

A photograph of a modern building under construction. The building features a prominent circular glass and steel structure at the top. In the foreground, a yellow excavator is visible on a dirt construction site. The text is overlaid on the image in a bold, red, serif font.

# TOWN OF BOW

## Self-Assessment Survey Results

Bow is a Member Community in  
Northeastern University's

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP**

# WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT?

The Center for Urban and Regional Policy at Northeastern University has partnered with the National Association of Industrial and Office Properties, the nation's principal commercial and industrial real estate trade association, to begin creating a **practical set of tools for local governments** to better position themselves to attract real economic development opportunities.

# OUR PURPOSE

CURP has embarked upon this initiative 1) **to help municipalities surmount the “deal breakers”** within their control that discourage economic growth, 2) **to enhance the power of local officials** to effect positive change in policies and procedures, and 3) **to better enable** these communities to compete for critically needed private sector job generating investment.

# OUR FIRST STEP

**With the assistance of NAIOP and CoreNet Global, 4,000 corporate real estate and development professionals were surveyed on factors effecting business location decisions:**

- **Local Permitting Processes**
- **Labor Suitability and Availability**
- **Development and Operating Costs**
- **Local Business Environment**
- **Transportation and Access**
- **Amenities and Quality of Life**

# WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT?

## The Magnificent Seven

- Labor Availability
- Timeliness of Approvals
- Transportation Access
- Real Estate Costs
- Nearby Amenities and Services
- On-site Parking
- Business Friendly Environment



# WHAT'S LEAST IMPORTANT?

## The Mythical Five

- Minimum Wage Laws
- Access to Rail
- Strong Labor Unions
- Local Taxes
- Business Incentives



# WHAT THEY SAID

**“Once a product has passed its Phase III trials, we want to get the new product into production before another company does. Speed is so critical that we start building the production facility before the product is approved.” – Biotech Executive**

**“From our perspective, time is money. We may actually be able to make a deal work more effectively if we can get expedited permits and infrastructure enhancements than by factoring a tax subsidy into our pro forma.” – Commercial Developer**

# WHAT ELSE THEY SAID

**“Where would we eat lunch if we located there?”**

**– IT Manager**

**“Our employees want to run at lunchtime or before or after work. Our location decisions must factor that into the equation.” – HR Manager**

**“Firms like to locate where other firms in the same industry already are established and where suppliers, distribution networks and support services already exist.” – Relocation Specialist**



# OUR NEXT STEP

## Industry Composition

21.	36.63	% Industry Manufacturing
22.	2.08	% Wholesale Trade
23.	18.96	% Retail Trade
24.	1.16	% Food and Beverage
25.	0.67	% Real Estate and Rental Leasing
26.	1.55	% Professional, scientific and technical services
27.	6.88	% Admin and Support & Waste Management/remediation
28.	0.1	% Health care and social assistance
29.	19.1	% Health care and social assistance
30.	1.26	% Arts, entertainment, and Rec.
31.	9.08	% Accommodation and Food Service
32.	2.03	% Other services (except public administration)

## A Self-assessment Tool

- Measure local strengths and weaknesses
- Weighed against the validated critical factors
- Comparable data from other jurisdictions
- Detailed guidance on where to focus efforts
- Reality check on opportunities and expectations
- Benchmark queries against the competition

# **SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL**

**Over two hundred questions in ten categories**

- 1. Access to Customers/Markets**
- 2. Concentration of Businesses & Services**
- 3. Real Estate and Infrastructure**
- 4. Labor Market Factors**
- 5. Municipal Permit Processes**
- 6. Community Quality of Life**
- 7. Site Related Amenities**
- 8. Business Incentives**
- 9. Local Tax Rates**
- 10. Access to Local Information**

# SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

- The tool is rigorous and comprehensive
- Participants respond on a secure website
- Data visible only to designated contact(s)
- Results can be read online immediately
- Report produced for official distribution

# ASSESSMENT REPORT

- Responses color coded and weighted
- Easy-to-view strengths and weaknesses
- Measured against industry market factors
- How you compare with other jurisdictions
- Where you need to target limited resources
- Where you can set realistic expectations
- How you can focus community involvement

# ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

**109. What is the average time (in weeks) from application to completion of the review process for the following?**

a. Site plan review

0-4 5-8 9-12 13-16 17-20 21-24 25-36 37-48 48+

b. Zoning variance

0-4 5-8 9-12 13-16 17-20 21-24 25-36 37-48 48+

c. Special permit

0-4 5-8 9-12 13-16 17-20 21-24 25-36 37-48 48+

d. Building permit











0-4 5-8 9-12 13-16 17-20 21-24 25-36 37-48 48+

e. Appeals process

0-4 5-8 9-12 13-16 17-20 21-24 25-36 37-48 48+











## C. Timeliness of Approvals

Report of Bow as compared to all jurisdictions

Question	Bow		Comparison Group
13: What is the average time from application to completion of the review process for the following?: Site plan review	9-12 weeks		5-8 weeks
14: What is the average time from application to completion of the review process for the following?: Zoning variance	5-8 weeks		5-8 weeks
15: What is the average time from application to completion of the review process for the following?: Special permit	9-12 weeks		9-12 weeks
16: What is the average time from application to completion of the review process for the following?: Building permit	0-4 weeks		0-4 weeks
17: What is the average time from application to completion of the review process for the following?: Appeals process	5-8 weeks		5-8 weeks
18: What is the average time from application to completion or occupation in existing structures: Site plan review	5-8 weeks		5-8 weeks
19: What is the average time from application to completion or occupation in existing structures: Zoning variance	5-8 weeks		5-8 weeks
20: What is the average time from application to completion or occupation in existing structures: Special permit	5-8 weeks		9-12 weeks
21: What is the average time from application to completion or occupation in existing structures: Building permit	5-8 weeks		0-4 weeks
22: What is the average time from application to completion or occupation in existing structures: Appeals process	5-8 weeks		5-8 weeks

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15: What is the average time from application to completion of the review process for the following?: Special permit	9-12 weeks	 9-12 weeks
16: What is the average time from application to completion of the review process for the following?: Building permit	0-4 weeks	 0-4 weeks
17: What is the average time from application to completion of the review process for the following?: Appeals process	5-8 weeks	 5-8 weeks
18: What is the average time from application to completion or occupation in existing structures: Site plan review	5-8 weeks	 5-8 weeks
19: What is the average time from application to completion or occupation in existing structures: Zoning variance	5-8 weeks	 5-8 weeks
20: What is the average time from application to completion or occupation in existing structures: Special permit	5-8 weeks	 9-12 weeks
21: What is the average time from application to completion or occupation in existing structures: Building permit	5-8 weeks	 0-4 weeks
22: What is the average time from application to completion or occupation in existing structures: Appeals process	5-8 weeks	 5-8 weeks

Importance To Market



Very Important



Important



Less Important

Your Performance Relative To Peers



Strong









Average



## ● A. Infrastructure

Report of Bow as compared to all jurisdictions

Question	Bow		Comparison Group
1: Are there significant limitations to any of your existing infrastructure systems? - Water Supply	Inadequate Capacity for Current Needs		Sufficient Capacity for Growth & Reliable Service
2: Public Sewer	Sufficient Capacity for Growth & Reliable Service		Sufficient Capacity for Growth & Reliable Service
3: Wastewater Treatment	Sufficient Capacity for Growth & Reliable Service		Sufficient Capacity for Growth & Reliable Service
4: Natural Gas	Sufficient Capacity for Growth & Reliable Service		Sufficient Capacity for Growth & Reliable Service
5: Electric Power	Sufficient Capacity for Growth & Reliable Service		Sufficient Capacity for Growth & Reliable Service
6: Data/Telecommunications - Land Lines	Sufficient Capacity for Growth & Reliable Service		Sufficient Capacity for Growth & Reliable Service





## B. Sites Available

Report of Bow as compared to all jurisdictions

Question	Bow		Comparison Group
7: Does your jurisdiction own sites that it is currently marketing for development?	no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	yes
8: Do you maintain a complete list of sites that are available for development in your jurisdiction?	no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	yes
9: Do you maintain an active relationship with commercial real estate brokers/developers/agents with sites in your jurisdiction?	no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	yes
10: Do your land use regulations protect land currently zoned industrial from encroachment by residential other incompatible uses?	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	yes
11: Do you have an active strategy for reclaiming or land banking tax delinquent and tax title properties?	no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	yes
12: Do you have an active strategy for reclaiming abandoned or underutilized shopping plazas?	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no



<b>Importance To Market</b> <input checked="" type="radio"/> Very Important <input type="radio"/> Important <input type="radio"/> Less Important	<b>Your Performance Relative To Peers</b> <input checked="" type="radio"/> Strong <input type="radio"/> Average <input type="radio"/> Weak
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**C. Cross Marketing**

Report of Bow as compared to all jurisdictions

Question	Bow		Comparison Group
15: Do you actively enlist the services of firms already resident in your jurisdiction to assist in attracting new firms?	no	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	yes
16: Do you engage local and regional business organizations to participate in marketing your jurisdiction?	no	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	yes
17: Do you engage regional planning and development organizations to participate in marketing your jurisdiction?	no	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	yes
18: Do you engage state agencies and organizations to participate in marketing your jurisdiction?	no	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	yes

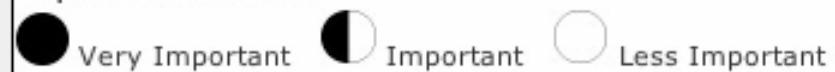
<b>Importance To Market</b> <input checked="" type="radio"/> Very Important <input type="radio"/> Important <input type="radio"/> Less Important	<b>Your Performance Relative To Peers</b> <input checked="" type="radio"/> Strong <input type="radio"/> Average <input type="radio"/> Weak
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## Section 10: Access to Information

<b>A. Website</b>			
Report of Bow as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Bow		Comparison Group
1: Does your jurisdiction's website list all local development policies and procedures?	no		no
2: Does your website have contact information for key officials?	yes		yes
3: Does your website have general information about your jurisdiction?	yes		yes
4: How frequently is your website updated?	Monthly		Weekly
5: Does your website include an explicitly designed economic development tool aimed at businesses and developers?	yes		no
6: Is there a development permit checklist/flow chart on the website?	yes		no
7: Are permit applications available for downloading on the website?	yes		yes
8: Are they date certified to ensure that they are the most recent version (i.e. the same version that you would get in person)?	yes		no
9: Is it possible to file a permit application electronically?	no		no
10: Is there a list of available land and building sites on the website?	no		no

13: Is there a posting of current hearings available on the website?	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	yes
14: Is there a posing of pending applications available on the website?	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
15: Is there a listing of current members of development review boards and staff contact information?	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	yes
16: Are there links to other local development resources? (Check all that apply)			
State finance agencies	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
State permitting agencies	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
Regional planning agencies	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
Regional development organizations	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
Workforce training organizations	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
Local public/quasi-public financing resources	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
Demographic information	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	yes
Economic development agencies	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
17: Other, Please Specify			
18: Are there links to other locally-based private/non-profit organizations?			
Colleges & Universities	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
Chambers of Commerce	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	yes

**Importance To Market**



**Your Performance Relative To Peers**



**D. Local Schools**

Report of Bow as compared to all jurisdictions

Question	Bow		Comparison Group
18: What is the average K-12 per pupil expenditure in your jurisdiction last year?	\$8,501+		\$8,501+
19: If yes, what percentage tested as proficient English?			
20: If yes, what percentage tested as proficient in Mathematics?			
21: What percentage of your jurisdiction's K-12 students are eligible for free or reduced-cost lunch?	1-25%		26-49%
22: What is the average combined SAT score (Verbal and Math) for college-bound seniors from your jurisdiction?	1051-1125		976-1050
23: What percentage of high school seniors from your jurisdiction graduated in 2004?	75%+		75%+
24: What is the high school drop out rate?	1-25%		1-25%
25: Have any of the schools in your jurisdiction been deemed "underachieving"?	no		no
26: What percentage of high school seniors go on to a four-year college?	75%+		26-49%
27: Are there any charter schools in your jurisdiction?	no		between yes and no

# BOW'S ADVANTAGES

- Central location at the junction of two interstate highways between the state capital and the state's largest city
- A main rail line with sidings that parallel commercial and industrial areas
- Bow has a local general aviation airport
- Permit approval process efficient with "Special Permits" for existing structures issued faster than the average, and a flowchart is provided to assist prospective developers
- Physical attractiveness: Well maintained public spaces and a system for responding to reported violations

# BOW'S ADVANTAGES

- A very high percentage of Bow's available sites are undeveloped and many are suitable for large scale development of >5 acres
- A much higher than average amount of Bow's tax revenue is derived from its industrial properties
- Tax delinquency is not much of a problem as very few properties are defaulted and even fewer still are subject to the power of sale
- Blue-collar and semi-skilled workers in Bow are paid a good wage compared to other Partner communities
- Bow's residents are very well educated with a higher percentage of high school diplomas and college degrees

# BOW'S ADVANTAGES

- Crime is very low in Bow in all measured categories
- Homeownership is strong with more than three-quarters of the population owning their own home
- Local schools rate very well with higher than average SAT scores and a greater percentage of high school graduates going on to four-year colleges.
- Bow's website is very good with links to resources relevant to development, online permitting and staff contacts



# AREAS IN NEED OF ATTENTION

- Bow's water supply is inadequate to meet current demands and no capacity to address future needs of commercial or industrial development
- There is no official “development cabinet” for major projects nor permitting ombudsman empowered to intercede in the permit processes as exists in other Partner communities
- Bow does not have a specific industrial attraction policy nor is it part of an Overall Economic Development Plan or Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
- There is virtually no cross marketing done in Bow; and interaction with existing firms, business organizations and state development agencies is limited

# AREAS IN NEED OF ATTENTION

- Few if any services or amenities (food, daycare, retail, etc.) available near development sites
- Bow does not currently own any sites being marketed for development, there is no list of available sites nor are there any formal arrangements with the commercial real estate firms
- Bow does not assist business in securing financing, exploring state or federal resources, revolving loan funds, utilizing tax increment financing, or offering local incentives
- There is very little available vacant warehouse space in Bow... about ¼ of what comparison communities have

# AREAS IN NEED OF ATTENTION

- No technical assistance provide for businesses in the state or federal permit / license application process
- Little is done to enforce codes and regulations on abandoned properties or for illegal trash or abandoned vehicle disposal
- Virtually no access to public transportation for workforce transportation
- The percentage of available industrial and commercial sites within two miles of an interchange is very low

# CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

- As local data change, assessment is updated
- As more communities enroll, comparisons change
- As industry needs change, factors are updated
- As practices shared, more data on results
- Lessons and data looped back to partners