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Introduction

The intent of this Economic Development Strategic Plan is to help Creswell reach its full economic potential. The Plan provides direction for economic development in Creswell by establishing a clear economic vision and goals that incorporate community values and providing a focused plan for action that helps the City make the most efficient use of limited resources. The Economic Development Strategic Plan identifies strategic needs and opportunities with respect to economic development and presents an actionable Work Plan for the City of Creswell that provides a roadmap for progress in the next five years. Other insights and findings from the planning effort are organized within a broader collection of Goals, Objectives, and Actions (Appendix E, Section III), including elements identified specifically for partner agency coordination and more direct incorporation into the City’s more quantitative Economic Opportunities Analysis, which follows on the heels of this Strategic Plan.

Strategic Planning Purpose

The Strategic Planning Purpose acknowledges that Creswell has room to improve to achieve its economic Vision and identifies gaps that are targeted with specific Goals, Objectives, and Actions.

Creswell is determined to adopt and implement this Economic Development Strategic Plan to address an economic opportunity gap. A lack of economic diversity, an imbalance between wages and cost of living, and a mismatch of business needs and available vacant land can diminish quality of life, reduce employment opportunities, and prevent businesses from growing and thriving to their full potential.

Stakeholder Engagement

The purpose of stakeholder outreach was to engage local businesses, civic leaders, subject matter experts, community members, and other stakeholders to help identify Creswell’s Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) as they relate to economic development and learn from the examples of peer communities with similar economic contexts.

The Vision, Goals, Objectives, and Actions presented in Creswell’s Economic Development Strategic Work Plan are drawn from themes and recommendations that emerged from stakeholder engagement activities, including:

Advisory Group—The Advisory Group included individuals representing a diverse range of backgrounds, including business owners, civic leaders, state and local subject matter experts, decision making body representatives, and County and State regional partners. The Advisory Group provided key input at critical points in the strategic planning process.
Focus Groups—Seven focus groups were conducted focusing on the following topics:

- Developers/Builders/Lenders
- Local Production/Agriculture
- Recruitment/Retention/Desired Industry Sectors
- Entrepreneurship/Education/Skill Development
- Tourism/Recreation/Hospitality
- Business Climate
- Sites/Infrastructure/Needed Services

Interviews—Four peer communities with similar economic contexts to Creswell were interviewed:

- City of Estacada
- City of Independence
- City of Madras
- City of Sisters

City of Creswell Staff Work Session—City of Creswell staff engaged in a work session to conduct a gaps analysis of feedback received through other stakeholder engagements and provide critical feedback about the feasibility, impact, and potential for success of strategies discussed by stakeholders and peer communities from the City’s perspective.

Public Open House—A virtual public open house was held in April 2022 to inform the community about the project and gather feedback about draft goal and action concepts.

See Appendices A-C for full summaries of each engagement, including participants, key takeaways, and detailed engagement notes.

Strategic Plan Elements

Creswell’s Economic Development Strategic Plan consists of a vision for the future and a plan of action designed to help Creswell take concrete steps to move toward its economic vision in the next five years.

The Core Values (also frequently referred to as “guiding principles”) succinctly define the organization’s culture and belief system, thus providing a foundation in an environment that is always changing. The core values become the core components of a vision statement for economic development in Creswell.
The **Vision Statement** provides a future view with a clear sense of purpose that incorporates Creswell’s Core Values and describes a Creswell that has achieved its economic goals.

The **Strategic Work Plan** includes targeted Goals, Objectives, and Action items that Staff believe are feasible to accomplish within a five-year time horizon, within the capacity of near-term resources of the City.

**Goals** are guiding statements that set local priorities for achieving the vision by describing the desired result. Goals establish the overall policy direction and organizational philosophy.

**Objectives** offer a means to meeting a goal that are focused on one particular aspect of a goal. Objectives can be met through a variety of actions.

**Actions** are typically action-oriented strategy statements that are understandable, specific, attainable, measurable, and time-sensitive.

A broad set of economic development Actions were identified through stakeholder engagement. In some cases, specific Action items may be outside the purview of the City’s Strategic Work Plan, either because another agency may be the appropriate lead for that Action item, or because the City may consider an Action item as part of other longer-term economic development work beyond the five-year horizon of this Economic Development Strategic Plan. See Appendix E for the full universe of Goals, Objectives, and Actions.

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**Creswell Economic Profile**

**Economic History**

The Creswell-Cloverdale area was historically inhabited by Kalapooia Indians, consisting of a variety of tribes located at Enterprise, Cloverdale, and Cottage Grove. The Donation Land Claim Act of 1850 established agricultural activity in the area, and Creswell was founded in 1872. With the completion of the railroad through Creswell, new settlers began to move into the community, and the City was incorporated in 1909.

Over the past half-century, the City of Creswell has grown from being predominantly a farming community to a city with close ties to the Eugene-Springfield metropolitan area. Creswell has continued to experience strong population growth fueled by its proximity to the metro area, relatively lower housing costs, and desirable small-town atmosphere; the City grew 47.2 percent during the 1990s, making it the fastest growing city in Lane County.

Today, Creswell has a relatively diverse economy, with an employment distribution similar to that for Lane County as a whole. Creswell’s proximity to larger urban areas and location on I-5, combined with its small-town character, makes Creswell attractive to residents and businesses who want to
live and work in a community with small-town character but still need access to urban amenities, a large and skilled workforce, and supplies and services available in larger communities, as well as access to major transportation networks.

**Current Economic Profile**

The 2019 draft Economic Opportunities Analysis (EOA)\(^1\) provides a data-driven, quantitative basis for the Economic Development Strategic Plan, which is intended to complement the EOA with a values-driven process that incorporates more qualitative analysis through public engagement. The economic profile provided in this section therefore summarizes key findings with data and graphics from the 2019 draft EOA.

In 2016, Creswell had about 1,151 covered employees\(^2\) at 158 businesses and other employers. The sectors with the largest concentrations of employees in Creswell included: Government (19%), Accommodation and Food Service (16%), Retail Trade (15%), and Health Care and Social Assistance (12%) (Figure 1). The average pay per employee in Creswell was about $28,700, compared with $41,500 in Lane County and $49,500 in Oregon.

Commute patterns reveal the relationship between Creswell and the regional economic center in Eugene and Springfield, located approximately 10 miles to the north. Roughly 90% of workers living in Creswell work at a job located outside of Creswell, with 36% working in Eugene and 16% working in Springfield (Figure 2). Creswell has a larger than average percent of the population with an Associate’s Degree or some college (Figure 3).

\[\text{Figure 1. Jobs by Sector in Creswell, 2016}\]

\[\text{Source: Oregon Employment Department, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages}\]

\[^1\] Creswell’s 2019 draft EOA evaluates economic conditions based on Census data to help inform policy decisions around economic development and to ensure that the City of Creswell complies with statewide planning Goal 9 (economy) and Oregon Administrative Rule 660-009.

\[^2\] Covered employment is employment covered by unemployment insurance. Covered employment does not include all workers in an economy. Most notably, covered employment does not include sole proprietors.
COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES

- **Location**—Creswell enjoys strong ties to Eugene, but it is far enough from Eugene to have its own identity (and not as far as Cottage Grove).
  - Opportunity to take advantage of Eugene’s economy and overspill of growth
  - Proximity to more affordable workforce housing down Highway 99 S
  - Proximity to skill development and support for local business/entrepreneurs (e.g. Lane Community College Small Business Development Center, RAIN, Chamber of Commerce)
  - Access to labor force; proximity to local schools with variety of college-level educational opportunities
  - Access to materials in every direction, by every mode (ship, train, truck, plane) – difficult to get in and out of Eugene; Creswell has advantage there
- Proximity to bigger cities (e.g. Seattle and San Francisco within 500 miles)
- Access to materials in every direction, by every mode
- Willamette Valley a strong growing region for lots of products – can source ingredients “down the street”
- Less traffic (quicker to get from Creswell to Autzen Stadium than some places in Eugene-Springfield trying to navigate traffic)
- Proximity to covered bridges, recreational opportunities – right in the middle of Lane County

- **Business-Friendly**—Creswell is a more business friendly environment compared with Eugene-Springfield, where potential regulations can inhibit building. City staff are engaged and proactive.

- **Creswell Airport**—The airport serves the entire I-5 corridor and brings in over $1 million per year into the community and local economy, filling a niche that is needed regionally and providing tie-in to the community that most little towns do not have.

- **Lower Cost**—It is less expensive for a business to operate in Creswell (e.g., less expensive rental commercial space). The advantage of being in Creswell is that you get the benefits of Eugene at a better price point. Creswell also has a lower cost of living.

- **Entrepreneurial Spirit**—Creswell has a strong small business community and many young entrepreneurs who care about the community and support each other.

- **Creswell’s Size**—Creswell is small enough that individuals and businesses can have major impact towards progress.
  - Creswell staff are approachable, reachable, and reactive to direction
  - Cusp of growth with location, accessibility of greater metro area, opportunity to draw employees from metro area
  - Small town pride – comradery pays dividends; Creswellians come out to support local business (e.g. during the pandemic)

- **Broadband Development**—Though Creswell does not have the internet infrastructure it needs, Creswell is part of an extraordinary consortium of municipalities with a shared interest in fiber assets to leverage for public and economic development purposes. Creswell received funding from the stimulus to extend broadband to the east side and will be running cable across the freeway. Most importantly, Creswell has a strong private Internet Service Provision partner, with a good track record for improving connectivity in rural cities.

- **Water**—Water plant and water system is a strength. Water is safe to drink. State of the art water plant still in its prime. Just received Outstanding Performer for plant and system from Oregon Health Department survey. Recently received 2nd in the state in best tasting water
competition. Quality does cycle through the year (temperature) but finished water is exceptional/high quality.

COMPETITIVE DISADVANTAGES

- **East/West Connectivity**—I-5 and the railroad bisect the community, including economic centers.

- **Wastewater Challenges**—The current sewer treatment plant is not equal to accommodate the amount of growth projected in the next 20 years; the City has outgrown the system. Ownership dynamics currently inhibit development on the east side and at the airport.

- **Transportation Challenges**—The interchange of Oregon Avenue and the Railroad is a safety issue and a barrier to transportation access. Speeds and times of public transit may not be conducive to economic development. Creswell is not part of the Metropolitan Planning Organization and does not have access to that funding stream.

- **Creswell’s Size**—Though Creswell’s size can be a competitive advantage, there are also some challenges associated with being a smaller community:
  - Creswell lacks some essential services/amenities (e.g. grocery store)
  - Some business types struggle to stay in Creswell due to proximity to Eugene
  - Creswell does not have a local police force, which presents safety/security concerns
  - Less capacity in city government and Creswell-specific support organizations that work in tandem with city government
  - Creswell does not qualify as a Rural Enterprise Tax Zone because it’s in Lane County, which is not considered “rural” in important characterization
  - Experienced developers, investors in short supply (especially on the residential side)

Summary of National, State, and Regional Trends

*This section presents a summary of the implications of national, state, and regional economic trends on economic growth in Creswell derived from the 2019 EOA.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National, State, and Regional Economic Trends</th>
<th>Implications for Economic Growth in Creswell</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Moderate growth rates and recovery from the 2009 national recession</strong></td>
<td>The Oregon Employment Department forecasts that employment in Lane County will grow by about 11% from 2017 to 2027.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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3 NOTE: These trends were identified prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the long-term implications of which on the Creswell economy are still unclear and evolving.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National, State, and Regional Economic Trends</th>
<th>Implications for Economic Growth in Creswell</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Growth of service-oriented sectors</strong></td>
<td>The Oregon Employment Department forecasts that the sectors likely to have the most employment growth in Lane County over the 2017 to 2027 period are: Construction, Private Educational and Health Services, Professional and Business Services, and Leisure and Hospitality. These sectors represent employment opportunities for Creswell.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Importance of small businesses in Oregon’s economy</strong></td>
<td>The average size of privately-owned businesses in Creswell is 6.3 employees per business. All 150 privately owned businesses in Creswell have fewer than 100 employees. Businesses with 19 or fewer employees account for roughly 56% of private employment in Creswell. Growth of small businesses presents opportunities for economic growth in Creswell.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Availability of trained and skilled labor</strong></td>
<td>About 80% of workers at businesses located in Creswell lived in Lane County, and 11% lived within Creswell city limits. Firms in Creswell attracted workers from the Eugene-Springfield Region. Creswell’s residents were more likely to have completed some college or earned an Associate’s degree (51%) relative to the State average (35%).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aging of the population</strong></td>
<td>Firms in Creswell will need to replace workers as they retire. Demand for replacement workers may outpace job growth in Creswell, consistent with State trends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Increases in energy prices</strong></td>
<td>Over the long-term, if energy prices increase, these higher prices will likely affect the mode of commuting before affecting workers’ willingness to commute. Very large increases in energy prices may affect workers’ willingness to commute, especially workers living the furthest from Creswell or workers with lower paying jobs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comparatively low wages</strong></td>
<td>Average wages in Creswell are lower than Lane County and Oregon. This difference is likely due to the larger share of lower-paying service sector jobs in Creswell, such as retail trade, accommodation and food services, and health care and social assistance, compared to Lane County. Businesses in Creswell may have difficulty attracting workers from across the Eugene-Springfield region, unless wages increase or the mix of businesses in Creswell expands to include higher-wage jobs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education as a determinant of wages</strong></td>
<td>Creswell’s residents were more likely to have completed some college or hold an Associate’s degree compared to Lane County and Oregon residents as a whole. Businesses that want to locate in Creswell can draw from the labor pool of the higher-educated populations of workers living in Lane County.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Importance of high-quality natural resources</strong></td>
<td>The region’s high quality natural resources present economic growth opportunities for Creswell, ranging from agriculture and wineries to amenities that attract visitors and contribute to the region’s high quality of life.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
COVID-19 Pandemic and Recent Economic Trends

The long-term economic and social impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic are evolving and may not be clear for many years. This section provides a snapshot of the short-term impacts to the regional economy from the Oregon Employment Department, including initial recovery immediately following the initial effects.

The COVID-19 pandemic and resulting stay-at-home orders had an immediate impact on Creswell’s economy in 2020. The unemployment rate jumped from 5% in March 2020 to 13% in April 2020; unemployment remained at or above 10% through July 2020 and had dropped to near pre-pandemic levels (6%), by May 2021. A similar trend occurred across Lane County, with unemployment peaking at 14% in April 2020 and falling to 6% as of May 2021. Across Oregon, low wage workers suffered the most job loss (Figure 4).

Due to an increase in vaccination rates, decline in COVID-19 cases, and easing of COVID-related restrictions, the U.S. economy has begun a period of recovery and job growth. By 2021, rural areas appear to be leading the economic recovery in Oregon.

Figure 4. Job Loss by Recession in Oregon

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4 Industry Average Wage, change from pre-recession peak to trough
Creswell’s Economic Development Strategic Plan

Creswell’s Core Values

Creswell Economic Vision

Livability & Quality of Life

Sustainable

Competitive

Opportunity

Entrepreneurial

Creswell’s Economic Development Vision

*Creswell has a competitive and self-sustaining economy, supports entrepreneurs, provides access to economic opportunity, creates an environment for businesses to be successful, and encourages a high quality of life for residents.*
GOAL 1 | ECONOMIC RESILIENCE

Creswell has a resilient, diverse, self-sustaining local economy that supports local businesses and enables residents to achieve a quality of life.

Objective 1.1: Actively encourage and attract family-wage jobs for the market as a whole.

- Identify, incorporate, and manage support for employers and industries that are community partners that offer high quality employment with living wage, flexibility, and benefits to residents; have good working relationships with City government; and are integrated into the community.
- Support landowners by marketing the city’s available employment land to industries/investors best able to provide living wage employment opportunities.

Objective 1.2: Encourage industry sectors that play to Creswell’s strengths and contribute to the diversity of Creswell’s economy.

- Prioritize business recruitment within Airport dependent sectors (e.g. Avionics, flight training, aircraft innovation, etc.).
- Inventory available shovel-ready sites and market them on Oregon Prospector and LoopNet.

GOAL 2 | BUSINESS CLIMATE

Creswell’s business climate attracts new businesses and enables existing businesses to grow, thrive, and remain in Creswell through a “get to yes” approach.

Objective 2.1: Become an active economic development partner that is efficient, proactive, accessible, and easy to work with.

- Proactively work to identify a 20-year supply of employment lands and target initiatives to increase market-ready certified sites.
• Actively build relationships and trust with Creswell’s business community. Schedule regular meetings with top employers and provide timely follow-up on identified needs and concerns.

• Evaluate and refine land use and permitting processes, where needed, to increase efficiencies and predictability and ensure a user-friendly experience.

• Create and manage a business retention and expansion program.

• Budget prepared by Staff supports economic development priorities.

Objective 2.2: Connect small businesses with information and resources to help them endure tough initial and ongoing cycles.

• Maintain a close partnership with Oregon RAIN.

• Disseminate and maintain information, technical assistance, programs, initiatives, and incentives that support small business growth and operations.

• Encourage organization/integration of business owners to form a resilient core for the local business community.

GOAL 3 | ENTREPRENEURSHIP & WORKFORCE

*Creswell supports local entrepreneurs to encourage home-grown businesses and provides resources to help meet their needs as they grow.*

Objective 3.1: Support and encourage the next generation of entrepreneurs to help young people see a future in Creswell.

• Facilitate connection between RAIN and local entrepreneurs.

• Support innovative curriculum, distinctive programming, community-based initiatives, and mentorship opportunities in Creswell schools through staff time, access to City facilities/assets, or funding assistance.
GOAL 4 | LEVERAGE ASSETS & OPPORTUNITIES

*Creswell builds on existing assets and remains nimble enough to seize new economic opportunities that arise.*

**Objective 4.1:** Showcase Creswell’s strength as a regional hub for entrepreneurship and innovation.

- Establish a clearer brand for Creswell, conveying its values and aspirations, telling its story and piquing curiosity. This could include a tagline such as “Creswell, Open for (Your) Business.”

GOAL 5 | VIBRANT DOWNTOWN

*Creswell has an attractive, human-centered, walkable downtown that is the economic and cultural center of the community and a draw for visitors.*

**Objective 5.1:** Consider tools available for catalytic outcomes to transform downtown and achieve the vision established in the Downtown Plan.

- Improve downtown wayfinding/signage (e.g., key destinations and resources, digital event sign).
- Expand pedestrian-friendly amenities in Downtown, encouraging residents and visitors to get out of their cars and walk, including during the evening hours.
- Identify opportunities for public/private partnership related to beautification.

**Objective 5.2:** Promote a mix of commercial and residential uses oriented to pedestrians.

- Encourage infill development of Downtown properties by providing and maintaining accessible parking, parks, and other gathering spaces.
- Promote development of a mix of retail, service, office, civic and residential uses that benefit from and enhance the Downtown pedestrian-oriented environment.
GOAL 6 | INFRASTRUCTURE & LAND USE

Creswell’s infrastructure and land use framework facilitate economic development and do not inhibit it.

Objective 6.1: Strengthen responsiveness to timing-sensitive opportunities.

- Identify a clear staff lead for economic development opportunities and a checklist for inquiries to ensure thorough evaluation and response to opportunities.
- Facilitate access to “immediate opportunity” funding provided by State agencies (ODOT, Business Oregon).
- Promote opportunities to space out payments for typical development costs assessed by the city.

Objective 6.2: Address barriers to infrastructure connectivity.

- Prioritize opportunities to make progress on infrastructure related to wastewater capacity and the airport.
- Develop and structure opportunities to facilitate developers receiving eligible system development credits for infrastructure improvements that have community-wide benefit.
- Use Urban Renewal financing to address identified infrastructure deficiencies in the network.

Objective 6.3: Use finite employment lands within Creswell to their full potential.

- Request and use the analysis from Creswell’s Economic Opportunities Analysis to better understand existing employment land potential to map better land use strategies.
- Maintain and/or establish relationships with owners and jointly define and reduce barriers to achieving a property’s highest and best use.
- Activate employment lands and remedy deficiencies of properties identified within the Urban Renewal district to make them shovel ready and responsive to economic development interests.
**Objective 6.4:** Prioritize and pursue actions that increase the availability and affordability of high-speed internet in Creswell.

- Identify and take advantage of existing broadband resources (e.g., Regional Fiber Consortium fiber) to establish leverage with private providers/partners.
- Identify opportunities to support geographic reach/coverage to expand access to high-performance broadband by existing and potential business users, employers, and employment lands.
- Include broadband service expansion in roadway modernization projects.