

7.0 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

7.1 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

Early settlement in the City of Bowling Green coincided with the migration of pioneers from east of the Appalachian Mountains. Growth of this early settlement was slow until channels were constructed to correct the drainage problems which the new settlers had encountered in this area. Shortly thereafter, agriculture flourished. Bowling Green became the seat of a rich agricultural district. Later, oil became an important economic factor, spurring growth within the City throughout the span of its short boom.¹

Today, although Bowling Green State University plays a dominant role in the City physically, socially, and economically, diverse businesses and industries are responsible for the integrated economy experienced by Bowling Green.

7.2 INDUSTRIAL AND BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENT TRENDS

The number of manufacturing, retail, wholesale, and service establishments located within the City increased over 61% between 1967 and 1982. In the ten-year period between 1967 and 1977, eighty-three (83) new establishments were added to the City, averaging an annual rate of growth of 2.8%. In the five-year period that followed (1977-1982), the rate of expansion was greater, almost 4.1% annually. (See Table 7.2.1).

As would be expected, the service industries, both retail and "selected services" (those services selected by the U.S. Bureau of the Census for this classification were hotels, motels, automobile repair, amusement, health services, and legal services), expanded the most. Not only did they gain over 2,100 employees and 145 establishments between 1967 and 1982, but the relative importance of each, in relation to Wood County, also increased.

In 1967, retail establishments in Bowling Green accounted for 24.4% of all retail establishments in the County, employing almost 34% of all paid retail workers in the County. (See Table 7.2.1 - Graph 2.) These figures increased to 27.6% and 35.9%, respectively, by

¹ Bowling Green Sesquicentennial Commission, Bowling Green, Ohio: A Sesquicentennial History 1833-1893, 1985.

1982. Retail establishments led all categories in sales and, between 1967 and 1982, generally comprised from 25% to 30% of all retail sales made within Wood County. (See Table 7.2.1 - Graph 3).

Similarly, "selected services" also gained a substantial number of establishments and employees between 1967 and 1982, increasing 185% and 404%, respectively. These increases were greater than any of the other three categories of business or industry.

The number of wholesale establishments in Bowling Green increased from seventeen (17) in 1967 to twenty-nine (29) in 1982. During that same period, only (12) employees were added to the work force. Relative to the number of persons employed in the wholesale industry in Wood County, the number of persons employed in wholesale industry in Bowling Green declined sharply. (See Plate 7.2.2 - Graph 4.) In 1967, Bowling Green's share of all paid wholesale employees in Wood County represented 22.7%. Sales declined sharply between 1977 and 1982; thus, the proportion of the City wholesale sales to that of the County represented far less in 1982 (9.25%) than it had in 1967 (22.67%).

In 1982, manufacturing establishments also did not maintain their proportion of establishments and employees to that of Wood County as they had in 1967, although those proportions did rise from 1977. Employment in the manufacturing industry, although volatile, is substantial. By early 1986, the low figure from 1982 (1,400) increased to 2,026.²

The value added by manufacturing not only increased substantially in the 15-year span (almost 141%), but its importance relative to that of Wood County also increased. Bowling Green's percent of value added by manufacturing relative to that of Wood County increased from 15.8% in 1967 to 17.7% in 1982. The dollars generated in manufacturing are second to those generated by retailing.

Generally, about one-fifth of Wood County's economic activity has taken place in Bowling Green. Receipts from wholesale, retail, manufacturing, and the selected services industries represented 16.5% of Wood County receipts in 1967. By 1982, this share increased 18.7%.

² Bowling Green Chamber of Commerce, Wood County Industrial Directory, 1986.

TABLE 7.2.1: BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY TRENDS FROM 1967 TO 1982 BOWLING GREEN, OHIO

	1967	1977	1982	Percent Change 1967-77	Percent Change 1977-82	Percent Change 1967-82
<u>Wholesale</u>						
Establishments	17	22	29	29.41	31.82	70.59
Sales (000)	\$11,042	\$56,560	\$30,538	412.23	-46.01	176.56
Paid Employees	144	146	156	1.39	6.85	8.33
<u>Retail</u>						
Establishments	169	202	227	19.53	12.38	34.32
Sales (000)	\$39,072	\$87,134	\$141,762	123.01	62.69	262.82
Paid Employees	1,307	1,959	2,376	49.89	21.29	81.79
<u>Manufacturing</u>						
Establishments	27	28	29	3.7	3.57	7.41
With 20+ Employees	14	13	12	-7.14	-7.69	-14.29
Value Added (000)	\$21,700	\$30,300	\$73,000	39.63	140.92	236.41
Paid Employees	1,600	1,100	1,400	-31.25	27.27	-12.50
<u>Selected Services¹</u>						
Establishments/with Payroll ²	47	91	134	93.62	17.25	185.11
Receipts (000)	\$2,881	\$11,026	\$30,267	282.71	174.51	950.57
Paid Employees	275	539	1,385	96.0	156.96	403.64

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Manufacturers, 1967, 1977, 1982, U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Retail Trade, 1967, 1977, 1982, U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Selected Services, 1967, 1977, 1982, and U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Wholesale Trade, 1967, 1977, 1982.

¹ Hotels, motels, automotive repair, amusement, health services, and legal services

² Only includes the number of establishments that have a payroll.

A comparison of Bowling Green's share of the County's economic activities with its share of the County's population further indicates that Bowling Green's economic activities have been gaining importance in the County. The City's population, which represented 24.25% of Wood County's population in 1970, dropped to 23.96% in 1980 and increased to 24.89% in 1990. While Bowling Green's share of the County's population has been increasing, its share of economic activities has increased as well.

7.3 MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES IN BOWLING GREEN

Varied manufacturing opportunities exist within the City. In 1986, industrial activities in the Bowling Green area encompassed twenty-one (21) different standard industrial classifications (SIC) that ranged from meat packing to casket and vault production.

As of early 1986, the City had twenty-nine (29) manufacturing establishments that employed a total of 2,026 workers, up substantially from 1982.³ Sixteen (16) of those establishments were one-of-a-kind within the City, as identified by their SIC codes. Combined, those sixteen diverse establishments employed approximately 1,150 people. Five (5) establishments were engaged in custom machinery, grinding, and welding. Together, those five establishments employed 1,233 people. Of the remaining establishments, two (2) produced snack goods, two (2) manufactured plastic parts and containers, two (2) were involved in metal stamping and fabrication, and two (2) produced newspapers. Those eight industries provided approximately 643 jobs in 1986. During the period 1993 through 1995, the City averaged 44 acres per year of new industrial development. Table 7.3.1 reflects the 1995 data.

³ Ibid.

TABLE 7.3.1.: NUMBER OF INDUSTRIES BY SIC CODE (1995)

Production	SIC Code	Number of Establishments
Meat Packing and Processing	2011/2013	2
Snack Foods	2099	2
Imprinted Advertising	2262	1
Seating/Stools	2522/2599	1
Newspaper	2711	2
Labels/Typesetting/Printing	2751	1
Hosing/Seals/Tubing	3069/3052	2
Plastics Parts & Containers	3079/3089/3087	3
Windows For Autos	3231	1
Tools/Dies/Molds/Castings	3325/3324	1
Industrial Fabrication & Heat Recovery	3444/3443	2
Molded Fittings/Conduits	3448	1
Metal Stamping/Fabrication	3469	3
Sheet Metal Stamping Dies/Tools	3544	1
Verification Tooling & Quality Control Fixtures	3545	1
Industrial Liquid Filtration Equipment	3569	3
Industrial Floor Maintenance Equipment	3589	1
Fluid Power Cylinders & Actuators	3593	1
Custom Machining/Grinding/Welding	3599	1

Power Distribution Boards/ Terminal Blocks	3663	1
Industrial Test & Production Machines	3829	1
Signs & Advertising Displays	3993	1
Caskets & Vaults	3995	1
Computer & Computer Peripheral Equipment and Software	5045	2
Janitorial Supplies	5087	1
Paper Products	5113	1
Computer Programming Services	7371	1
Business Services	7389	1
Fabricated Textile Products	2399	1
Wood Products	2499	2
Soaps And Detergents	2841	1
Total		45

Source: Community Development Foundation, May 1995.

7.4 AREAS ZONED FOR COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITIES

There are eight (8) districts zoned for commercial and industrial activities.⁴ Four of the districts allow for the existence of commercial activities (neighborhood, general, central business, and planned). The remaining four districts are to be used for industrial activities (light, general, business park, and planned business park). Table 7.4.1 gives a brief discussion of each district.

As of September 1997, approximately 1228 acres were zoned for commercial or industrial activities. Industrially-zoned districts accounted for 704 acres, while 524 acres were zoned for commercial activities.

Of the 704 acres zoned for industrial use, 405 acres are developed, 158 are vacant with complete utilities, and 141 acres have incomplete utilities. With regard to the commercial zoning, 328 acres are developed, approximately 66 acres have complete utilities, and 130 acres lack complete utilities.

General industry (M-2) accounted for most of the acreage zoned for industrial activity. The districts zoned M-2 largely dominate the northern and northeastern portions of the City.

The final industrial zoning district, for industrial and technical activities, was designed for the 144 acre Wood-Bridge Business Park, located at the southeast corner of Dunbridge and West Poe Roads. A smaller business park, along Industrial Parkway, is presently zoned M-3.

As required in the current Bowling Green, Ohio, Zoning Code, virtually all of the approximately 229 acres of the general commercial districts faced major roads, primarily along State Route 25 in the south of the City and on the south side of State Route 64, just west of I-75. General commercial zones also lined State Route 25 in the northern portion of the City, as did planned commercial zones. Although dispersed throughout the City, very few areas were zoned for neighborhood commercial activities.

⁴ American Legal Publishing Company, City of Bowling Green, Ohio, Zoning Code, 1984.

TABLE 7.4.1: BOWLING GREEN COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL ZONING (1997)

<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>ZONING DISTRICT</u>
Allows for convenience type sales and service (retail sales, services, and allied activities) that primarily service a neighborhood's residents.	B-1 Neighborhood Commercial
In areas of high accessibility, allows for general business or commercial activities that serve the general public. District <u>must</u> have frontage on a major street.	B-2 General Commercial
Encompasses the functional center of the City. Allows for commercial, governmental, and institutional activities that serve the entire community.	B-3 Central Business
Special commercial districts used to create areas with specific functional needs. Allow activities to be designed to relate functionally to each other and may incorporate commercial activities and residential and multi-family activities. Requires that a site plan be submitted.	S-2 Planned Commercial
Allows the manufacture, assembly, storage, or transfer activities whose nature of operation produces a minimum of noise, odor, and smoke, and stores or assembles very little outside.	M-1 Light Industrial
Allows for general manufacturing and assembly activities excluding: fertilizers manufacturers and animal rendering, stockyards, petroleum refineries and storage, nuclear power plants, and paper and hay mills.	M-2 General Industrial
Allows for a mixture of manufacturing and office uses in a business park setting. Retail sales are prohibited.	M-3 Business Park
Allows for a more orderly location and arrangement of facilities to be more efficient and promote a higher quality of visual and functional design. Requires a site plan.	S-4 Planned Business Park

Source: City of Bowling Green Zoning Code

7.5 EXISTING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SITUATION

As part of the comprehensive planning process, the Community Development Foundation (CDF) was founded by a group of concerned citizens in 1988. Since that time, the City has changed the way it approaches economic development.

Prior to the Community Development Foundation, there were many persons working on economic development. While many persons still work on economic development, there is now a person employed by the CDF who is the key contact. All available information and resources are focused at the CDF.

The CDF has a complete list of available sites and buildings. This list is updated on a regular basis.

Promotional materials have been developed and the CDF makes regular contacts to attract businesses to Bowling Green. A response team has been developed so any issue can be addressed.

A revolving loan fund has been established to assist existing small businesses in expanding and creating new jobs. Community reinvestment areas have been established as well as enterprise zones.

Efforts to attract new businesses to Bowling Green, as well as to retain existing firms, have been refined and focused. Ongoing refinements will be necessary for a successful program.

7.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the information acquired through the comprehensive planning process over the years, several recommendations can be made regarding future economic development efforts in Bowling Green. These recommendations are based on the fact that the City is committed to taking an aggressive approach to economic development, and include:

Adequate planning to accommodate such growth including analyzing existing land uses to determine proper locations for future commercial and industrial growth.

Based on information acquired over the years, several recommendations can be made regarding economic growth.

Historically, industries have developed at the fringes of communities. Once development reaches the fringe of a community and surrounds the industries, the industries again locate on the fringe. The reason for this trend has to do with the adjoining land uses that are acceptable to industry. Residential and retail are generally considered undesirable neighbors, while agriculture and office parks are considered compatible land uses by industry. With this fact in mind, several special considerations must be given to attract industry.

Attention should be given to the eastern edge of the City. The success of the Wood-Bridge Business Park has shown that the area is attractive to industry. However, the potential commercial development at the intersection of State Route 105 and Dunbridge Road could be detrimental to future industrial development. As neither the Master Plan nor the 1989 agreement with Center Township actually change existing zoning classifications on property, there exists nearly 140 acres of land presently zoned for commercial development around this intersection. The City must undertake a focused study to insure orderly development of this area with the traffic impact being minimized. With a study, the following advantages for industrial development can be used to the City's benefit:

- Utilities are available.
- Bedrock depth soundings along Dunbridge Road indicate rock at approximately 14 feet. Tests indicate that at the very least the bedrock is not uniformly high.
- Access to I-75 (north/south) and Route 6 (east/west) is an asset.
- I-75 and Route 6 form natural buffers between industrial and other land uses.

Interest in both commercial and industrial development in this area appears to be very high. However, to ensure proper development of this prime location, given the nearly 140 acres of existing commercial zoning, a plan for development should be prepared and implemented. If the area is not planned, proper development will not occur. After the plan is developed, the September 1989 agreement between the City and Center Township should be updated. The Center Township

Ad-Hoc Committee should be involved in this process.

An industrial park, Wood-Bridge Park, is being developed, complete with infrastructure, to accommodate future industrial uses. If this had not been done, the frontage would have been developed in random fashion and adequate access to interior land would not have been assured. The extension of utilities and the provision of infrastructure is more effective in attracting development than any other tool the community has at its disposal.

Because adjoining industrial and commercial land uses are frequently viewed by industry as being incompatible (and therefore a deterrent to industrial development), a new zoning district was created which allows only manufacturing and office uses.

Both Dunbridge Road and State Route 105 are arterial streets and projected as four lane, limited access roads. All access to developments must be from interior public streets. Failure to do this will make Wood-Bridge Business Park unattractive to industry and contribute to traffic congestion. Dunbridge Road presently functions at level C and widening was done to North Dunbridge Road. This need for access management is described in the Transportation Section.

While commercial uses are not being sought for the intersection of Dunbridge Road and Route 105, approximately 140 acres of commercial zoning presently exists on three sides of the intersection. If commercial uses are allowed to develop along State Route 105, no curb cuts are to be allowed directly onto State Route 105. An access road, parallel to State Route 105, should be developed to serve future businesses so that no curb cuts are made directly on to State Route 105. Curb cuts must be limited, in similar fashion, along Dunbridge Road as well.

In the northwest quadrant of the City, the land immediately north of Van Camp Road north to Bishop Road, and west to Haskins Road should be rezoned to an industrial classification in accordance with the March 1990 agreement between the City and Plain Township. Care must be given so as not to allow additional residential or retail development in this area. With the extension and improvement of Newton Road, as shown in the Transportation Section, to Haskins Road, as an arterial street, will improve site access. The 1996

extension of Newton west from State Route 25 to Brim Road, assures proper access is available to future development.

With the possible commercial development around the State Route 105/I-75 interchange, this northern industrial area has become increasingly attractive. The extension of Newton Road, with complete utilities, was necessary to increase the amount of industrially zoned land which has the full set of utilities available. The development of an industrial park, like Wood-Bridge Business Park, would help assure proper development of this industrial area.

A third area which could be used for industrial development is the area immediately south of the Route 6/Route 25 interchange. While sewer is not presently available, the easy access to I-75 and the large amount of undeveloped land could make this an attractive site for industry.

As developments occur in the northern section of the City, and possibly to entice development to service existing industry, an additional I-75 interchange, north of Bowling Green, is vital. This would provide a third access off Interstate 75 to the City and would service the booming industrial development, known as the Van Camp Corridor, the airport, BGSU, and any new development on the northern end of the City. The Transportation Section recommends this future interchange be located at Nims Road.

As noted earlier in this plan, there is a lack of available undeveloped land, with utilities, zoned for commercial uses, except at the intersection of State Route 105 and Dunbridge Road. These are the only sites available to develop a project which requires 30 to 40 acres, without the extension of utilities. Such recent growth has been located on the south side of Bowling Green along State Route 25.

The northern commercial area along State Route 25 has not grown since the addition of the mall. While water and sewer lines are in place north of Newton Road, this area is currently outside the City, and the recent completion of a new electric substation at State Route 25/Bishop Road may increase interest in development along the State Route 25 frontage.

The Wood County Airport continues to be a contributing factor to successful economic development. As the City continues to grow, the City should not preclude consideration of assuming municipal control of the airport.

There is a continuing need for additional neighborhood commercial. This is particularly true in the western residential areas of the City.

In order to accommodate future industrial growth, the City has analyzed and updated its existing policies on utility and street extensions. As stated earlier, policies and practices that were feasible and practical in the past no longer meet the needs of today's marketplace.

Communities all over Ohio, as well as across the United States and other countries, are providing utilities and other improvements to industries as incentives for them to locate in their community. Although no industry should expect, or receive, a "free lunch," some concessions, or departures from past policies, may be necessary.

The expertise is available locally, through the CDF, the utility companies, City staff, the industrial community, Bowling Green State University, etc., to develop innovative and creative approaches to extend utility lines and construct streets without requiring the developer and/or industry to finance the entire cost. In cases which are not speculative in nature, federal or state funds may be available.

In summary, an aggressive economic development program should be able to, at a minimum, maintain the status quo in relation to other communities around it. With proper planning, Bowling Green can adequately address its needs for commercial and industrial uses in a proper manner and in a manner economically feasible to all parties involved.