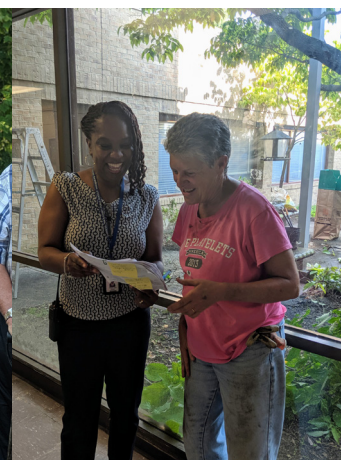




CITY OF BOWIE SUSTAINABILITY PLAN



PLAN



ANNUAL REPORT
AUGUST 2019

The Sustainability Plan

Sustainability may not have been a common word a few years ago, but its full meaning is increasingly acknowledged by more people and with greater urgency. There is a clearer understanding of the need to plan and provide for a truly sustainable future. The City's Sustainability Plan was created because the City's planners recognize that specific strategies are needed to address an array of issues beyond those in the existing Climate Action Plan. The Sustainability Plan builds upon the Climate Action Plan and all of the other work that has come before it.

The City of Bowie's Mayor, G. Frederick Robinson, refers to Bowie as "the greatest city in Maryland." The City has a strong economy and an enviable quality of life for its citizens. As the City grows, its urbanization, diversity, and way of life will require adaptation, communication, and collaboration among all stakeholders. This plan is the result of a collaborative process with those stakeholders and reflects a commitment to implement a new vision for sustainability in the City of Bowie. The path to a sustainable future enhances what is already great about Bowie, and prepares the City and its residents to thrive in the face of change.

WHAT IS SUSTAINABILITY?

Experts define sustainability as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” Consisting of three pillars, sustainable development seeks to achieve, in a balanced manner, economic development, social development, and environmental protection. As part of the public input process, the Bowie community defines sustainability in a number of ways as shown in the word cloud below.

Vision for a Sustainable Bowie

Plan Vision

The City of Bowie will be a diverse and vibrant community that is committed to its citizens, economy, and natural environment. It will be a community that successfully unites and integrates its neighborhoods and one that communicates openly with all stakeholders. It will support efforts that protect resources, improve health, increase connectivity, advance education, and expand business in order to continue providing a place to live and thrive for future generations.

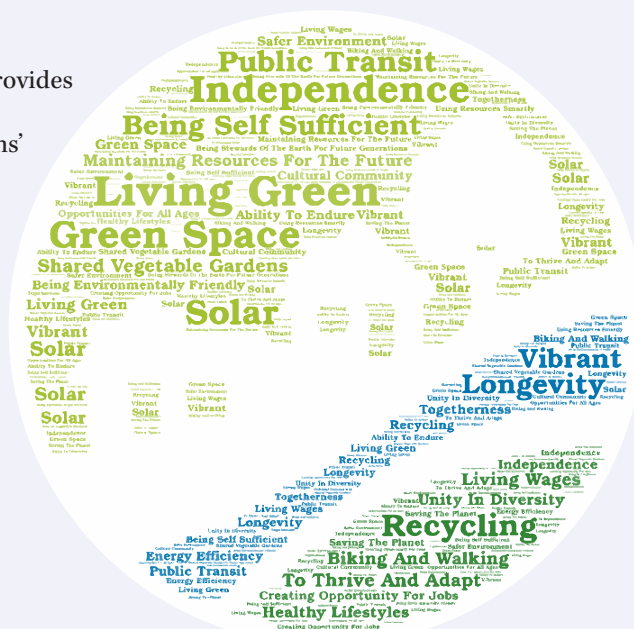
Mission for the City of Bowie

The City of Bowie, in partnership with the community, provides a cost-effective system of city services and facilitates compatible economic development that enhances citizens' quality of life within a positive and sustaining physical environment.

Vision for The City of Bowie

Bowie is a model city in partnership with state, county, and regional entities that:

- Nurtures a safe, united, and culturally diverse community in which to live, work, and play.
- Preserves the community's natural environment.
- Has economically vibrant commercial centers.
- Supports quality neighborhood schools.
- Has high-quality city services and infrastructure.



Progress Over the Past Year

Progress has been made on:



17 Goals



42 Strategies



55 Actions

In total, there are 25 goals, 57 strategies, and 103 actions that are designated to be completed in the short-term (1–2 years), mid-term (3–5 years), or long-term (6 or more years) time frame.



Jobs and Business

A robust business community is one that creates local jobs and expands the city tax base, has businesses that provide goods and services needed by the community, employs people from the community, and, in many cases, has businesses managed or owned by individuals who live in the community. A community that supports an independent, diverse, and green-minded business network will help create a local economy that recycles a much larger share of revenue back into itself—enriching the whole community. The goals in this section focus on increasing commercial occupancy, supporting small businesses, and getting businesses to go green.

STRATEGIES IN PROGRESS: 4

Goals



Goal JB1: Achieve 100 percent occupancy of retail space and under 10 percent vacancy of office space in the City

➔ Retail occupancy is 96.8 percent and office vacancy is 14.8 percent.



Goal JB2: Increase the number of businesses participating in Bowie Small and Independent Business Programs annually from 46 to 100

➔ Over 200 businesses participating in Small and Independent Business Programs.



Goal JB3: Increase the number of participants in the Green Bowie Business Certification Program from 2 to 150.

➔ There are now 10 Green Bowie Businesses.

Highlights

- Held five meetings about Green Bowie Business Program as well as contributed to the Chamber of Commerce newsletter.
- The Maryland Women's Business Center helped start new businesses and sustain over 300.



Health and Wellness

An analysis of the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service's 1997 arrival data from the Jessup, Maryland terminal market found that the average pound of produce distributed at the facility traveled more than 1,685 miles, which suggests that your meal travels approximately that distance from farms to your plate. Though this varies based upon where you live, it is not uncommon to see strawberries from California in a store in Maryland. These "fresh foods" may be a few days old before they reach your grocery shelves. Local foods need not travel so many miles—they can often be harvested within a few hours or a day of being delivered to the farm stand, farmers market, or the grocery store's local produce section. Fresh food has a high nutritional value and a

high concentration of vitamins. You are likely to have more choices locally because more fragile varieties do not have to endure the trauma of shipping.

According to the County and state health departments and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the incidence of diabetes, heart disease, and obesity is higher in Prince George's County than in the State of Maryland and in the United States. These are conditions that can be controlled through policies, access to healthy food, and education. The goals in this section focus on participation in activities related to well-being, producing and consuming locally grown food, and health-related policies and programs.

STRATEGIES IN PROGRESS: 2

Goals



Goal FW1: Achieve 20 percent resident participation in programs that promote the production, distribution, purchase, and consumption of food that is sourced within 200 miles.

➔ We continue to promote the farmers market, national farmers market week, and the new community garden.



Goal FW2: Increase participation in physical fitness and wellness programs and events by 20 percent.

➔ About 50 residents participated in Walk Wednesdays in FY 2019. The City held its first 5k with over 200 participants.

Highlights

- Opening of community garden with plots for sale to residents.
- The First Annual Green Bowie Veterans Day 5k was held on November 10, 2018. This City-sponsored event promotes health and wellness while celebrating our many veteran residents and staff. Registration is free and comes with an event t-shirt and race bib. The next is scheduled for November 9, 2019.



Nature and Wildlife

Protecting and maintaining the natural environment for the benefit of people, plants, and animals is an important element of a healthy, beautiful community. Creating or enhancing green spaces, parks, and trails, as well as cleaning up litter in the City, ranked in the top priorities of the community engagement voting activity conducted as a part of this plan preparation. This indicates that Bowie's natural environment contributes to an aspect of the City that many residents and visitors are attracted to and highly value.

Bowie's previous Green Infrastructure and Environmental Infrastructure Plans gave the City a head start protecting its natural resources in 2003 and 2007. In 2012 and 2013, studies were conducted to determine how to best manage and improve forest conditions by increasing tree canopy, increasing forest diversity, and removing invasive species. The goals in this section address ways to implement tree planting, create and maintain habitat, and reduce litter.

STRATEGIES IN PROGRESS: 9

Goals

- **Goal NW1: Protect, preserve, and enhance existing forest and tree canopy coverage to reach the 45 percent tree canopy goal.**
 Tree rebates provided to 12 residents for a total of 17 native trees planted. One tree planting workshop was held in the fall.
- **Goal NW3: Remove invasive plant species from at least 300 acres of land.**
 No goal update available yet.
- **Goal NW4: Increase participation in City cleanup and litter educational programs by 30 percent.**
 Litter campaign started FY 2020.
- **Goal NW2: Create native landscaping on 300 additional public and private properties to help improve water quality and create new habitats for wildlife.**
 No goal update.

Highlights

- Bay wise certification workshop held on March 26, 2019.
- The City's Weed Warrior Program continued at Whitemarsh Park with 89 participants and 4 work days. Work days are open to 30 participants and take place at Belair Meadows and Whitemarsh Park.



Communication

The purpose of communication varies from information and promotion to education and public safety. From a City perspective, it has the large task of meeting all of those purposes and reaching all members of a community. During the ImagineBowie campaign, extra efforts were made to reach all stakeholders, including those which have been hard to reach (African-American, Hispanic, and millennial demographics). Such efforts need to continue throughout the plan's implementation by expanding the City's use of electronic communication methods, while also increasing public participation in order to enter a new phase of communication. The goals in this section focus on engaging the community through various media outlets such as social media and e-newsletters.

STRATEGIES IN PROGRESS: 4

Goals

- **Goal CC1: Increase City Alert System subscriptions from 4,907 to 10,000.**
 Currently 6,400 subscribers
- **Goal CC2: Increase the reach of the City's social media from 6,800 to 16,000 people.**


| | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| City Facebook: 5,655 | City Twitter: 2,717 |
| Animal Control Facebook: 2,408 | Green Bowie Twitter: 215 |
| Police Facebook: 2,429 | Police Twitter: 889 |
| Total: 14,482 | Bowie Gym: 169 |
- **Goal CC3: Increase Green Bowie e-newsletter subscribers from 588 to 1,500.**
 Currently: 982

Highlights

- The City started an Instagram account and has 719 followers.
- The City also posted over 100 videos on its YouTube channel, which has 225 subscribers.








Community

A strong community provides a sense of belonging, which enables individuals to look outside themselves and contribute to the welfare of others. Community and “sense of community” were consistent themes throughout the engagement process. Bowie residents embrace neighbor-to-neighbor interactions and opportunities to share ideas and problem solve together. People want to connect; it makes them feel like they are a part of something, and it improves their quality of life. People also feel good when they do something positive for someone else, or for something bigger than themselves.

STRATEGIES IN PROGRESS: 6

Goals

-  **Goal CT1: Create or enhance 10 public gathering spaces.**
➡ New public seating area, and other enhancements, at Centennial Park
-  **Goal CT2: Increase resident participation in Emergency Services programs from 100 to 300.**
➡ No goal update available yet.
-  **Goal CT3: Increase the number of public art pieces from 7 to 20.**
➡ Currently 7 – There are three in the pipeline.
-  **Goal CT4: Involve 500 residents in a City-led resident sustainability certification and award program.**
➡ No goal update available yet.
-  **Goal CT5: Involve 6,000 residents in events and programs that strengthen neighborhood connections.**
➡ No goal update available yet.

Highlights

- The 5k was an event held that strengthened our sense of community.
- The third annual Sustainability Award was presented to Cecilia Reddy at the Bowie Green Expo in April 2019.
- Bike rack inventory was completed in 2019 with four new installations.






Education

Education drives action. Someone might not think twice about the rush of water and pollutants that go down the storm drains without someone pointing out the range of impacts from erosion, to habitat disruption, to impacts on the Chesapeake Bay. When a community shows that it cares and knowledge is shared in a common cause, much progress can occur. Driving action through education can happen at all ages, starting with our children in schools, through higher education, and on to formal and informal adult education. In the school environment, incorporating sustainability into the curriculum can make learning more fun, as problem-solving connects students to the real world in their backyards and in their neighborhoods. When they are engaged and excited about what they are learning in school, students take those lessons home. For example, if they are growing their own food and composting at school, they might encourage their families to do the same at home because it is fun and they understand the value.

STRATEGIES IN PROGRESS: 2

Goals

-  **Goal ED1: Achieve Green Schools Certification at all schools within the City limits.**
➡ Fourteen of 15 public schools certified.
-  **Goal ED2: Increase Green Bowie program awareness to 90% for residents over 18.**
➡ No goal update available yet.
-  **Goal ED3: Provide a way for all community members in the City to report sustainability actions and have at least 2,000 participate in reporting.**
➡ No goal update available yet.

Highlights

- The Green Team’s Green Schools Resource List was updated in 2019
- Two Green Schools forums were held, one in November and one in January.
- Green Bowie started a new program, The Lightbulb Exchanges, which targeted millennials and retirees.



Mobility and Connectivity

Bowie enjoys the benefit of convenient access to Baltimore, Washington, D.C., western Maryland, the Chesapeake Bay, and the Eastern Shore. Bowie Town Center serves as a transit hub with the nearby Park and Ride serving as a transfer station for nearly all of the buses serving the City. The MARC station provides another transit center at the north end of the City. Many actions in the Climate Action Plan address the need to develop transit-oriented communities, increase usage of public transport, and expand the City’s biking and hiking networks to reduce per capita vehicle miles traveled.

However, more needs to be accomplished in terms of decreasing traffic by creating interconnected trails and sidewalks throughout the City. The Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, which includes suburbs in Maryland and Virginia, is ranked first nationally in the cost of traffic congestion per commuter, with congestion costing \$1,834 per commuter and causing 82 hours of delay annually. The goals in this section address increasing the City’s Walk Score and encouraging more walking and biking trips.

STRATEGIES IN PROGRESS: 2



City residents take advantage of the trail located at Whitemarsh Park.

Goals



Goal MC1: Increase City’s Walk Score from 25 to 50 and encourage more walking and biking trips.



Currently: 25

Highlights

- The City began working on the trails master plan update.
- The City promoted and participated in Bike to Work Day, where 16 people registered at the Old Bowie stop and 24 at the new Bowie Gym stop. There was about a 75 percent participation rate.



Water

Water is one of Earth’s most valuable resources and it needs to be protected by keeping it clean and using it efficiently. When it rains, water runs off roofs, parking lots, streets, and lawns instead of soaking into the soil the way it did before development. This water (e.g. stormwater), along with everything it picks up along the way (fertilizers, oil and grease, litter, etc.), ends up in storm sewers and ditches that discharge to streams, rivers, and lakes. This process contributes to the presence of toxic contaminants in the Chesapeake Bay. Only 2.5 percent of the Earth’s water is freshwater, and only 1 percent of that is accessible. To ensure future supplies of fresh, clean water, this precious resource must be conserved. The goals in this section focus on ways to save and clean water at a local level.

STRATEGIES IN PROGRESS: 3



A new pet waste station installed at Whitemarsh Park.

Goals



Goal WA1: Implement practices and programs to save and clean water on 2,000 properties in the City.



No goal update available yet.

Highlights

- The Lions Club hosted a very successful rain barrel sale on August 4, 2018, where over 15 were sold in 2 hours.
- A “bayscaping” workshop was held in March 2019 with approximately 20 attendees. This workshop was titled “Save the Bay from Your Backyard” and taught bay-friendly landscaping.



Recycling and Composting

Recycling and composting are two of the easiest and most familiar actions individuals can take to be sustainable and help their community. The City’s current recycling rate is about 33 percent, but other nearby areas have reached a recycling rate of over 50 percent, and there is plenty of room for improvement.

Food waste presents a huge opportunity to reduce landfill waste, though it is often ignored. Home food waste results from meal preparation, clean up, unpacking foods, and discarding purchased foods or food that has been left uneaten during a meal.

In 2010, an estimated 133 billion pounds or 31% of food from U.S. retail food stores, restaurants, and homes—valued at approximately \$161 billion—went uneaten. Recycling and composting are also important actions in the Climate Action Plan, since these efforts reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but the goals in this section expand on the goals in the Climate Action Plan.

STRATEGIES IN PROGRESS: 3



Curbside food waste collection bins getting ready for delivery.

Goals



Goal RC1: Decrease the tonnage of residential waste sent to the landfill by 30 percent.



No update available yet.

Highlights

- There have been over 650 total residents that have started composting since the program began in 2015.
- The Food Waste program has 230 participants.



Energy and Climate

Energy and Climate are major topics for action in the Climate Action Plan adopted in 2015. However, it is a five-year plan, and this plan looks to 2026. Climate change will be an issue for many decades to come, and will need to be continually addressed. In 2020, the City will need to consider updating its Climate Action Plan. In addition, solar projects in Bowie are of high importance to continue and increase past 2020. Switching to renewable energy sources can drastically reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and solar has been positively received in the City, with solar capacity increasing by over 50 percent each year since 2010.

STRATEGIES IN PROGRESS: 5



Residents attend a Bowie Solar Co-op information session at City Hall.

Goals



Goal EC1: Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 20 percent.



Currently 15 percent according to MWCOG.



Goal EC2: Increase renewable energy generation from 9 to 40 MW hour production.



Currently: Approximately 98 MW hours

Highlights

- The City systems now equal 82 KW total, with annual generation of about 98 MW hours.

Strategy Status

● Completed
● In Progress
○ Not Started
✘ Not Moving Forward

| Strategy | Time frame | Status |
|--|------------|--------|
| GROWTH | | |
| JB1.1: Continue to nurture a diverse and stable business environment that supports all community needs. | Short-Term | ● |
| JB2.1: Support and foster small and independent businesses. | Short-Term | ● |
| JB2.2: Start a Buy Local Campaign to support Bowie businesses. | Mid-Term | ○ |
| JB3.1: Organize two green business workshop or networking events per year. | Short-Term | ● |
| JB3.2: Schedule in-person assessments with 10-15 businesses per year to identify ways to go green. | Short-Term | ● |
| FW1.1: Create and maintain a community garden with plots on City property that residents can use to grow food. | Short-Term | ● |
| FW1.2: Expand Bowie Farmers Market. | Mid-Term | ● |
| FW1.3: Adopt a Community Food System Plan. | Mid-Term | ✘ |
| FW1.4: Create a vertical farm or food forest for residents to use. | Long-Term | ● |
| FW2.1: Create a City-sponsored wellness initiative by partnering with local organizations. | Short-Term | ● |
| NW1.1: Use social marketing to develop a tree planting campaign. | Short-Term | ● |
| NW1.2: Enhance and maintain the City’s current tree rebate program. | Short-Term | ● |
| NW2.1: Achieve and maintain National Wildlife Federation (NWF) Community Wildlife Habitat Designation (at least 200 homes, 6 community sites, and 5 schools certified as wildlife habitats plus additional requirements). | Short-Term | ● |
| NW2.2: Increase the number of certified Monarch Waystations. | Short-Term | ● |
| NW2.3: Encourage resident participation in the Bay-Wise certification program. | Short-Term | ● |
| NW3.1: Encourage the removal of invasive species from private land. | Short-Term | ● |
| NW3.2: Remove invasive species from public land. | Short-Term | ● |
| NW4.1: Host volunteer cleanups around the community. | Short-Term | ● |
| NW4.2: Create an educational and public awareness campaign to sensitize residents to the negative impacts of litter on the environment. | Mid-Term | ● |

NOTE: “Complete” does not denote finished. Several complete programs continue to be implemented or marketed.

| Strategy | Time frame | Status |
|--|------------|--------|
| UNITY | | |
| CC1.1: Provide 10 workshops per year about emergency responses for storms, flooding, etc. for residents and promote City Alert System at all workshops. | Short-Term | ● |
| CC1.2: Encourage residents to sign up for City Alert at all City events. | Short-Term | ● |
| CC2.1: Encourage residents to like or follow the City on social media at all City events. | Short-Term | ● |
| CC3.1: Encourage residents to sign up for the Green Bowie e-newsletter on the spot at all Green Bowie events. | Short-Term | ● |
| CC3.2: Change Green Bowie e-newsletter to a monthly distribution from quarterly. | Mid-Term | ● |
| CT1.1: Investigate areas to create more green space. | Short-Term | ● |
| CT1.2: Install more amenities in the public gathering spaces (interpretive signs, park benches, picnic tables, drinking fountains, etc.). | Mid-Term | ● |
| CT2.1: Recruit and train more Community Emergency Response Team leaders. | Short-Term | ✘ |
| CT2.2: Offer home emergency kits for residents to purchase. | Short-Term | ✘ |
| CT3.1: Expand the City’s Public Art Master Plan. | Mid-Term | ● |
| CT4.1: Develop a citizen sustainability certification program that encompasses a range of sustainability efforts. | Short-Term | ○ |
| CT4.2: Provide an annual award to residents who make significant achievements in sustainability. | Short-Term | ● |
| CT5.1: Hold quarterly community roundtables hosted by City and/or community organizations to discuss community issues. | Short-Term | ○ |
| CT5.2: Work with churches, non-profits, businesses, and other organizations to host diversity and cultural awareness gatherings and/or events. | Short-Term | ● |
| CT5.3: Increase promotion, benefits and participation in the “Neighbors Helping Neighbors Program”. | Short-Term | ● |
| ED1.1: Provide biannual workshops to assist with meeting Green School requirements. | Short-Term | ● |
| ED1.2: Partner with Bowie-Crofton Garden Club and the City’s Education Committee to provide grants to schools that pursue green projects. | Short-Term | ● |
| ED2.1: Develop an outreach campaign to reach audiences that are underrepresented or not represented in current program activities. | Short-Term | ● |
| ED3.1: Develop a sustainability projects monitoring and tracking system. | Short-Term | ○ |
| MC1.1: Develop and implement a promotional campaign to bring awareness of existing trails for biking, hiking and family walks. | Short-Term | ● |
| MC1.2: Expand existing trails for biking, hiking, and family walks into a safe interconnected network. | Long-Term | ● |

| Strategy | Time frame | Status |
|--|------------|--------|
| PROGRESS | | |
| WA1.1: Encourage the installation of rain gardens. | Short-Term | ● |
| WA1.2: Encourage the installation of rain barrels. | Short-Term | ● |
| WA1.3: Increase participation in the mulching mower rebate program for residents. | Short-Term | ● |
| WA1.4: Increase resident awareness of practices and programs to save and clean water. | Short-Term | ● |
| WA1.5: Create and adopt a Watershed Plan. | Short-Term | ✕ |
| WA1.6: Install five additional pet waste stations. | Short-Term | ● |
| WA1.7: Encourage planting of native vegetation within the stream buffer. | Mid-Term | ● |
| RC1.1: Enhance educational programs on household recycling and composting. | Short-Term | ● |
| RC1.2: Increase the number of households that are composting to 2000. | Short-Term | ● |
| RC1.3: Investigate a Food Recovery Program to collect food that would otherwise go to waste from restaurants, stores, and other places to give to local emergency food programs, such as the Bowie Food Pantry. | Short-Term | ○ |
| RC1.4: Install public recycling bins at all City parks and other public areas. | Mid-Term | ● |
| RC1.5: Investigate implementing a Pay-as-You-Throw pricing structure. | Long-Term | ✕ |
| EC1.1: Continue to implement the Climate Action Plan. | Short-Term | ● |
| EC1.2: Evaluate and update the Climate Action Plan in 2020. | Mid-Term | ● |
| EC2.1: Assist with developing a Community Solar Program for renters and low-income residents by organizing partnerships. | Mid-Term | ● |
| EC2.2: Investigate ways to support solar battery storage projects for City facilities, residential properties, and businesses. | Long-Term | ● |
| EC2.3: Investigate the feasibility of a renewable microgrid project. | Long-Term | ● |