spur economic development and solidify the University's role as an anchor institution in the community.

For Bowie State University's Economic Development Plan, the Margrave and CLD team performed a SWOT analysis for each of the plan's four themes: placemaking, community, growth and innovation. The elements of the SWOT diagrammed below have been the cornerstone of the Recommended Actions in the plan.



## THEME: PLACEMAKING

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recently installed branded wayfinding signage throughout campus creates a sense of place.</li> <li>ELLC building has a stunning visual presence from campus and MD-197.</li> <li>New academic buildings and improvements to campus quads have created gathering spaces unique to BSU.</li> <li>Eternal flame is a unique attraction on campus that ties back to the history and mission of the university.</li> <li>Strong facilities/janitorial/landscaping teams keep campus bright, clean and inviting.</li> <li>Fraternity and sorority traditions plots throughout campus add vibrancy.</li> <li>Many outdoor quads and open spaces for students to naturally congregate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BSU is still hidden to many members of the local community – need to draw them onto campus to experience it as a destination.</li> <li>Development of campus over time has resulted in a wide variety of architectural styles on campus.</li> <li>Limited retail and food options in close proximity, causing students and faculty/ staff to seek places off campus.</li> <li>Limited space on campus to host large gatherings of people.</li> <li>Limited residential beds may cause interested students to look elsewhere for an “on campus experience” if there is no bed vacancy at BSU.</li> </ul>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stronger/additional BSU branding at the MARC station – murals in underground tunnel, light pole banners in parking lots, etc.</li> <li>Continued development along campus edges (MD-197, MARC station) can create new destinations.</li> <li>New buildings on campus should give thoughtful consideration to gathering spaces to create a “third place.”</li> <li>Signage/development at the Racetrack will bring the BSU brand into the community.</li> <li>Newfound relationships with corporations can create unique spaces/labs on campus.</li> <li>Rural nature of the surrounding environment results in unique recreational amenities in close proximity to BSU.</li> <li>Attracting additional retailers on campus that can encourage interaction between students, faculty, staff and the community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BSU has limited frontage, resulting in fewer opportunities for external facing placemaking.</li> <li>In the immediate, coronavirus may prevent some gathering spaces to be used to their full potential.</li> <li>Stressed budgets as a result of the pandemic may reduce spending on placemaking efforts.</li> <li>Many placemaking activities cost money, but do not have a tangible return on investment, making it easy to cut these activities from budgets.</li> </ul>

## THEME: COMMUNITY

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing programs/departments seem to have some connections to the surrounding community.</li> <li>University leadership prioritizes community relations.</li> <li>Fine and Performing Arts and Athletics events can be utilized as a means to bring community members to campus and create relationships/sponsorships.</li> <li>Ability to incorporate community engagement/community service into academic and extracurricular programs on campus.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is no single point person/office coordinating community engagement and outreach.</li> <li>Many existing interactions with community appear to be ad hoc and informal.</li> <li>Limited promotion of campus events and activities to surrounding community.</li> <li>No formal mechanism for consistent engagement with surrounding community and stakeholders.</li> </ul>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>M-NCPPC's sector planning process has engaged many members of the community – BSU can capitalize on this momentum.</li> <li>Surrounding community is well organized and engaged, so will likely be receptive to a stronger relationship with the university.</li> <li>Hundreds of community members already come to campus to utilize the MARC station.</li> <li>Location proximate to Baltimore, Washington DC, Annapolis creates a unique ability to access many different populations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Location proximate to, but outside the incorporated limits of the City of Bowie, make BSU a limited stakeholder in City decision making.</li> <li>Without establishing formal relationships with the community, efforts are likely to diminish over time, after staff transitions, etc.</li> <li>Many longtime area residents may have never interacted with BSU before.</li> </ul>

## THEME: GROWTH

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recently updated Facilities Master Plan laid out priorities and needs of the university's infrastructure and buildings.</li> <li>• Growing enrollment supports sustainable growth of the university.</li> <li>• Development of new residential beds allows growth of the residential campus, opening campus to more students.</li> <li>• Many new academic programs are in development.</li> <li>• Play off of prominence being Maryland's oldest HBCU, and one of the top HBCU's in the nation, to encourage investment and growth.</li> <li>• Recent funds to BSU have improved its financial/budgetary outlook.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to maximize potential of the BSU Foundation.</li> <li>• Evaluation of partnership opportunities is ad hoc – there is a need for a streamlined process to evaluate opportunities.</li> <li>• Goal of becoming an R2 institution will require a planning and strategic alignment with other departments.</li> <li>• Without increasing the on campus living experience (housing, retail, amenities) in a strategic way, enrollment growth might plateau or be stunted.</li> </ul>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recent media attention, gifts and partnerships with BSU have created momentum to grow university's endowment and offerings.</li> <li>• Existing relationship with BCCC to funnel students could be replicated to create similar programs in other counties.</li> <li>• Engaged group of stakeholders focused on the MARC station property is an opportunity for growth and expansion.</li> <li>• Prominent location between Baltimore &amp; Washington DC provides opportunities in both metropolitan areas.</li> <li>• New BSU funding can be used to create public/private partnerships and leverage private investment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With prevalence of online learning, the University needs to make a compelling case for students to return to campus.</li> <li>• Competition from nearby institutions.</li> <li>• Defined campus boundaries on many sides limit physical space where university can grow.</li> <li>• Rural nature of surrounding area may be a barrier to new development near campus.</li> </ul>



## THEME: INNOVATION

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• University has an entrepreneurial mindset and curriculum. Classes are taken by all BSU students starting freshmen year focusing on entrepreneurship through the Entrepreneurship Academy.</li> <li>• Bowie BIC is a unique resource on campus the first example of such resource located at a Maryland HBCU.</li> <li>• Entrepreneurship Living Learning Community ingrains the importance of innovation into campus life, as well as academics.</li> <li>• Innovation is encouraged and supported by campus leadership.</li> <li>• Entrepreneurship Living Learning Community will include updated and expanded space for the Bowie BIC and Entrepreneurship Academy.</li> <li>• New buildings on campus (Performing Arts Center, Natural Sciences, etc.) have created unique spaces for innovation to occur.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current campus buildings have limited space for external businesses/partners to collocate with campus and grow an innovation ecosystem.</li> <li>• Lack of maker/tinker spaces on campus for students.</li> <li>• Relationship with Bowie BIC could be strengthened to bring more value to BSU students and faculty/staff.</li> <li>• Currently lacking financial resources to support existing opportunities for expanded innovation programs/tools.</li> </ul>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recent corporate partnerships may open opportunities to grow academic programs or create experiential learning opportunities for students.</li> <li>• Goal of becoming a R2 institution may result in more grants, higher enrollment and new funding sources for research and innovation.</li> <li>• RISE Zone designation could incentivize industry to locate near university.</li> <li>• New real estate projects can provide opportunity for maker space and dedicated areas for corporate partners.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other nearby universities are also increasing their focus on innovation, which may result in competition for funds and resources.</li> <li>• Creating innovation spaces with proper tools and technology can be expensive.</li> <li>• Lack of awareness/recognition of BSU's strengths in innovation by the broader economic development community.</li> </ul>



## Recommended Actions

## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

At the core of this economic development plan are the series of actions the Margrave Strategies and CLD team recommends Bowie State University should consider to meet its economic development goals. Each action is described, along with the rationale for implementing the action and identification of the related thematic goal achieved. The actions presented below are in no particular order, rather are grouped together thematically as innovation, growth, placemaking or community. While each action has a primary theme, some recommended

actions may also have a secondary theme, meaning that said action can accomplish several thematic goals at once.

Additional information about each recommended action, particularly information pertaining to implementation, can be found within the Implementation Matrix, starting on page 40.

## PRIMARY THEME: PLACEMAKING

P1

**ACTION: Leverage the TOD Designation at the Bowie State University MARC Station to spur economic development on and surrounding the BSU campus.**

The University has been a longtime advocate for the designation of the MARC Station area as a Transit Oriented Development Site. This designation was finalized in June 2021 by the Maryland Department of Transportation. Now that the designation is formalized, BSU should leverage the designation and its benefits to spur development near the university.

**RATIONALE:** The TOD designation is not a guarantee of development, but acts as a tool that can be used to incentivize the private sector to develop in the area. BSU was the main proponent of the designation, leading the process between the County and State until it was executed, and should continue to play a leadership role in encouraging development within the designation boundaries.

**GOALS ACHIEVED:** Placemaking

P2

**ACTION: Develop a plan and timeline to redevelop the County owned parcel adjacent to the MARC train station.**

As demonstrated through the process to designate the Bowie State MARC station as a Transit Oriented Development site, the University has been the largest driver and most vocal proponent of developing a dynamic, mixed use TOD adjacent to campus. In order to draw private sector interest in developing around the station, BSU must continue to be a vocal advocate for development and market itself as a partner to Prince George's County and the development community. As such, the University should play an active role developing the plan and creating a timeline and process by which the County owned parcels will be developed.

**RATIONALE:** It is clear that if the University is not the driver, concept plans for the redevelopment area will continue to sit on a shelf, as they have for the past decade. BSU must use its influence and relationships to move this project along and create market interest in development, as well as determine the university uses that could locate within those parcels. The ongoing drafting of

Grand Slam's Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) as a joint solicitation between the County and BSU is an example of how collaboration can speed up redevelopment.

**GOALS ACHIEVED:** Placemaking, Growth

### P3

**ACTION: Undertake strategic branding efforts at the Bowie State MARC station and at all future buildings that will be prominent and visible to train riders.**

The MARC station is one of the greatest assets to the University. Not only does it provide a safe, reliable means of public transportation to get people to BSU, it is also highly visible to thousands of commuters daily. The University should undertake, lobby for, and/or fund improvements to the MARC station area to increase its BSU branding. Such activities could include painting murals in the pedestrian underpass, creating updated light post banners for the lights in the parking lot or advertising BSU events within the station. Additionally, as new buildings outlined in the *Facilities Master Plan* along the railroad tracks are constructed, the University should pay attention to signage and branding on the sides of buildings that face the railroad tracks. While that signage may not serve pedestrians or the internal BSU community, it is important to catch the eyes of passersby and spark their curiosity about the University's activities.

**RATIONALE:** The MARC train provides a unique opportunity for BSU to grow its brand and brand recognition. Thousands of commuters ride the Penn line daily, so strategically placed placemaking and branding efforts will draw attention to the University by commuters, even if they don't actually use the Bowie State station itself. Failure to enhance branding at the station would be a huge missed opportunity for the University.

**GOALS ACHIEVED:** Placemaking, Growth

### P4

**ACTION: Develop amenities on campus to capture MARC station riders and keep them on campus before/after riding the train**

While many of the riders on the Penn line don't board or alight at the Bowie State station, pre-pandemic ridership data tells us that more than 700 passengers were utilizing the station every day. The majority of these commuters drive to directly to campus solely to access the station, and promptly leave campus as soon as they've gotten off the train and returned back to the commuter parking lot. BSU should develop amenities on campus to capture a portion of these riders and keep them on campus before their train departs/after their train arrives at the station.

**RATIONALE:** Developing amenities in proximity to the MARC station serves a few goals. First, it brings much desired businesses and retail establishments in close proximity to the University. Second, ridership of the MARC station helps to support the aforementioned amenities that may not be feasible if they were supported by the university community alone. Hundreds of daily travelers passing by increases the number of customers for any given amenity space or retailer. Finally, a large focus of Dr. Breaux's administration is to improve relationships with the surrounding community. Amenities on campus that support and serve the community give neighbors a reason to come onto campus, exposing them to the University's mission, students, events and activities.

**GOALS ACHIEVED:** Placemaking



**P5**

**ACTION: Develop the Gateway Parcel into a mixed-use building with amenities, commercial space and housing.**

The 1.6-acre parcel sitting opposite the Entrepreneurship Living Learning Community, with frontage on MD-197, currently sits vacant. This parcel is the front door to the University and connects to two important nodes of activity: the intersection of Laurel Bowie Road (MD-197) and Jericho Park Road, and then further into campus at Jericho Park Road where it begins to connect to Loop Road. This BSU controlled parcel with highway frontage should be viewed as a natural next step for growth and connection to the community. A flexible mix of uses on this site has been conceptualized with residential, retail, commercial and University amenities. Uses may also include spaces for external university corporate partners, or space to bring new retailers on campus in a prominently visible location with street frontage. Additionally, the Gateway Parcel is a critical node between the main entrance to campus and the MARC Station, making it even more important that the parcel's development is well thought out and purposefully designed.

**RATIONALE:** As the University continues to grow, there is a strong case for making the campus more well connected to the community and providing more amenities and options for those who work, live and learn on campus. As the site is adjacent to the newly activated Entrepreneurship Living Learning Community building, a new building with a variety of uses can build even further on this new activity center of campus. Additionally, this building may become a space for neighbors, locals or MARC train commuters to patronize, bringing fresh eyes and visibility to a campus that was once perceived to be tucked in the woods.

**GOALS ACHIEVED:** Placemaking, Growth

## PRIMARY THEME: **COMMUNITY**

**C1**

**ACTION: Create a singular point person/office responsible for university wide community engagement.**

Currently, community engagement efforts at the University are decentralized. Each college or office has their own interaction with various community groups and outreach for events/programs are not centrally organized. As a result, there is no real list of community and neighborhood partners and often University users are not aware of relationships that happen outside of their office. BSU should designate a person or specific office to be responsible for coordinating community engagement efforts across campus. This role will aggregate and keep track of existing ongoing relationships, create new relationships, and promote – internally and externally – the breadth of community involvement and community service happening at BSU.

**RATIONALE:** To external individuals and organizations, BSU is seen as one entity, however on campus community engagement efforts vary widely from office to office. Having a centralized resource for community engagement makes it clear to the external community who they should work with, organizes and inventories the engagement that is happening, and can make connections across the university to different groups and organizations.

**GOALS ACHIEVED:** Community

## C2

**ACTION: Enhance relationship and build trust with the City of Bowie.**

Bowie State University and the City of Bowie have a nuanced relationship. While the University is not within the limits of the incorporated City of Bowie, the two entities share a name and are major stakeholders of one another. The relationship between the City and University seems to change over time depending on leadership and any pressing issues. Creating a year-round, evergreen relationship with the City, and rooting that relationship in trust and partnership, could strengthen BSU's position as an anchor institution, while simultaneously engaging the local community. Some ways that this relationship could be fostered include, but are not limited to:

- Advocating for the development/funding of the Bowie Heritage Trail – a walking and biking trail encircling the City that is planned to pass by BSU. This could be a valuable amenity for students, faculty and staff to enjoy recreational activities in Bowie's bucolic areas.
- Advertise BSU events and share good news stories through the City of Bowie's local media channels, such as the Bowie Spotlight or the Bowie Blade-News.
- Create a stronger presence within the City of Bowie through marketing BSU/having BSU paraphernalia at local businesses within the City as a way for the business community to support the University.
- Consider hosting popups or other events that serve the community off campus at places in the City. Examples could be a pop-up fashion show highlighting the fashion design program, utilize the talents of the natural and plant sciences students to create a community garden within the City or sponsoring community clean up events, etc.
- Create an internship program for BSU students with the City of Bowie. Municipal governments provide a diverse array of employment experiences from finance to engineering to public safety, which would provide important experiential learning opportunities for BSU students while enhancing the relationship between the City and the University.

**RATIONALE:** Though BSU is not within the limits of Bowie, it is still important to maintain a strong working relationship. This relationship can lead to opportunities for growth and innovation, as well as better connects BSU to the surrounding community.

**GOALS ACHIEVED:** Community



### **C3 ACTION: Establish a working group to plan for the redevelopment of the Bowie Race Track.**

In 2023 the City of Bowie is anticipated to take ownership of the Bowie Race Track. The only movement related to the development of the Bowie Racetrack so far is the Joint Use Agreement signed in 2020, granting and outlining the approved and suggested uses for BSU at the site. BSU should take a proactive approach to planning the development of this property to ensure the needs of the University are met. BSU should designate a person or specific office to be responsible for coordinating and staffing this group with stakeholders from the community, City of Bowie and any other groups, as necessary. Once formed, the group should explore the types of uses that will locate on the property, funding models for any improvements, and a process for sharing use of designated facilities. With regular meetings and input from all stakeholders, the group will be able to work towards a solidified plan for the racetrack.

**RATIONALE:** While the race track proves to be a great opportunity, there is also likely to be an array of feedback from the City and local community on how the land should be used beyond what is governed by the State legislation. By forming a working group well in advance of the transfer of the land, the University can get ahead of any potential issues and move swiftly into starting construction once the land is owned by the City. The Bowie Racetrack offers a means for the University to increase its presence beyond its current footprint. The physical space offered at the racetrack as well as the opportunity for BSU's ROTC, athletic, and recreation space is critical to meeting BSU's goals.

**GOALS ACHIEVED:** Community; Growth

### **C4 ACTION: Enhance relationship and build trust with Prince George's County leadership to strengthen the relationship between BSU and County.**

Bowie State University is a unique asset and driver of activity in Prince George's County, however the relationship between the County and University should be strengthened to ensure longevity despite leadership changes on either side. One avenue to do this is through regular, recurring meetings with County leadership to ensure the two entities have a strong working relationship and are frequently in communication with one another. Meeting participants from BSU could include the Vice President of Administration and Finance and Government Affairs. From the County, participants should include the local County Councilperson and/or their staff, representatives from the County Executive's office and staff from the Economic Development Corporation.

**RATIONALE:** Having a strong relationship with Prince George's County is key to moving forward the University's vision. Meetings scheduled at regular intervals provide opportunities for both parties to share news of ongoing projects and initiatives, bring up any problem areas or trouble points, and ensures frequent collaboration. These scheduled touchpoints also provide opportunities to leverage the relationship into benefits for BSU, such as hosting the County Executive's State of the County address on campus at BSU, or the County starting an internship program with Communications students. More touch points result in more opportunities for the University.

**GOALS ACHIEVED:** Community

## PRIMARY THEME: GROWTH

G1

**ACTION: Evaluate and consider restructuring the organization of the Bowie State University Foundation to support the University's goals as they evolve over time.**

As is the case with many institutions of higher education, the Bowie State University Foundation acts as a fundraising vehicle for the school. The Foundation holds two annual fundraising events and is governed by a 15-member Board. This is a relatively small number of Board members, even for institutions of a similar size. To see more activity from the Foundation, the University should evaluate its existing structure – number of board members, commitment level of board members and Foundation activities. After an analysis, BSU should consider making changes to the Foundation's organization to maximize its efficiency. Potential reorganization could include expanding the number of board members, diversifying the Board members or establishing guidelines for expectations and level of involvement from board members.

**RATIONALE:** A strong foundation and endowment strengthens the University as a whole. Furthermore, an engaged Foundation is a common thread between universities with successful fundraising enterprises. Evaluating the existing Foundation structure and making strategic changes may increase the involvement or number of board members, resulting in increased opportunities and fundraising for BSU. At this pivotal moment in University history, action is critical. Between the MacKenzie Scott gift, the HBCU lawsuit settlement and pandemic recovery funds, Bowie State University is in position to have the largest sum of money on campus in its history, making it an opportune moment to reevaluate the purpose, direction and goals of the Foundation.

**GOALS ACHIEVED:** Growth

G2

**ACTION: Create a Real Estate Department for the University to manage and prepare for the real estate efforts as described in this plan, and as others arise.**

Over the past few years, BSU has become more involved in thoughtful, proactive real estate development transactions. Given its size, it makes sense that BSU does not have a person dedicated to these efforts, however the lack of bandwidth to work on real estate related activities may stunt the University's ability to grow and implement new ideas. This plan alone raises three major real estate projects tied to economic development: the Gateway Parcel, the Bowie Racetrack and the MARC Train TOD development. Beyond these major efforts, managing the new Entrepreneurship Living Learning community, planning renovations to the library as well as the future projects laid out in the *2020 Facilities Master Plan*, will require increased bandwidth.

**RATIONALE:** Currently the Vice President of Administration and Finance leads these efforts and is supported by the Office of Facilities Management, who manage on campus capital projects and project planning. The real estate department/person would not replace Facilities Management, rather would focus on the transaction structure, building program and broader planning elements for projects on campus, but also nearby, such as the MARC station area and Bowie Race Track. The intricacies of real estate development and the work load of these projects will likely require dedicated resources, beyond what the Vice President or existing facilities staff have the capacity for. There may also be an opportunity to tap into the Foundation's Board to find experts in real estate who can advise the University on specific projects.

**GOALS ACHIEVED:** Growth



**G3**

**ACTION:** Create a systematic way to evaluate, collect data, and streamline the process of entering into all external partnerships with small businesses, corporations, government agencies, and potential sponsors and donors.

BSU has many existing external partnerships, and more are constantly created. To date, there has not been a systematic way to evaluate and negotiate these partnerships. Instead, they have been handled in an ad hoc manner as each opportunity arises. The University should create a streamlined method for reviewing potential partnerships, determining which ones will move forward, and assessing the benefits to BSU of each partnership opportunity. Additionally, collecting this information for the University as a whole provides data that can be used in storytelling, recruitment and when evaluating the success of each partnership.

**RATIONALE:** Creating a uniformed way to review and evaluate potential partnerships ensures that BSU fully understands the cost/benefit, structure and timeline of new collaborations. Having a consistent review procedure also ensures the relevant leadership positions are aware of the opportunity and can compare partnerships to one another. Through a refined review approach, the University can also create a list of what it is willing contribute to its partners to form reciprocal, successful, long lasting relationships. This should take shape as a data driven framework, ensuring that it is easy to track and update on an as needed basis. By doing this, the University will have created a means of more clearly tracking opportunities and ensuring that limited bandwidths and resources are appropriately dispersed. This program can also track information about the opportunity, such as their MBE/WMBE status, alumni involvement and help prioritize what is most important to BSU. Finally, a comprehensive review and evaluation process will provide opportunities to assess partnerships after they have ended to determine what was successful, help maintain existing relationships, and identify areas of improvement to focus on for new or future relationships.

**GOALS ACHIEVED:** Growth, Innovation

**G4**

**ACTION:** Consider dedicating an Institutional Advancement Officer to each of the University's departments in order to effectively focus on opportunities with small businesses, corporations, government entities and other potential donors within each department's reach.

The Division of Institutional Advancement works with a staff of 16 to handle outreach and fundraising for the entire University. As the institution and the core departments of the University experience growth, opportunities for funding and support may increase. The Institutional Advancement team must be prepared for these opportunities to fully maximize philanthropic gifts to the University.

**RATIONALE:** If done successfully, this action has the ability to pay for itself over time with the new dollars Institutional Advancement officers bring in to BSU. Other institutions that have made strategic investments in this manner have been able to grow their endowment and the number of partnerships they have established. Bowie State University has been a true champion of diversity, equity, and inclusion in this region. Once the volume of advocacy on behalf of Institutional Advancement is increased, it will allow the University to open itself up to more partnerships, including MBE and WMBE firms, which support BSU's mission. Beyond that, the University has already broken down barriers with its core areas of research and academic excellence, and a focused and motivated effort on behalf of a department's Institutional Advancement Officer will bring in expertly connected opportunities and dollars.

**GOALS ACHIEVED:** Growth, Community

**G5**

**ACTION: Leverage the Athletic and Fine and Performing Arts Departments as a means of introducing external campus to external parties.**

Athletics and the Arts are two areas where a higher education institution can demonstrate their excellence and sense of pride to the surrounding community. These two areas are also critical for enticing campus neighbors to partake in activities and raising funds. Although both the Fine and Performing Art Department and Athletic Department currently welcome the community, a more strategic focus could fully leverage the potential of each area.

**RATIONALE:** Athletics competitions and art and cultural events should be natural revenue generators for the University. BSU should focus on these areas as touch points to engage with the community, potentially resulting in deeper relationships down the road. As expressed in the previous action, this can be done, in part, by dedicating an Institutional Advancement Officer to each department, who can help identify and reach out to arts and athletics supporters who may be interested in supporting the University in a broader way. It can also involve increasing the visibility of the Fine and Performing Arts and Athletics Departments by marketing to the surrounding City and neighbors through passing out schedules to local businesses, putting up BSU branding in the City of Bowie, having large signage with event schedules at the MARC Station.

**GOALS ACHIEVED:** Growth

**G6**

**ACTION: Grow the number of student housing beds on campus by creating a timeline of current and future housing projects and consider policy changes to encourage and enable more students to live on or adjacent to campus.**

With relatively small housing stock available to students to live on campus, BSU has been perceived by some as a commuter school. Increasing the number of on campus housing beds creates a more residential feel akin to many of the four-year institutions that BSU is competing against for top students. The University needs a plan, accompanied by a timeline, of when older residence halls are being taken offline (permanently or to be renovated), and when new beds (new construction or recently renovated) will be brought online to ensure the University can accurately predict and plan for the residential student population. The *2020 Facilities Master Plan* begins to establish a schedule of buildings coming online/going offline, but it should be expanded to look at the next 5-10 years and add target dates to accurately plan for and predict the number of on campus beds BSU will have to offer for the next decade. Once the number of beds on campus has grown, BSU should consider revising its housing policies to maximize the number of students living on campus. Such policies could include a requirement for first year, full time students to live on campus, or revisiting closure procedures during school breaks that disincentivize student athletes and international students from living on campus.

**RATIONALE:** If BSU wants to be competitive with other local universities and reap the financial benefits of a more residentially based student population, the University will need to plan to provide enough housing to accommodate priority groups on campus, such as first year, full time students, student athletes, international students or upperclassmen to live on campus. A timeline of net new housing development will help the university plan for a sustainable growth of its residential population, with the goal of fully meeting demand and eliminating the need for satellite housing options, such as The Enclave. As the housing stock grows and changes, BSU must look at policy

implications to make sure that its housing remains attractive, convenient and safe for those who desire to live on campus.

**GOALS ACHIEVED:** Growth, Placemaking

## **G7 ACTION: Complete an Economic Development Plan “Progress Report” every year.**

The economic development plan, in particular the implementation matrix on page 40, provides a roadmap for BSU leadership to implement each of the recommended action items. On an annual basis the leadership team should review the matrix and generate a “progress report,” noting which of the recommended actions have been completed, which are in progress, and which are yet to begin.

**RATIONALE:** Completing an annual progress report provides an opportunity to check in and see what steps have been taken to achieve the goals listed in this plan. In doing so, leadership can reflect on the progress that has been made so far and focus in on what actions need to be addressed in the year ahead. This in turn can assist with budgeting and creating work plans. An annual progress report also serves as a reminder to frequently revisit the document and make adjustments to its implementation as necessary to address the current trends, activities or goals not anticipated at the time this document was drafted.

**GOALS ACHIEVED:** Growth

## **G8 ACTION: Develop a program and amenities to aid in the attraction and retention of top notch faculty and staff.**

Developing a program of amenities for BSU’s faculty and staff can help retain existing employees while also making the University more attractive when recruiting new employees. The University should consider creating new programs to hit this goal. Such programs could be as small as offering free or reduced price admission to employees and their families to BSU sports events and cultural performances, or as large as partnering with the City of Bowie to create a “live where you work” program offering down payment assistance to BSU employees who buy a home within the City. The University could also consider the creation of a daycare/early childhood education center on campus to serve BSU employees and students, while simultaneously creating experiential learning opportunities for the Education programs.

**RATIONALE:** Bowie State University not only competes with other universities in the region for the best students, but also for the most highly qualified faculty and staff. BSU’s academic strengths, core mission and bucolic campus act as natural attractions for many faculty and staff, but providing amenities that retain said employees is of the utmost importance to ensure the University’s future and be able to successfully compete against other institutions who may have larger budgets or brand recognition.

**GOALS ACHIEVED:** Growth, Community

## PRIMARY THEME: INNOVATION

11

**ACTION:** Designate the area surrounding Bowie State University as a RISE Zone through the Maryland Department of Commerce.

The Regional Institution Strategic Enterprise (RISE) Zone Program is a program run by the Maryland Department of Commerce to incentivize economic and community development nearby the state's institutions of higher learning. The purpose of the RISE Zone is to access institutional assets that can help revitalize the communities in which they are located. A qualified institution and local government create a targeted strategy and financial incentives to attract businesses and create jobs within the zone. In exchange for locating within a RISE Zone, a business may qualify for tax credits and rental incentives tied to capital investment and job creation.

To be designated as a RISE Zone, Bowie State University will first have to become a "qualified institution" through an application to the State. After becoming "qualified," the University will work with the County to submit an application for a RISE Zone. It is estimated to take 90 days to become designated a "qualified institution" and 120 days to receive RISE Zone designation status.

**RATIONALE:** A RIZE Zone designation brings with it financial incentives and tax benefits that encourage businesses to locate within an institution's sphere of influence. The Zone acts as one additional tool in the toolkit to spur growth and economic development around BSU. Additionally, a joint application submitted by BSU and the County will help to strengthen relationships between organizations and memorialize an agreement which demonstrates the shared priority of the area on and adjacent to campus.

**GOALS ACHIEVED:** Innovation, Placemaking

12

**ACTION:** Work with the State and County to identify incentives and programs to encourage growth and investment supporting innovation efforts at BSU

In addition to the RISE Zone, BSU should work with the State of Maryland and Prince George's County to identify any other incentives or funding programs that can support growth and investment at, or surrounding, the University. Real estate incentives can encourage the development of the MARC station area, making the site more attractive to companies and business who could benefit from collocating near the University. Other funding programs could support BSU's innovation efforts, such as support the activities, programs and small business development efforts hosted by the Entrepreneurship Academy or Bowie Business Innovation Center, a collaboration with the City of Bowie, which may result in tangible economic benefits to the State and County, if successful.

**RATIONALE:** As a major anchor institution in the State of Maryland and one of two large institutions of higher education within Prince George's County, investment by both government entities into BSU and its surrounding area should be a priority. From the state's perspective, this strengthens one of the institutions within the University System of Maryland, one of Maryland's most important assets. From the County's perspective, spin off business and companies can yield additional revenue in taxes and fees, as well as grow and diversify the County's workforce.

**GOALS ACHIEVED:** Innovation, Growth



13

**ACTION: Create affiliate program for university partners.**

BSU should create an affiliate or similar program for key partners who are not students, faculty or staff of BSU. By granting certain persons affiliate status, they would have access to designated services, programs and resources offered by the University. Examples of such resources often used by affiliates include the ability to use fitness/recreation facilities, access to the library and research periodicals, receiving a university ID/email address, gaining building access or eligibility for parking permits. Universities with an affiliate program often have different bands of affiliates, such as research/fellowship affiliates, retiree affiliates, or corporate affiliates, each with different privileges.

**RATIONALE:** An affiliate program is a low-cost way for BSU to encourage and incentive partnerships with outside individuals and organizations. Affiliate memberships can be given to select individuals and corporate partners to increase their engagement on campus, as well as given to existing external organizations located on, or in close proximity to, BSU's campus, such as the Bowie Business Innovation Center. An affiliate program often makes these individuals feel embedded in the university community, improving productivity and engagement.

**GOALS ACHIEVED:** Innovation

14

**ACTION: Strengthen the role of the Career Development Center in providing a centralized location for employers seeking candidates to fill internship and full and part time employment positions.**

Bowie State University has a Career Development Center that provides services, primarily geared towards students, to assist with career planning, job searching and resume building. Though there is a section within the Career Development Center's website for employers, the team received many anecdotal stories about how difficult it was to hire interns out of BSU because there did not seem to be a centralized person or "one stop shop" to post and promote internship offerings. Stakeholders expressed frustration over constantly being directed to speak with a different person and a perceived lack of responsiveness. The existing services provided should be strengthened and promoted so that future employers have clear direction on how to find candidates for internship or full time openings.

**RATIONALE:** Career services and internships are, for many businesses and organizations, the first interaction they may have with a university. The quality of the intern and the experience of getting that intern often informs a business's perception of the University. As a result, it is essential to make sure this process is as smooth and easy for the business community as possible. Tweaks and adjustments to the current process to match employers with interns could go a long way in solidifying BSU's reputation as an efficient, well organized producer of the work force. Additionally, being able to have a centralized place to maintain the data on the students who successfully receive internships through this means is an incredible way of tracking the University's successes in preparing their students for the future and BSU's impact on the job market.

**GOALS ACHIEVED:** Innovation

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**ACTION: Create a marketing campaign focusing on university strengths to build awareness and target students, faculty, staff and potential partners.**

For decades, Bowie State University has been one of the state's premier institutions of higher education. With a newfound focus on research and expanding the graduate degree programs offered, more and more innovations and discoveries are likely to stem out of BSU. BSU should invest in a marketing and public relations campaign to spotlight the academic strengths and core programs of the University to spread the word about all that the University has to offer and create a buzz about the many specialized programs and talented students on campus. This marketing campaign should come along with a branded tagline for BSU's work which can capitalize on the University's momentum and tell a story to the community at large.

**RATIONALE:** Creating a brand to tell success stories is essential to create a pipeline of good press and inform the broader community of the innovation taking place at BSU. Other USM institutions have had success with their own spin on branding generating positive press, such as the University of Maryland, College Park's "Fearless Ideas" and "Greater College Park" or Towson University's "StarTUp Towson" initiatives. For BSU, this could even keep the "Bowie Bold" motto, but intentionally promoting specific academic strengths of BSU and information about those programs beyond the campus edges is key to growing awareness. BSU needs to be the storyteller of its successes. Creating a new brand tied to the University will actively promote BSU while ensure there is a constant stream of good news tied to the university's ecosystem and strengthen the reputation of the University as a partner to the community.

**GOALS ACHIEVED:** Innovation, Growth







## Implementation Matrix



## IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

The implementation matrix is a tool to assist University leadership with the implementation of each of the recommended action items. The implementation matrix is set up to give the basic information necessary to begin working on any one of the recommended actions, and as such, is it not an all-encompassing tool. Instead, the matrix provides what our team considers the

most “need to know” information based on our knowledge at the time this document is drafted in August 2021. Over time, the matrix may need slight revisions and updates to reflect the current realities that the team did not anticipate.

Specifically, the matrix calls out the following pieces of information:

- **Recommended Action** - aligns with the recommended action descriptions beginning on page 26.
- **Primary Theme** - which of the four themes of the document aligns most closely with this recommended action?
- **Secondary Theme** - lists any secondary theme(s) related to this action.
- **Primary Lead** – lists the entity, or division within an entity, that should primarily lead implementation of this action.
- **Partners** – lists any notable key partners to work with when implementing the recommended action.
- **Budget Impact** – does the recommended action have a budget impact BSU should plan for?
- **Timeline** – how quickly can this action be implemented? To guide this portion of a matrix, our team has come up with the following definitions.
  - **Short-Term** – this action is relatively quick and can be completed either with little prep, or within 6-12 months from action initiation.
  - **Mid-Term** – this action item is anticipated to take a moderate amount of time to fully implement, between 12 – 24 months, and/or involves a moderate level of preparation to be able to start implementation. Preparation could involve aligning with partners, preparing for a budget impact, or completing any precursors that must take place before implementing the recommended action.
  - **Long-Term** – this recommended action is anticipated to take a long time to fully implement and requires significant preparatory work before implementation can begin. Actions labeled as long-term may take anywhere from 2 to 5 years to fully implement.
- **Notes** – any additional notes or pieces of information necessary to implement this item.

Action Number	Recommended Action	Primary Theme	Secondary Theme	Budget Impact?	Primary Lead	Partner(s)	Timeframe	Notes
P1	Leverage the TOD Designation at the Bowie State University MARC Station to spur economic development on and surrounding the BSU campus.	Placemaking	-	No	Prince George's County	BSU; Maryland Department of Transportation	Short-Term	-
P2	Develop a plan and timeline to redevelop the County owned parcel adjacent to the MARC train station.	Placemaking	Growth	No	Prince George's County; BSU	Private developers	Long-Term	-
P3	Undertake strategic branding efforts at the Bowie State MARC station and at all future buildings that will be prominent and visible to train riders.	Placemaking	Growth	Yes	BSU – University Relations & Marketing	Maryland Department of Transportation	Mid-Term	Permission will be needed from MDOT to make improvements to the station itself.
P4	Develop amenities on campus to capture MARC station riders and keep them on campus before/after riding the train.	Placemaking	-	Yes	BSU - Admin & Finance – Auxiliary Services	Private developers	Long-Term	This long-term item may be completed in tandem with P5, development of the Gateway Parcel.
P5	Develop the Gateway Parcel into a mixed-use building with amenities, commercial space and housing.	Placemaking	Growth	Yes	BSU - Admin & Finance – Facilities Management	Private developers	Long-Term	This item will help support action P4.
C1	Create a singular point person/office responsible for university wide community engagement.	Community	-	TBD	BSU - Admin & Finance, President's Office	-	Mid-Term	Efforts to begin streamlining should begin as soon as reasonable, but it may take a couple of years before a seamless system is implemented.
C2	Enhance relationship and build trust with the City of Bowie.	Community	-	No	BSU - Government Relations, Admin & Finance	City of Bowie; Bowie BIC	Short-Term	Starting to improve this relationship is a short-term item, but it should continue in perpetuity.
C3	Establish a working group to plan for the redevelopment of the Bowie Race Track.	Community	Growth	Yes	BSU - Government Relations, Admin & Finance, President's Office; City of Bowie	Community Groups	Mid-Term	Creation of the working group is a short-term item. Completion of the planning process is mid-term item.
C4	Enhance relationship and build trust with Prince George's County leadership to strengthen the relationship between BSU and County.	Community	-	No	BSU - Government Relations, Admin & Finance, President's Office	Prince George's County – County Executive, Economic Development Corporation, County Council	Short-Term	-
G1	Evaluate and consider restructuring the organization of the Bowie State University Foundation to support the University's goals as they evolve over time.	Growth	-	No	BSU - Institutional Advancement	Foundation Board members - new and existing	Mid-Term	This action will likely have to take place over an extended period of time where changes are slowly implemented.
G2	Create a Real Estate Department for the University to manage and prepare for the real estate efforts as described in this plan, and as others arise.	Growth	-	Yes	BSU - Admin & Finance	-	Long-Term	-
G3	Create a systematic way to evaluate, collect data, and streamline the process of entering into all external partnerships with small businesses, corporations, government agencies, and potential sponsors and donors.	Growth	Innovation	No	BSU - Admin & Finance	-	Short-Term	-

Action Number	Recommended Action	Primary Theme	Secondary Theme	Budget Impact?	Primary Lead	Partner(s)	Timeframe	Notes
G4	Consider dedicating an Institutional Advancement Officer to each of the University's departments in order to effectively focus on opportunities with small businesses, corporations, government entities and other potential donors within each department's reach.	Growth	Community	Yes	BSU - Institutional Advancement	-	Mid-Term	Roll out of this item can happen slowly over time by gradually adding to the Institutional Advancement team and reassigning the focus of work for each employee as the office grows until there is an officer for each department.
G5	Leverage the Athletic and the Fine and Performing Arts Departments as a means of introducing external relationships on campus.	Growth	-	TBD	BSU – Institutional Advancement	BSU – Department of Athletics	Short-Term	There may be budget impacts depending on if a new hire is needed to fill this role versus reallocating an existing employee's time.
G6	Grow the number of student housing beds on campus by creating a timeline of current and future housing projects and consider policy changes to encourage and enable more students to live on or adjacent to campus.	Growth	Placemaking	Yes	BSU - Student Affairs	BSU – Facilities Management, Residence Life	Long-Term	Creation of the time line is a short-term item. Completion of the housing vision is a long-term item.
G7	Complete an Economic Development Plan "Progress Report" every year.	Growth	-	No	BSU - Admin & Finance	-	Mid-Term	Listed as a "mid-term" item as it will take 12 months before the first progress report is completed, but this should occur on an annual basis.
G8	Develop a program and amenities to aid in the attraction and retention of top notch faculty and staff.	Growth	Community	Yes	BSU - Admin & Finance, President's Office	Varies - City of Bowie, childcare providers, school systems, etc.	Mid-Term	Developing an amenity package attractive to faculty and staff will likely occur in small bits over time, but the start of this program could be a mid-term action, although some ideas may take many years to implement.
I1	Designate the area surrounding Bowie State University as a RISE Zone through the Maryland Department of Commerce.	Innovation	Placemaking	Yes	BSU - Government Relations	Prince George's County	Short-Term	-
I2	Work with the State and County to identify incentives and programs to encourage growth and investment supporting innovation efforts at BSU.	Innovation	Growth	No	BSU - President's Office, Government Relations	Prince George's County, State of Maryland	Long-Term	-
I3	Create affiliate program for university partners.	Innovation	-	No	BSU Academic Affairs, Institutional Advancement, Admin & Finance, President's Office	-	Short-Term	BSU should start a pilot with a small group of affiliates to test the program and ensure its functionality before fully implementing.
I4	Strengthen the role of the Career Development Center in providing a centralized location for employers to seek candidates to fill internship and full and part time positions.	Innovation	-	TBD	BSU – Career Development Center	-	Short-Term	-
I5	Create a marketing campaign focusing on university strengths to build awareness and target students, faculty, staff and potential partners.	Innovation	Growth	Yes	BSU – University Relations & Marketing	Potential need for marketing/PR firm	Mid-Term	-





# Conclusion



## CONCLUSION

Led by Dr. Aminta Breaux and her tenacious effort to strengthen the University, this Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy will help guide the University's economic development work for the next five years. Strengthening the economy of the University will require work and commitments by a range of partners and stakeholders, beyond the University's internal leadership team. As a result, Bowie State University must invite, nurture and engage with corporate entities, business groups, elected officials, non-profits, and other anchor institutions to step closer to the finish line on the race to excellence.

Bowie State University is bountiful in history, culture, academic pride, and potential. As BSU looks to its future to promote economic development through placemaking, community, growth and innovation, this Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy offers a "road map" for the University to lead them to success and ensure there is clarity, consensus and advancement throughout the University community. Through the downturn of a pandemic to an unexpected philanthropic gift, federally issued recovery dollars, and long-awaited funding to address inequalities, BSU is at a critical point in its 156-year legacy to prepare for the future.