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Purpose

This summary presents an overview of the stakeholder outreach strategy for Creswell’s Economic Development Strategic Plan, presents key themes distilled from stakeholder engagements, and provides detailed notes from each discussion for additional context.

Introduction

The stakeholder outreach strategy for Creswell’s Economic Development Strategic Plan consists of stakeholder focus groups, interviews, and a public open house which will occur later in the plan development process and will be summarized separately. The purpose of these outreach activities 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; develop a list of Creswell’s competitive advantages and disadvantages that make it more or less attractive as a place to do business; and learn from the examples of peer communities with similar economic contexts, or otherwise of interest.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, all engagements were held remotely via Zoom.

Focus Groups

Seven focus groups were conducted. Each focus group addressed a distinct topic:

- 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 to provide additional insight into successes and challenges relating to economic development efforts:

- City of Estacada
- City of Independence
- City of Madras
- City of Sisters
Public Open House
The public open house is tentatively scheduled for early 2023. A summary of that engagement will be added to this summary following the event.

Participants List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTICIPANT NAME</th>
<th>AFFILIATION</th>
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<td>JAMES GILROY</td>
<td>Banner Bank Branch Manager, Creswell and Cottage Grove</td>
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<td>Wise Woman Herbals</td>
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Key Themes

Focus Groups
The following SWOT summary list reflects some of the key themes that were brought up by participants in the seven focus group discussions. More detailed responses from each individual focus group can be found in the Detailed Focus Group Notes section below.

Strengths
- Location, location, location
  - Benefits of proximity to metro area but still being a small town
  - Proximity to Eugene and metro area, UO, southern region
  - Access to I-5, Highway 99 corridor and amenities
  - Autonomous – Have a Main street and community feel but still close to larger population
  - Access to markets, outlet for products, processors for local producers
  - Access to wine country, covered bridges
- Small town community feel – offer something Eugene-Springfield cannot
- Loyal citizens
  - Strong community support for local businesses, especially during COVID
  - Excitement/pride around agriculture
- City government is efficient, accessible, easy to work with
  - Awesome staff
  - Small government structure
  - Helpful, accessible to businesses (bigger fish in small pond)
  - Proactive with business
  - Business friendly environment
- Strong small businesses in community, entrepreneurial strength
  - Support for small businesses
  - Mentors for other small businesses/entrepreneurs
  - Many young entrepreneurs who care about the community, know and support each other
- Housing is cheaper
- Destination attractions and local gems
  - Airport
  - Championship-level golf course
  - Creswell Bakery
  - Lodging, places to eat
- Downtown has a lot of potential – some good businesses and opportunity for more
Weaknesses

- Location a weakness as well as a strength – hard to compete with bigger markets
- Lack of real estate & developable land limits growth
  - Lack of large parcels – what exists is wet or constrained by ownership dynamics
  - Not enough opportunities to accommodate needs of growing businesses
- East-west divide
  - Rail traffic, I-5 inhibit connectivity
  - Lack of ability to develop on east side of freeway (lack of infrastructure)
- Chamber of Commerce could be stronger
- Creswell as a commuter/bedroom community
  - People spend their $ before coming home
  - Lack of jobs in town
- Infrastructure limits development, especially on east side
  - Internet connectivity
  - Consistent energy (outages)
  - Wastewater challenges
  - Lack of infrastructure at the airport impedes activities that could occur there
- Lack of branding/storytelling
  - Not a big external draw to Creswell
  - Lack of visibility/web presence of local businesses
- Resource limitations (small town)
- Lack of clear center in Creswell
- “Drive-by” community
- Intro to Creswell right off I-5 is highway commercial/truck stops
- Lack key services/amenities needed to attract more business, fulfill needs of workforce (no grocery store)
- Political challenges – divisiveness
- Vibe of downtown – something missing that gives people a reason to park, get out, and walk around

Opportunities

- Surrounded by beautiful farmland – opportunity for farm to table, local flavors, agricultural processing
  - Local market/vendors/products
  - Value-added meat processing facility to address supply chain bottleneck, support farmers and homesteaders
  - Permanent infrastructure for farmer’s market
  - Food and beverage works as an alternative to wood industry
  - Incubator spaces for food and beverage (like Bohemia Food Hub in Cottage Grove)
- Leverage outdoor recreation, culinary food trails, arts/culture/heritage – products in these areas supported at state and regional level
• Opportunities around tourism (e.g. golf, river, access to outdoors, wine country, covered bridges, airport)
• Fiber and tech industry could grow
• Medicine and bio-med/tech
• People moving to smaller towns, Creswell projected to grow
  o COVID
  o Tight housing markets in other cities
  o Livability, affordability
• Enhancement of downtown
  o Build on successful businesses (e.g. Creswell Bakery)
  o Concentration of businesses downtown to draw people
  o Mixed use, residential converting to commercial – catalytic
  o Livability
• Stronger Chamber of Commerce
• Marketing Creswell and its businesses
• More support for entrepreneurs needing support/incubation
  o Provide spaces for entrepreneurs and businesses to grow so they can stay in Creswell
  o Mentorship
  o Focus on Creswell as a good place for entrepreneurs, starting business
• Unique opportunities relating to COVID
  o Opened opportunity for entrepreneurship
  o Elevated importance of local food systems
• Integrate locals into local workforce
  o Avoid brain drain, keep hometown talent at home
  o Partner with schools to provide mentorship opportunities, career pathways – give students the opportunity to think about their future in their hometown
  o Teach students how to start businesses
• Embrace bedroom community dynamic, connection to Eugene-Springfield
  o Regional economy/workforce – Creswell can offer people a great place to live and raise their family while they work somewhere else or from home
  o Livability, affordability but still access to higher wage jobs in the metro area
  o Synergies with other metro satellite communities
  o Other small communities have had success focusing on housing
• Capture overflow from Eugene (e.g. hospitality events, people looking for housing)
• Provide more developable land (e.g. Bald Knob)
• Airport represents big potential/opportunity – needs infrastructure
• Infrastructure bill could present significant opportunities to fulfill infrastructure needs
  o Now is the time to communicate needs with legislators
  o Make sure elected officials and Regional Solutions Team know priority projects
Threats

- Ideological division/sensitivity can make or break a business (risk of alienating customers)
- Lack of real estate
- Local money spent elsewhere (in Eugene/Springfield)
- Natural hazards – climate change, drought, wildfire
- Safety/security concerns (no local police)
- Inconsistency in business traffic
- Infrastructure is expensive and there’s not a lot of state or federal funding (but more important than incentives)
- More attractive jobs (wages/pay) in more dense areas (metro)
- Changes in federal regulation (e.g. FEMA floodplain, environmental regulations)
- Smaller cities particularly vulnerable to economic downturns
- Sewer challenges with privately held entity on east side – tension with DEQ, DEQ won’t allow expansion/extension until resolved.
- Transportation challenges beyond Creswell’s control (e.g. challenges with rail, difficult/unsafe intersections, access to businesses limited by ODOT)
- Housing crisis – not enough available land to meet Creswell housing needs

Competitive Advantages

- Location – strong tie to Eugene, but far enough from Eugene to have 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 I-5
  - Proximity bigger cities (e.g. Seattle and San Francisco within 500 miles)
  - Access to materials in every direction, by every mode*
  - Direct proximity to freeway, rail
  - 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)

- Entrepreneurial spirit
- Creswell a more business friendly environment
- Lower cost of living, doing business in Creswell
Competitive Disadvantages

- I-5 bisecting community, including economic centers*
- Water issues – perception that water is not safe to drink
- Safety/security concerns (no local police)
- Not part of MPO (no access to funding stream)*
- Lack of downtown draw
- Lack of some essential services/amenities (e.g. grocery store)
- Infrastructure shortcomings at airport

Interviews

The following themes arose from the four interviews with peer agencies. Detailed notes from each of those discussions can be found in the Detailed Interview Notes section below.

- **Having a community-defined vision is a useful tool.**
  - Present to agencies/foundations/partners that can provide funding or capacity – shows that everyone is on the same page, now just need support to get it done
  - Community engagement/buy-in – helpful to be able to point to a plan to respond to questions or pushback

- **Getting everyone swimming in the same direction/on the same page is key.**
  - Leadership and community have ownership over implementation steps
  - Also helps to have consistency in leadership/local champions

- **Getting SOMETHING done is important.**
  - Even small wins gain momentum – little projects along the way add up over time
  - Need to actually follow through on the work – start moving forward, put resources behind it and make sure staff is completing the work under deadline
  - If projects are too nebulous or take too long, it can be hard to sustain high level of energy and enthusiasm – might lose champions

- **Building relationships with the local business community is important.**
  - Meet with businesses, understand their needs, find state grants to help them
  - “Get to yes” approach – build trust in business community that you want to work with them

- **The City should be ready to take some risks.**
  - City can be creative & entrepreneurial, active in implementing projects
  - Show business community that City is putting skin in the game

- **Good timing has a lot to do with success.**
  - Where the community is, who’s championing it, how it aligns with everything else
City should be nimble and ready to capitalize on unexpected opportunities
Leverage success into additional success

**Work with your assets and build on what you have.**
- Don’t take small ones for granted (e.g. businesses that could grow)
- Smaller communities offer quality of life benefits over bigger cities
- People leaving major metro areas because of COVID – home in on the fact that you can have urban rural lifestyle in communities like Creswell

**Downtown revitalization and support for businesses are both important.**
- Create appearance that it’s a nice community and also work on systemic changes to help out new and existing businesses
- URA & Main Street Program have proven effective tools in many peer communities.
- Livability vs. incentives

**Economic development is one of many priorities.**
- May be a priority that’s second to (or part of) others like livability, parks, transportation, essential infrastructure, public safety, tourism
- Economic development vision is most effective when it follows a broader, balanced community vision.

**Strong partnerships are important.**
- Increase City capacity to implement the vision
- Find the right partners (public and private) aligned with goals.
Detailed Focus Group Notes

Developers/Builders/Lenders

Questions

1. What do you think are Creswell’s strengths when it comes to economic development? (Things that are internal/subject to “Creswell’s” control and increase Creswell’s capability to achieve desired economic outcomes)

2. What are Creswell’s weaknesses? (Things that are internal/subject to “Creswell’s” control and decrease Creswell’s capability to achieve desired economic outcomes)

3. What opportunities could Creswell take advantage of? (Things that are external – Creswell does not have control, e.g. market forces, or things that expand or develop new possibilities)

4. What threatens Creswell’s economic development? (Things that are external/not under Creswell’s control, e.g. economic downturns)

5. What are Creswell’s competitive advantages? (Note that competitive advantages are things that set a community apart from other nearby communities as a good place to do business, e.g. availability of skilled labor force, proximity to major transportation routes, broadband access, quality of infrastructure)

6. What are Creswell’s competitive disadvantages? (Note that competitive disadvantages are things make a business less likely to locate in a community, e.g. lack of workforce housing, lack of skilled labor force, lack of quality infrastructure)

7. How can the City encourage additional commercial and industrial development?

8. What are the key barriers to commercial and industrial development in Creswell?

9. Is there anything else you’d like to add?

SWOT Analysis Results

Strengths

- Creswell’s principal strength is that it is not Eugene
  - Access to I-5 & Willamette Valley like Eugene
  - Less expensive
  - Less bureaucracy
  - Not suburban – distinct city, has sophistication
  - Creswell government works extremely well and is very efficient
- Accessibility to Metro Area
Access to population base
○ Business opportunities to meet base’s service needs

- One of the fastest growing cities in Lane County for a long time
- Airport is stunning – ownership and tie-in to community that most little towns don’t have
- Variety of land types – residential to support industrial and commercial available for future growth
- Autonomous – its own main street & community feel
  ○ People are fiercely loyal – if the amenities are here, they’ll patronize
  ○ Main street, community events, library, schools, businesses contribute to community feel
  ○ Has its own feel, but close to larger population
- Amenities associated with being right on I-5
- Physical attributes
  ○ Direct I-5 access
  ○ Top-notch golf course
  ○ River running through
  ○ 10 minutes from Eugene, but not Eugene – close but has the ability to differentiate (similar to Springfield and Coburg); ability to take benefits of larger city and distance from negative
- Small Government structure
- LTD service extends to Creswell
- Closer than other communities (e.g. Cottage Grove)

Additional Comments from City Staff:
- Open mindedness to certain kinds of development
- Opportunity here (space, building types, relationships)
- Airport brings in over $1 million/year into community & local economy (gas, food, hotels, etc.) – recreation (sky diving, flight lessons), maintenance, serves entire I-5 corridor, tourism; fills a niche that is needed regionally
- Access to labor force; local schools

Weaknesses
- Industrial / commercial access – big one!
- Schools – people won’t locate until the schools rank higher; people will locate to other communities (Pleasant Hill, Coburg) over Creswell
- Rail traffic inhibits connectivity; no major company will locate on the opposite side until that’s dealt with
- Capability to do things on their own is limited; partnerships necessary; not a self-contained community that can do everything themselves (not enough staff or funding to pay for it)
  ○ Have to be realistic about what a community of this size can accomplish
  ○ Don’t have own police department
• Communicating the City’s overall vision statement might be a challenge
• Chamber of Commerce could be stronger
• Political instability (mayor turnover) – lack of confidence in City Hall
• Lack of jobs in town – hard to sustain certain business types when residents work out of town in Metro Area
  ○ People who work in Eugene/Springfield do their shopping there before coming home
  ○ Stronger job base would translate to more sustainable amenities
• Infrastructure on east side of the freeway – lack of ability to develop on east side
• Lack of industrial or commercial real estate (hard at Creswell’s size – can’t do much about it)
  ○ Cottage Grove has an industrial park outside of main area of town where it’s possible to put in development that is not the most attractive – Creswell does not really have that area; needs an area for such economic development opportunities; current options available present challenging land use compatibility
• Lack of/opportunity for City police force

Additional Comments from City Staff:
• Lack of infrastructure on the east side – fight it continually at Airport, but just a stop gap
  ○ Funding currently available would not connect airport to City services (Airport still on septic/well)
  ○ Undermines Airport vision – inhibits business interest in Airport

Opportunities
• Shopping closer to home has increased – box stores not the future?
  ○ Strong ability to develop small local market – local vendors/products
  ○ Surrounded by beautiful farmland – farm to table
• Development of local flavors and breweries (as other communities have encouraged)
  ○ Smaller local restaurants
• Marketing campaign – “Come join us!” (like a marketing campaign from the 80s – billboards in San Francisco with a picture of a forest to encourage people to come to Oregon: “Things look different here. Come join us”)
  ○ People have already left Eugene/Springfield because of housing market – housing is a challenge for everyone, regardless of socioeconomic background
  ○ Creswell could partner with region to solve that issue – with opportunity for Creswell Economic Development
• Provide housing for teachers and school staff so that they’ll stay – hang onto best resources
• Help improve beautification of City +1
  ○ A lot of concrete – could be more tree lined streets, ambience
  ○ If entire city had a more consistently better appearance, it could improve the overall economic climate – Main Street had success with such an effort (smaller investment can make a big difference, e.g. repainting storefronts)
• Opportunities to market what Creswell has
• Connecting Eugene Ridgeline Trail to Creswell (Fox Hollow); different demographics may be attracted by such an amenity (e.g. cyclists who already ride bikes around Spencer Butte)
• Peer communities provide examples for fun and vibrant downtown (Coburg, Sisters, Monroe) – getting a look and buy-in, everyone pulling in the same direction
• Lack of opportunity for City police force
• Developing infrastructure around I-5 corridor
• Chamber can be helpful to success of future growth – much more focused
• Proximity and availability advantages (overspill benefit from Eugene)
• Marketing campaign with a buzz term that sets Creswell apart from other communities, e.g. “Entrepreneurial Capital of Willamette Valley” or “Startup Center of Central Oregon” +1
• Unified marketing/branding
• High density mixed use on the east side of town – refinement plan? Allowance for separation of gathering place, community center
• Shared schools (other shared dynamics)

Additional Comments from City Staff:
• Interstate corridor
• Opportunities to collaborate with other jurisdictions with similar geographic features (e.g. bike trails, river) – attracting talent
  o Some associated challenges (e.g. many connections are state-owned roads)
• Recent success/history with entrepreneurship – starting place/home base for great new ideas but have not been able to keep or help them grow; big opportunity – consider Creswell the startup capital of Lane County?
• Fiber on east side
• Urban Renewal area provides potential opportunities (between 99 and I-5) – funding for improvements

**Threats**
• Railroad – how do we deal with trains passing through town? Very expensive +1
• Lack of real estate (available and appropriately zoned)
• Ideological division (sensitivity around some political issues) – Creswell in a unique place of tension between some of these ideologies
• 10 mins from Eugene but not Eugene (this is both an opportunity & a threat)

Additional Comments from City Staff:
• Re: lack of real estate – inability to grow at rate that market demands (this is a challenge across Oregon)
• Not a member of the MPO (just outside boundary) – missing out on funds; peer communities are able to grow with funding
• Two sides of Creswell (newer development in the East and older development in the West) –
how do we unite them? Will solve itself over time? Perpetuating divide between younger and older families as well as newer and more established?

Competitive Advantages and Disadvantages

Advantages

- Close to more affordable workforce housing down Hwy 99 S (Cottage Grove)
- Opportunities for skill development and support for local businesses/entrepreneurs – Lane Community College Small Business Development Center, RAIN, Chamber of Commerce
- Unique location – far enough away from Eugene, but not as far away as Cottage Grove; has an angle in proximity; can take advantage of Eugene’s economy and overspill of growth; strong tie to Eugene

Additional Comments from City Staff:

- Access to labor force; proximity to local schools with variety of college-level educational opportunities
- Creswell has a Catalyst in Community and Entrepreneur in Community with RAIN who assist small businesses free of charge with extensive 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

Disadvantages

None

Additional Comments from City Staff:

- I-5 bisecting community, including economic centers

Other/Additional Insights

None

Local Production/Agriculture

Questions

1. What do you think are Creswell’s strengths when it comes to economic development? (Things that are internal/subject to “Creswell’s” control and increase Creswell’s capability to achieve desired economic outcomes)

2. What are Creswell’s weaknesses? (Things that are internal/subject to “Creswell’s” control and decrease Creswell’s capability to achieve desired economic outcomes)
3. What opportunities could Creswell take advantage of? *(Things that are external – Creswell does not have control, e.g. market forces, or things that expand or develop new possibilities)*

4. What threatens Creswell’s economic development? *(Things that are external/not under Creswell’s control, e.g. economic downturns)*

5. What are Creswell’s competitive advantages? *(Note that competitive advantages are things that set a community apart from other nearby communities as a good place to do business, e.g. availability of skilled labor force, proximity to major transportation routes, broadband access, quality of infrastructure)*

6. What are Creswell’s competitive disadvantages? *(Note that competitive disadvantages are things that make a business less likely to locate in a community, e.g. lack of workforce housing, lack of skilled labor force, lack of quality infrastructure)*

7. What specific challenges do local producers and others in the agriculture industry face in Creswell?

8. Do local producers have what they need to grow? How can the City support local producers?

   How can Creswell better support local production/agriculture that takes place beyond the City’s boundaries?

   Are there examples of facilities in other towns that create a “value chain” or support businesses through value-added opportunities (such as packaging, production, or processing of agricultural products)?

9. Is there anything else you’d like to add?

**SWOT Analysis Results**

**Strengths**

- In the last ten years City has improved upon their expectations for themselves; recognizing/learning weaknesses and improving upon them
- City Hall good at their jobs/helpful
- Proximity to Eugene has been critical for farming business to access resources needed to take a product from the field and sell it into market
  - A convenient outlet for products; rely heavily on Lane County Farmers Market
  - Processors in relatively close proximity (e.g. meat processing, hazelnut roaster)
  - Any business in Creswell can do business with a business in Eugene with little or no friction
- Proximity to I-5 corridor for business that deals with fresh plants; quick processing is crucial – easy delivery from farmers
• Strong partnerships with farmers in area (Willamette Valley – Southern OR, 50 miles east or west of I-5 corridor)
• Excitement in community around agriculture
  o Enthusiasm about what we have been doing as a farm; stoked that we are doing something different
  o Media attention (e.g. newspaper doing an in-depth story)
  o Elementary school involvement/school trips (pre-COVID)
• Deep connection to history of/connection to agriculture; pride around agriculture demonstrated through patronage
• Creswell a more business friendly environment and still economical (vs. Eugene/Springfield – available to build but potential regs in Metro area resulted in a conclusion to stay in Creswell)
• Businesses get attention & City staff are very accessible (bigger fish in small pond); not so in a bigger city like Eugene/Springfield
• There are businesses here to support. Easy (local market).
• Family farms

Weaknesses
• Proximity to Eugene – bedroom community
  o Tendency for less involvement & investment from folks who work in Eugene
  o Local money spent elsewhere – commuters spend money in Eugene/Springfield, not as much in Creswell
• Infrastructure
  o Issues with consistent energy – lots of outages, though City has done some work to help with redundancy and this may have improved?
  o Internet connectivity – issues with stable, reliable connectivity a major challenge; issue for business processes (e.g. customer service department, taking and processing orders, fulfillment) because of broadband shortcomings
• Delays with shipments becoming more of a challenge
• Lack of open office space, limited/no options – if you want business real estate, you have to build something; very expensive to build +2
  o Grocery in 2,400 sq. ft – do not have the choice to move; wouldn't enjoy doing it elsewhere & don’t want to have to
• Stock is old and hard to address needs with
• Local market has not been consistent
• Distance for processing that we require can be a bottleneck for the supply chain (USDA meat processing facility serves majority of southern Oregon and lots of Central Oregon, sausage processing in Cave Junction)
• USDA meat processing delay (the whole country is facing this right now) – have to be thoughtful about planning our production
• In between community sizes – inconsistency of business (patronage); hot & cold, not large enough to handle that fluctuation
• Young people not always seeing agriculture path as attractive or viable
• Challenge of being a smaller community – less capacity in city government and Creswell-specific support organizations that work in tandem with city government
• Lack of branding or storytelling – if Creswell doesn’t create its own story/control its own narrative, others will do it for them or else not think about them at all

Additional Comments from City Staff:
• Lack of commercial space at the airport also – need commercial space available for businesses we want

Opportunities
• Value-added meat processing facility that would support farmers and homesteaders/hobbyists; address supply chain bottleneck
• Support from local political delegation – what can these groups do?
  o Desire to help/support, both from state and local delegations, they just don’t know what is needed – a plan would allow better/cohesive messaging (e.g. Bald Knob plan, etc.)
  o Lobby to get the Rural Tax Incentive changed – Lane County is more nuanced than current classifications reflect
• Latent entrepreneurial opportunities; waiting for support/incubation
• How can we (Creswell) collaborate locally around food resiliency/security
• How can City support Producers through Climate change?
• How can we demonstrate (to youth) agriculture as a viable path forward for career path/lifestyle?
  o Business ownership/entrepreneurship are pathways to wealth
  o Think about connections, workforce development
• Responsiveness to preventative safety concerns
• City could be more involved with regional conversations to remain top of mind – given limited capacity of city government, could be a good use of time to get in the ear of/get more facetime with folks involved at the county level
• COVID has opened up opportunity for entrepreneurship – folks in the community with skills and passions and creative spirit who could probably be successful as entrepreneurs with adequate support
• COVID has elevated the importance of local food systems – it has proved that local food systems are important and also elevated consumer interest in them (a rise in people looking for local food and beverage products, restaurants, etc.)

Threats
• Local money spent elsewhere – commuters spend money in Eugene/Springfield, not as much in Creswell
• Delays with shipments (supply chain)
• Creswell does not qualify as a Rural Enterprise Tax Zone because it’s in Lane County, which is not considered “rural” in important characterization
• Inconsistency in business traffic – too small to manage that; strength of the businesses may not be sustainable
• No one at County working on food production opportunities – we are not food secure; no staff thinking about ag production and food security
• Drought – access to water for livestock, pasture
• Age of farmers – generational transition; land changing hands
• Large corporations, residents from other states with cash and ready to buy (e.g. Cannabis) – potential for farmland to be bought by people who don’t live in the community
• Municipal water quality
• Climate Change and wildfires
• Safety/security concerns – no local police
• COVID’s impact on workforce from employer side – people walking away from jobs a challenge for certain types of businesses to be successful in this environment (especially restaurants, service industry as a whole)

Competitive Advantages and Disadvantages

Advantages
• Entrepreneurial spirit and attention to reuse has led to creative reuse of what would otherwise be waste – 50-gallon barrel drums that are repurposed into rain barrels; synergy with other aligned local uses
• Creswell a more business friendly environment and still economical (vs. Eugene/Springfield – available to build but potential regs in Metro area resulted in a conclusion to stay in Creswell)
• Close to Eugene but less expensive for a business to operate in Creswell – advantage of being in Creswell is that you get the benefits of Eugene at a better price point
• Location
  o Proximity to Eugene
  o Less than 500 miles from both Seattle and the San Francisco Bay Area – huge from a logistics perspective for food manufacturing (500 miles is around the maximum distance a long haul trucker will go in a single day)
  o Creswell’s direct proximity to the freeway (right on I-5, don’t have to get over to it – time is money)
• Willamette Valley is a strong growing region for a lot of different products; many food companies and farms in close proximity – can source ingredients “down the street”
  o Lots of existing/generational knowledge at ag level and manufacturing level

Disadvantages
• Water issues – perception that water is not safe to drink; it is heavily regulated, but perception can be a problem
• Safety/security concerns – no local police
• Branding – would Creswell make it on a list of top 10 cities in Oregon to run a business? Probably not, but not because it’s not a good place to run a business – people just aren’t thinking about it

Other/Additional Insights

• Getting product to market is very difficult
• Being an outlet for many small businesses is difficult (approached a lot) – vision is to grow into larger space to be the hub for local farmers
  o There is a local need, a lot of time and money needs to be spent to correctly package/process products and farmers don’t always know
  o Can’t bring them all in at this point (not enough room on shelves)
  o Farmers want an outlet for their products to be seen
• Farmers work so hard and are undervalued – they have to be very efficient and specific with their time; if that time is spent on processing, packaging, and labeling, they need to know its going to come off the shelf so they can get what their time and product is worth
• I don’t farm, because it’s hard
• Hard to compete with large places (e.g. people will buy Foster Farms chicken vs local because it’s local) – huge commodity food system vs. local family farms
  o Difference between prices at farmers market vs. grocery is huge
  o Cost to label, package, get certifications to get into a grocery store (have to raise price to cover these costs, then can’t compete/people are less likely to buy)
• Producers are not always heard - related to because of significant responsibilities.
• Other facilities in other towns that create a “value chain” or support businesses through value-added opportunities:
  o Port Townsend, WA – many small sustainable farms in the community; thriving market; county has done some heavy lifting and provided leadership
  o Farmer needs to get something out of it to show up – they are isolated and busy, can be hard to convene with a shared purpose
• Running food or agriculture business is challenging no matter where you are
• Creswell Bakery a success story for Creswell – may have had resources/training/background that average food entrepreneur might not have, but every business like that that’s successful makes it easier for the next one
• Bohemia Food Hub in Cottage Grove as a powerful example/interesting case study of how the City can make a big difference when it becomes intentional in its support of a specific sector – City of Cottage Grove has become more aware of/aligned with existing efforts to strengthen food community in the past 3 years, and Bohemia has taken off as a result
  o Food people have understanding of food challenges and opportunities, but not how to navigate grant writing, federal/state processes to identify/go after funding opportunities
Folks working in economic development understand that even if they aren’t familiar with food systems

- Powerful team when paired up

Additional Comments from City Staff:
- Disconnect between product and market, City’s role in that relationship – space/relationships/carry the freight of organizing
- Marketing/Tourism? Maintain relationship, support, understanding for crucial role of agriculture.

Recruitment/Retention/Desired Industry Sectors

Questions

1. What do you think are Creswell’s strengths when it comes to economic development? (Things that are internal/subject to “Creswell’s” control and increase Creswell’s capability to achieve desired economic outcomes)

2. What are Creswell’s weaknesses? (Things that are internal/subject to “Creswell’s” control and decrease Creswell’s capability to achieve desired economic outcomes)

3. What opportunities could Creswell take advantage of? (Things that are external – Creswell does not have control, e.g. market forces, or things that expand or develop new possibilities)

4. What threatens Creswell’s economic development? (Things that are external/not under Creswell’s control, e.g. economic downturns)

5. What are Creswell’s competitive advantages? (Note that competitive advantages are things that set a community apart from other nearby communities as a good place to do business, e.g. availability of skilled labor force, proximity to major transportation routes, broadband access, quality of infrastructure)

6. What are Creswell’s competitive disadvantages? (Note that competitive disadvantages are things make a business less likely to locate in a community, e.g. lack of workforce housing, lack of skilled labor force, lack of quality infrastructure)

7. What are the primary industry types the City of Creswell should focus on attracting or retaining?

8. What can/should the City do to strengthen/encourage these local industries and clusters? (Note that a cluster is a concentration of related industries, e.g. forestry and wood products in Oregon, Wine production in the Willamette Valley, auto industry in Detroit, computer chip production in Silicon Valley, movie production in Hollywood)
SWOT Analysis Results

**Strengths**
- Location, Location, Location +2
  - Lots of opportunity on I-5 corridor
  - Rail
  - Airport
- Strong small businesses in community +1
  - Businesses feel well-supported by the community
  - Love being in community – want to invest, hire, employ
  - New investments (service station, housing)
- City Gov very proactive with business; business friendly processes
- Entrepreneurial strength
  - New economic environment – work from home for many jobs
  - Housing prices in Creswell give it a leg up – people no longer have to live where they work with remote work options; wealth brought in will be an economic driver for small communities
- Newer water facility
- Good existing businesses and support of small businesses are huge strengths
  - Ties to new ability to work from home – food and beverage/retail industries keep people who live here working here; inclined to buy locally after they get off work
  - Leverage & build on successful businesses already here (e.g. Creswell bakery and similar)

**Weaknesses**
- If it’s bad in Metro, it’s exacerbated in rural areas (e.g. access to childcare, transportation, access to education opportunities) – when easier areas are not well served, hard to serve daughter reaches; can feel insurmountable
- Resources (grant, etc.) can be hard to leverage in smaller areas – higher costs, more nuanced dynamics
- No strong brand to business community; not a big draw to City externally
- Resource limitations to bring in and support additional investments/businesses +1
  - Wastewater challenge historically (east side of freeway) is an example; was a weakness for developing land on that side of the freeway
  - Smaller rural communities in general don’t get the same kind of resources as metro areas
- Lack of clear center in Creswell – challenge to create cohesive definition of who you are as a community
Need to be livable to attract and retain individuals who are living/working at home; concentration of businesses would enhance local livability, make Creswell a desirable place to go out and spend money

Downtown vibe could be enhanced

- Split by I-5
- Transportation access (as part of broader rural issue) – speeds and times of public transit make it a challenging solution
- Availability of developable land

Additional Comments from City Staff:
- Creswell struggles to access federal and state funds for public transit and mobility in general
- Disconnect with community around efficiencies in travel options (e.g. van pooling and small redistributed on-demand services not not available)
- Per capita benefit for investment reduces attention to needs
- Wastewater limitation; amount of land available to develop limited by wastewater
- Great entrepreneurial spirit, but retention of businesses could be better

Opportunities
- Build on successful business (e.g. Creswell bakery a huge draw) +1
- Concentration of businesses would enhance downtown vibe
- Cottage Grove example of repurposing mixed use – Creswell could be stronger in this regard
- Access across I-5
- Huge family contingent in Creswell – no other community with higher number of kids in a school
  - Families in cohesive community present opportunities to address needs and wants; opportunity to gather feedback from community – what do they want?
  - Improve performance
  - Mentorship opportunities with successful businesses in the community for Sophomores/Juniors/Seniors – having relationships to connect with local business
  - Is there an opportunity to integrate locals into local workforce? Avoid brain drain, keep the hometown talent at home
    - What do we want to draw our kids back with/for
  - Give students opportunity to think about their future in their hometown – Creswell can be a thriving small community so that success isn’t just seen as growing up and leaving small town (common for small towns)
- Opportunities around fiber, publicly owned fiber center in Creswell
- No large Grocery anymore (Ray’s left) – could capture larger community
- Bald Knob site is a blank canvas/site readiness opportunity; needs work but unique – make it usable
- Exit interviews with companies that leave?
• Is Creswell a good place to START businesses? Focus on this?
  o Regional economy context – enough economic opportunity regionally so that people can choose to stay
  o Incubator spaces (maker spaces) – market test. Incubation cluster?
  o Build up mentorship network – mentors at all levels; peer leaders
• Workforce across County is an asset – Creswell can offer people a great place to live and raise their family while they work somewhere else or from home
  o Talk to local companies about having their workforce live and raise families and focus on developing assets required in Creswell (access to childcare, grocery store) to draw people to live there
• Vacant parcels can present unforeseen opportunities – be opportunistic; positive things can emerge from agility

Additional Comments from City Staff:
• Re: fiber – Creswell is part of the RFC; need to better understand and evaluate options for supporting/extend to more geographic areas
• Re: Bald Knob site – new owner, some concerns have been remedied; there are some other industrially/commercially zoned properties that are vacant
• Re: families – Creswell has the largest elementary school in Lane County
• Skilled workers (e.g. construction) leave town – opportunity to look at ways to keep them in town
• Re: I-5 division – lots of opportunities to think about how to allow people better access across the freeway, further development of east side of Creswell

Threats
• Other cities in the region may offer better deals
• Basic infrastructure is the most important thing that governments can do – roads, clean water, adequate, treat
  o Incentives matter less than quality infrastructure at a reasonable price (it’s very expensive)
  o Creswell is fairly low density – difficult to maintain infrastructure on a small tax base; inadequate resources to maintain existing much less expand
• Retention is threatened by more attractive jobs (wages/pay) in more dense areas (metro) – goes along with being rural
  o Living costs are low but people can still have a high wage job in the city – Creswell is so close that folks are maximizing benefits of both
• Climate Change will challenge water supply – how to keep up with demand and nuances of water rights
• Changes in environmental rules (e.g. Endangered Species Act, Floodplain)
• Smaller communities particularly vulnerable to economic downturns – need to figure out how to reduce impacts, improve resilience (larger cities to the north help – people continue
to be employed there and live here, but also a challenge to keeping stronger economy in local cities)

Additional Comments from City Staff:
- Need for coalition among smaller communities outside Metro area – no tie that binds other than sharing challenges (and sharing services with Cottage Grove); opportunity to develop organization structures that help us navigate challenges together
- Need external resources for Creswell appropriate development

Competitive Advantages and Disadvantages

Advantages
- Lower cost of living
- Lower rental commercial space
- Creswell is part of Metro area (close to Eugene-Springfield and UO, LCC)

Disadvantages
None

Additional Comments from City Staff:
- Not in the MPO. No access to that funding stream
- Experienced developers, investors in short supply (especially on the residential side)

Other/Additional Insights

Primary Industry Types
- Food and beverage
  - Bohemia food hub – opportunity to capture businesses that come out of there (spillover benefit for Creswell)?
  - Low barrier
  - Good regional/state reputation for food items
- Fiber and Tech (Information Services/Manufacture?)
  - Industry that could grow; backbone infrastructure is there
  - Supporting infrastructure/services necessary, amenities
- Rail supported industries +1
  - E.g. Pac-Tech expanded to Cottage Grove because of rail access
  - Could find a unique fit – never know; important to remain flexible
- Agricultural processing
  - Surrounded by ag land (cattle, seed, hazelnut trees)
  - Capture local needs for processing, etc.
- Recreation
Hobby airport – opportunities to capture this more fully, make Creswell a destination stop (e.g. fly in to play golf at Emerald valley?)
Other ways to cluster benefits from unique airport and golf course +1

- Medicine and bio-med/tech?
  - Knight Campus – focus on bioscience industry application/commercialize bioscience research coming out of the university
  - Small manufacturing for a place like Creswell?
- Broad collection of manufacturing types in the region (under the radar) - advanced manufacturing. Versatile options? Rail line?

Additional Comments from City Staff:
- Downtown storefront opportunities, downtown commercial zone
- Childcare – supporting the significant family population in Creswell and surrounds
- Aging care – East side has a lot of retirees; baby boomers aging in place

Entrepreneurship/Education/Skill Development Questions

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6. What are Creswell’s competitive disadvantages? (Note that competitive disadvantages are things make a business less likely to locate in a community, e.g. lack of workforce housing, lack of skilled labor force, lack of quality infrastructure)

7. How can local skills and local job opportunities be better matched in Creswell?

8. How can the City support local entrepreneurs?
9. Is there anything else you’d like to add?

SWOT Analysis Results

Strengths

- Similar strengths as Cottage Grove, which is close – proximity to Eugene (Creswell is even closer)
  - Food manufacturing outlets
  - Proximity to urban center makes it work
- Really cute downtown – needs a little more defining “vibe,” but lots of potential +1
  - Main Street potential
- Great players (entrepreneurs who own Blue Valley Bistro, Creswell Bakery) – availability to other entrepreneurs +1
  - Mentors essential in making success/helping small businesses start and thrive
  - Long-term families who care about Creswell – Farmlands market another example
- Creswell HS has great Career Technical Education (CTE) programs (e.g. woodshop, computer science, culinary) – great resource to tap into and work with
  - Opportunities in schools that feed into career pathways
  - Mentorship
  - Work experience/on the job training
- On I-5 – key freight route; close to UO
- Airport – tons of potential for sector buildout
- Have Industrial lands to work with
- Awesome staff – capacity to manage, apply for grants/funding
- Diverse businesses/industry mix in Creswell area – creates synergies and opportunities for other companies of the same type to develop there
- City and community buy-in, support for small businesses
- Good community feel
- Many young entrepreneurs who care about community, know and support each other
- New Chamber is getting stronger
- Food and beverage sector strategist for County a really important partner; great at connecting opportunity
- Austin at Lane County is a resource

Weaknesses

- Lack of large parcels – what they have is wet or constrained by ownership dynamic
- Infrastructure – need to pull infrastructure to the east side for housing growth and to grow opportunity at the airport
- Intro to Creswell (right off I-5) is largely highway commercial/truck stops
- Hard to break less attractive bedroom community tendencies; identifying sectors that are actually feasible to build on can be a challenge
• Lack of real estate
• No grocery store – key service needed to attract more business
• Political challenges – divisiveness, big opinions can detract from common goals
• Vibe of downtown – drawn to Creswell bakery, but why else does someone stop?
  o Something missing that gives you a reason to park and get out and walk up and down
  o In CG it went from no real cohesive space to something that drew you in as a destination to meander up and down; people come from Eugene, park, look for a bite to eat after a ride – shops, places to eat, breweries, Bohemia Park (a strong anchor)
  o Bonus of being on I-5 – easy to get to Creswell, now it’s about building up why folks stop here
• “Drive by” community – outsiders may not be familiar with anything other than the bakery; no specific draw otherwise (no other restaurants or venues seem to be a strong attraction)

**Opportunities**
• Lots of people leave for work, but opportunity to pull in workshed
• Airport presents a big opportunity – approached by businesses considering that airport, but it has infrastructure and funding needs
• Recent opportunity presented by transportation sector & trucking industry
  o Shortage of truck drivers causing problems everywhere and local trucking industry is looking for opportunities to train CDL drivers
  o Creswell has one of very few CDL training facilities (LCC does not have a facility. Creswell’s is the only facility in Lane County) – opportunity to grow the training facility to meet demands
• Permanent infrastructure for the farmer’s market – farmers market in Creswell needs a more established location; craft and food could use love
• Industrial lands
• Downtown could be built out – livability potential
• Creswell Bakery pulls in hundreds from the freeway every day – they’re already doing the work of getting people to town; give people another reason/place to stop
  o Create some sort of draw, something that makes people want to stick around after they get their gas
  o E.g. Bohemia Park an anchor in Cottage Grove; promoted “walking around,” people looking for something to eat/drink, tourism – shows promise for something similar in Creswell (closer to Eugene than Cottage Grove)
• Diverse businesses/industry mix in Creswell area – creates synergies and opportunities for other companies of the same type to develop there
  o Manufacturing in town already
  o Construction
  o Logging
  o Healthcare
Biotech

Food and beverage

Tourism/recreation – Creswell is well located for opportunities
  - Pull in Travel Lane County and Travel Oregon
  - Business Oregon looking at marketing arts and culture in rural areas (go hand in hand with tourism/recreation and could be a key driver)

Welcome minority communities (language access, marketing) – how do we elevate how immigrant communities and diverse populations are incorporated in the community, what they give back to community?

More affordable rents in Cottage Grove contribute to success of Bohemia Food Hub and small business tenants (half are from Eugene)
  - Purchasing buildings was cheaper, enables lower rent
  - Costs have as much as equivalent space in Eugene for manufacturing, food truck parking

Can you tap into thriving community of farmers?
  - Farmers market that might be a draw to downtown (this is a slow build)
  - Incorporate farmers into projects
  - Food and food security are front and center due to pandemic

Synergizing with other Metro satellite communities – capitalize on cool things other small cities are working on; share resources

Technical assistance and support integral to success of Bohemia Food Hub
  - Great advisory team available to entrepreneurs
  - Fostering and supporting champions (e.g. Oregon RAIN)
  - Culture of mentorship

Food and beverage works as an alternative to wood industry

Tap into larger scale sector strategy work already done – education
  - Education programs do a great job of getting students trained in/aware of different career opportunities, but local industry and parents are likely not aware of what’s happening in schools – connections need to be made
  - A lot of rural small communities try to force certain sectors they want to happen, which probably won’t happen unless they happen natural – school can be where you find those entrepreneurs
  - Teach students how to start businesses (homegrown) – they might come back if the roots and opportunities are established (vs. recruiting new businesses to town might is harder)

Youth getting involved and having a better framing of realities of entrepreneurship (pros and cons) – many mentors in town to provide this guidance/exposure

Find out what you have to draw people in, market the space – pull the right partners together and get everyone in a place to build resources together

Inclusion – united in ideas of how to move forward

New restaurants, build on

Support what is there. Jobs in place are important.
Additional Comments from City Staff:
- Creswell Butte, Creswell Castle – opportunities just outside City limits to help create identity

Threats
- One challenge = identifying sectors that are actually feasible and they can build on
  - Cottage Grove did that really well with work that Kim did with food & beverage
  - Creswell could do that with food & beverage as well and with airport – opportunity for those sectors to start from
- Not a lot of state or fed funding coming in to meet issues like infrastructure and land use issues (these aren’t in their control)
- Land use
- Real estate increase/lack of real estate – some trying to buy and cannot afford
- COVID (pandemic) issue
- Access to global markets – unreliable and expensive
  - Lots of agricultural/food products could be sold overseas (e.g. Oregon wine has been popular in Asia)
  - Port of Portland is not dependable – can be expensive
- Wood products industry continues to lose jobs, even though demand grows
  - Technology is always becoming more efficient and less labor intensive
- Regional competition among small cities along I-5 (framing it as competitive rather than synergistic)
- Wealth in the hills – not integrated in the community
- Transitions needs to be careful and thoughtful

Competitive Advantages and Disadvantages

Advantages
- Rail (though only on west side)
- Right on I-5 – excellent access, right next to downtown
- Creswell Bakery pulls in a lot of folks form the freeway – already doing the hard work; give them ANOTHER reason to stop
- STEM hubs (Elevate) need to be a part of the education piece
- Homegrown opportunities

Disadvantages
- Downtown draw
- Lack large grocery store
Tourism/Recreation/Hospitality

Questions

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6. What are Creswell’s competitive disadvantages? (Note that competitive disadvantages are things make a business less likely to locate in a community, e.g. lack of workforce housing, lack of skilled labor force, lack of quality infrastructure)

7. What is one asset you wish more people in the region (or beyond) knew about Creswell, and came here to visit/use?

8. In what ways is Creswell under-realizing its potential to attract visitors? Can you share specific strategies for attracting more visitors to Creswell?

9. Is there anything else you’d like to add?

SWOT Analysis Results

Strengths

- City staff are easy to work with +3
  - Easy to access info to know how to get your project off the ground
Engaged in discussing economic development including tourism
- Downtown has some good businesses and opportunities for more
- Destination attractions & local gems
  - Emerald Valley Golf Course (championship-level golf course)
  - Creswell Bakery
  - Lodging, places to eat – pieces are there; need a little more
- Airport is an asset – destination
- Staff (Maddie) elevate Creswell at regional and state level
- Efforts: Streetscapes, new buildings, look and feel
- So close to Eugene – overflow in hospitality from events in Eugene; City could capitalize
- Proximity to wine country
- Proximity to covered bridges (right in the middle)
- Clay target shooting/sports (just south of town)

Additional Comments from City Staff:
- Fourth of July event put on by Chamber of Commerce brings many people into town
- Bicycle park – support for cycling enthusiasts on long rides (rest area, bicycle repairs, bottle fill stations)
- Variety of restaurants (Bon Mi, Thai, Bigfoot fudge, Pazzos) – good place for food variety

Weaknesses
- Lack of a chamber presence +1
  - Travel Lane County engages with chamber meetings; connection is weaker due to this deficit
  - Cottage Grove has not jumped into 4th because of the understanding of Creswell’s precedence
  - Other collaboration should/could be happening
  - Combined Chamber of Commerce?
    - Kiwanis club has combined?
- Lack of a Grocery store
- More restaurants – capture more people from golf course and hotels (Eugene is close enough to compete)
  - Lack of web presence on local businesses (something a Chamber would normally do) – finding info on Creswell business online is hit or miss right now
- Lack of wayfinding is an issue (uncertain) – getting folks from one place to another; are the isolated destinations clearly oriented?
- Lack of infrastructure at the airport impedes activities that could occur there +1
  - Hard to induce businesses when you don’t have readily available facilities (e.g. no running water)
  - STEM is hard when you can’t support classroom (no water)
- Lost hotel rooms; could use more
- Creswell has a bad/dangerous intersection – out of towners struggle to negotiate; could be a real problem

**Opportunities**
- So close to Eugene – overflow in hospitality from events in Eugene; City could capitalize
- Lodging, places to eat – pieces are there; need a little more
- Proximity to covered bridges (right in the middle)
- Bike close (Connect Lane project) – a first in bike parks
- Strengthen Chamber or tourism committee
- Website and hotel golf course could share “clearinghouse” of businesses (restaurants)
- “Bookable” products – work with Travel Lane County to establish how to package Creswell
- Business presence – expertise to help businesses to help increase their presence of business online
- Figure out how to leverage the “pillars” – outdoor recreation, culinary food trails, arts/culture/and heritage (products in these areas are supported at state and regional level)
- Golf is very popular during pandemic
  - Leverage this? Best year at Emerald Valley
  - Recruit players; retain golfers
- Disc golf? Growing demand from larger tournaments looking for locations
  - Opportunity but not on the same course as Emerald (can do in almost any reasonably sizeable setting)
  - There is a private course in Creswell – by appointment (Facebook)
- Main Street program – other communities are having success with that program
- River Access (e.g. Cloverdale – on Willamette River water trail, lots of investment on state level on the trail and by Willamette Valley Visitors Center)
- Mountain Biking and Gravel biking – Lorraine? Other forms of cycling with Creswell as gateway?
- More events like Fourth of July, weekend events (arts, etc.) – get people to the area, visit restaurants, stay at hotels
- More hotel rooms to meet higher capacity events.
- Clay target sports
- AirBnB? Look at other small communities – need to figure out right balance for community (how many rooms); ensuring that they pay lodging taxes is key
- Shuttles for venues from places of accommodation
  - No shuttle now – tried but never got much traction (possible, but need more to break even)
  - LTD on east side (currently only on the west side)
- Strategic Planning for subareas (updates to Airport plan etc. – will be required for airport in)
  - Bring water to Airport
  - Sewer is a greater challenge (~$2 million)
  - Emerald Valley (~$700,000) – opportunity here? DEQ has a moratorium in place; City has been going around and around on this
- Hot air balloons? No interest to date, but it would be an asset
**Threats**
- Losing hotel rooms
- Parade challenges in 2021? Bad impressions
- Pandemic – public safety
- AirBnB? Look at other small communities – need to figure out right balance for community (how many rooms); ensuring that they pay lodging taxes is key
- Transportation
  - One Interstate exit 99/I-5
  - Creswell has a bad/dangerous intersection – out of towners struggle to negotiate; could be a real problem

Additional Comments from Staff:
- Political co-opting is not anticipated as a problem – sense that Parade will recover from challenges once things are back to normal
  - Misinformation was a source
  - Not the first sensitive parade
  - Strong Chamber will help – messaging that the traditional 4th of July Parade is returning
  - Volunteering. Competition for volunteer’s time.

**Competitive Advantages and Disadvantages**

**Advantages**
- Proximity to Cottage Grove and Eugene-Springfield
  - Will come for a round of golf or the bakery
- Easy access (transportation)
  - Close to I-5
  - No congestion, easy to get around
  - Quicker to get from Creswell to Autzen Stadium than some places in Eugene-Springfield trying to navigate traffic
- Creswell Airport is a more attractive stop for life flight due to greater traffic predictability
- Airport is easy on/easy off (I-5)
  - Out of town folks prefer Creswell because it’s accessible
  - Strong/robust existing business core at Creswell Airport
    - Multiplier effect
  - Skydiving. Newer owners. Cautious about offerings/costs. They are very busy. Nonstop.

Additional Comments from City Staff:
- Small – visitor can feel welcome and not overwhelmed (rural feel, low crime rate, visitors feel safe)
**Disadvantages**

- Infrastructure shortcomings at airport

Additional Comments from City Staff:

- Small – proximity to Cottage Grove, Eugene-Springfield (hard to maintain the draw, don’t offer amenities that a larger city might have)
- Lack of hangers
  - General aviation is more of a headache than commercial and jet traffic
    - Creswell could have more of that traffic/airplanes with more hangers, but it is costly
  - Private public venture? Looked a little at this
    - Build own hangers (general fund)
      - Over $600,00 for infrastructure alone
      - Willing to discuss and investigate further
      - City is buying out leases with transitioning owners; we’ll have more City owned in the future

**Other/Additional Insights**

- Wish more people knew 4th of July Parade
- Roads/safety/accessibility benefit locals and visitors alike
  - SRTS
  - Connectivity & integration to County Bike Plan
- Opportunities for locals
  - Remote/telework work options – leverage Creswell’s advantages
  - Activities in parks (sports and other activities – keeping residents recreating locally)
  - Creswell Butte?

Additional Comments from City Staff:

- Creswell Butte is privately owned and in a conservation easement – City is working to make it appropriate as an asset

**Business Climate Questions**

1. What do you think are Creswell’s strengths when it comes to economic development? *(Things that are internal/subject to “Creswell’s” control and increase Creswell’s capability to achieve desired economic outcomes)*

2. What are Creswell’s weaknesses? *(Things that are internal/subject to “Creswell’s” control and decrease Creswell’s capability to achieve desired economic outcomes)*
3. What opportunities could Creswell take advantage of? (Things that are external – Creswell does not have control, e.g. market forces, or things that expand or develop new possibilities)

4. What threatens Creswell’s economic development? (Things that are external/not under Creswell’s control, e.g. economic downturns)

5. What are Creswell’s competitive advantages? (Note that competitive advantages are things that set a community apart from other nearby communities as a good place to do business, e.g. availability of skilled labor force, proximity to major transportation routes, broadband access, quality of infrastructure)

6. What are Creswell’s competitive disadvantages? (Note that competitive disadvantages are things make a business less likely to locate in a community, e.g. lack of workforce housing, lack of skilled labor force, lack of quality infrastructure)

7. What specific challenges do businesses face in Creswell?

8. In general, do local businesses have what they need to grow?  
   What resources do Creswell businesses have for support? Describe how the City could support local business growth. Are there ways the City can support businesses self-organizing? How can businesses help one another grow (through knowledge transfer, mutual aid, multipliers, etc.)?

9. Is there anything else you’d like to add?

**SWOT Analysis Results**

**Strengths**
- City is taking proactive approach
- Size of Creswell and projected growth +1
  - Small enough that individuals and businesses can have major impact towards progress
    - Business can have clout with directives
  - Approachable, reachable, and reactive to direction
  - Cusp of growth with location, accessibility of greater metro area
  - Small town feel remains
  - Draws employees from Metro
- Business on east side of I-5
- Everybody knows where the businesses are – word of mouth, referral
- Farmlands market filled niche/void when Ray’s left

Additional Comments from City Staff:
- Added RAIN as a partner – help businesses and improve climate
Non-Profit originated at college level – entrepreneurial catalyst that helps entrepreneurs with challenges (not so much capital)
- Free classes in financing/marketing
- Creswell invited RAIN
  - Entrepreneur in Community (Seth with Blue Valley Bistro)
  - Work with local businesses to convey offerings and connect dots (mentors)
  - Cultivate a setting friendly to and supportive of entrepreneurs
- No business license requirement – anybody can have a business in town without red tape

**Weaknesses**
- Location weakness as well as strength – strategic disadvantage
  - Some business types have come and gone, struggle due to the proximity to Eugene
  - Price conscious customers will favor lower costs (e.g. choosing to visit Walmart in Cottage Grove if grocery store prices are a little higher in Creswell)
  - Proximity means people are not disincentivized to patronize other businesses elsewhere +1
  - Big box stores create a strategic disadvantage to our mom & pop stores
  - Some job types don’t align well with labor force in Creswell (including younger)
- Ability to rally the small town is a make-or-break matter
  - Some vulnerability in patronage (e.g. if offend a group for example)
- Facade of Creswell, coming off I-5
  - Northbound – wayfinding is confusing northbound (confusing which way to go for commerce)
  - Southbound – trailer park then defunct hotel, former gas station; visually this is disadvantageous compare to other communities, those not familiar may be deterred.
- Developability issues east to west (freeway separation) – huge dividing line, almost makes it two separate needs for development
- Downtown is mixed (residential and commercial) – maintaining status quo is not good for anyone
  - Business zone in downtown, focus on commercial activity
  - Transition to commercial from residential – won’t be successful until legacy residential is transitioned.
- Unintended consequences associated with old school conversion

**Additional Comments from City Staff**
- Most people who live in Creswell are absent during the day – commuters have an “end of day” shopping experience
  - Main Street does not attract a lot of business clusters (e.g. shops that might attract people to shop during weeknight/weekend)
Opportunities

- Projected growth
- New business on east side
- New Chamber of Commerce will be much more interested in helping businesses to be successful
- Town is big enough that a restaurant could thrive
  - People will only travel so far (10 mile radius?) – Eugene is close enough
  - Retail? Good question. Is draw something other than retail store?
    - More of a challenge than food/beverage for attracting?
  - Bicycle shop – Is there enough draw to substantiate? Dry Cleaning? Kitchenware?
  - A single store might not be enough of a draw, but collection could have potential?
  - Takes a lot of coordinated effort to achieve the draw
- Citywide high speed internet, broadband improvements. Free wifi?
- More developable land
  - Some, but not a lot and not much variety
  - Commercial and industrial – Bald knob has been looked at
  - Attracting larger industries, need more land accommodation, incentives (price oriented)
- Proximity to recreation/tourism, Metro area – if promoted properly, these could be real opportunities
- Advertising on the freeway
- Challenges on east side, but utility mainlines near some businesses on eastside
  - Area near participants property is servable
  - Dale Kuhni and Cloverdale are not serviceable – sewer expansion
- UGB Expansion. New customers, labor force.
- Embrace bedroom community dynamic – connection to Eugene-Springfield is strong
  - Huge county, a lot of community members connected to whole county
  - Pursuit of individuality/identity can be overdone?
  - Pursue connections; blending is good (e.g. Kiwanis club Coast Fork – Cottage Grove and Creswell)
  - Embrace Eugene – not the anti-Eugene (metro a great big eco engine) +1
  - Doesn’t mean Creswell can’t flourish, it means Creswell will flourish in the shadow of Eugene; does not need to be binary (either/or)
  - Great place to live – residents choose to live in Creswell
- Downtown residential uses converting to commercial (conforming)

Additional Comments from City Staff:
- Funding from stimulus for broadband on east side
  - Will be running cable across freeway
  - Privately owned infrastructure
**Threats**

- FEMA Floodplain map changes on east side – maybe of concern to already developed or potential developable land
- Salmonid habitat (east side)
- Sewer water challenges with privately held entity on east side – can’t expand (functional moratorium)
- ODOT has limited access on properties along Cloverdale – limiting factor to development
  - Businesses have to come up through Milton to access these properties
  - Dairy Queen has to come off of Emerald Parkway
- Interchange of Oregon Avenue and Hwy 99 Railroad – really challenging intersection
  - Mix of Bureaucracies control making it hard to resolve +1
  - Really is a barrier, not just an annoyance (also a safety issue)
  - Multi-agency nightmare yes, but general public may feel like some buck passing? Legitimate perhaps – messaging could help
  - Maybe the economic development and safety issues could elevate?
- 800 new houses needed in Creswell – how do we house with available land?
  - Potential employees (labor), customers, etc.
  - Steppingstone jobs – labor is drawn from Creswell (larger labor pool means better hiring can occur)
- Residential uses in Downtown can inhibit commercial opportunities

Additional Comments from City Staff

- Sewer line on east side not actually at capacity – DEQ has put a moratorium
  - Need to set aside financial assurances – not willing to do that
  - Prohibiting expansion as per DEQ
  - Real challenging dynamic for the City, hindrance to expanding UGB

**Competitive Advantages and Disadvantages**

**Advantages**

- Small town pride – comradery pays dividends
  - Helpful in pandemic
  - When things were lean and restaurants were required to do take-out only – saw an uptick
  - Creswellians coming out to support local business

**Disadvantages**

None
Other/Additional Insights

- Different businesses face different challenges in Creswell – small town is double-edged sword
  - If embraced there’s business to be had
  - If you alienate, significantly more challenging
  - Misstep example = community bulletin board – flyer in support of “real Creswell”
  - Mentality that exists in distinctions even in the small community – best to be cognizant of sensitivities around disparities, embrace everybody
  - If you go out on a limb you can scare/alienate half of the community
  - Michael Jordan quote: “Republicans buy sneakers too.”
- Local newspaper is a sensitive business
  - Physical threats regularly, boycotts, a lot of businesses don’t support – is it beef with the newspaper?
  - COVID has created challenges – revenue stream has dried up (events, ads)
  - Moving out of downtown space because can’t afford rent
  - One employee on payroll, used to have 10
  - Hard right now, hostile environment to work in
  - Virtually no advertising support in Creswell
  - Pivoting to Springfield and try to cover Creswell – out of business otherwise
- Proactive approach from the City helps local businesses
  - RAIN is ideal for catalyzing business growth – great support
- Blue Valley – 80% of business is from within 3 miles (EUG/SPR on occasion, but not as frequent)

Sites/Infrastructure/Needed Services

Questions

SWOT Analysis Results

Strengths

- Location – close to metro region
  - Proximity to I-5
  - OR 99 corridor
  - Proximity to southern region as well as Eugene/Springfield – perfectly positioned for filling housing needs
- Small town – offer something that Eugene-Springfield cannot
- Airport; ability to build out for industrial use
- Engaged, proactive City staff

Weaknesses
• Funding – Creswell is not more or less disadvantaged, others in the same boat
• Wastewater challenges – challenging not to have east and west side under City’s authority
• Not a ton of Industrial land available
• Not opportunities to accommodate growth of growing businesses
• Not enough land/buildings
• Costly/regulation heavy path forward to expand infrastructure to developable areas
• How to move private properties forward
• Lack of amenities to fulfill needs of workforce – no grocery store
• West side wastewater – managing but no upgrades to existing system; interim action will likely be required and City will be forced to hit some milestones for upgrades (likely starting in 2023)

Opportunities
• Zoning to ensure proximity to I-5 can be leveraged
• Bald Knob – some area can be developed immediately, others with natural resources dynamics need to be addressed (Could they be water features? Drainage area makes whole property challenging)
• RST – continued engagement with organized resources, state partners
• Hwy 99 an opportunity that could be leveraged from a weakness
• Transit – Cottage Grove-Creswell-LCC
• Comprehensive Planning underway

Threats
• Very challenging not having east and west side under municipal authority – private owner on east side not working with DEQ to allow economic development on east side; DEQ won’t allow expansion/extension
• Demonstrate financial assurance
• Funding
• Housing crisis – serviceability issues for some available lands
• Water Supply/Quality (Bacteria issues – TMDL)
• Floodplain area in Creswell has changed, some properties significantly (remapping of Coast Fork) – East I-5 properties

Competitive Advantages and Disadvantages

Advantages
None
Disadvantages
None

Other/Additional Insights

- Airport – So much potential
- Recruitment and expansion capacity – huge opportunity
- Peer communities doing really impressive things
- ARPA funds being used to install some sewer capacity (ORENCO system)
- Monroe switched to focus on housing – centrally located between Corvallis and Eugene. Bedroom communities can be a real opportunity. Let’s focus on housing?
- Look to Cottage Grove – Incubation in Food and Beverage. Creswell would do something similar. Learn from Cottage Grove. They have a large incubator – could be done on a smaller level. Kim is willing to work with other communities. Focus on these sectors?
- Doesn’t have to be large scale industrial recruitment – could be smaller sectors.
- Partnership with Putnam (east side water system owner). DEQ can’t do the work there – but that partnership will be impactful. Separated approach will continue to be complicated and challenging. Is there really no way to work with the east side system owner?
- Downtown – half of a block of a mixed use development and affordable units. High and well constructed apartments (30-40 units). See more density in downtown. Catalytic.
- USDA has RBDG program that can support this work (incubator – Agriculture)
- “One Stop” funding to the sewer system should be pursued in the future (dedicated meeting)
- Infrastructure Bill COULD present some significant opportunities. If you have large scale infrastructure needs, now is the time to be putting a scope together and communicating the needs with legislators. Fingers crossed on how that money can be allocated. Through more traditional funding resources (Biz Oregon).
- Make sure elected officials know priority projects. Have the one pager – awareness. RST may be asked about these – make sure they know about projects.
City of Estacada

Questions

1. Can you speak a little bit about some key economic development efforts Estacada has made in the past 10 years?

   What were the most important/significant/impactful steps you took to support and encourage economic development in Estacada?

2. What strategies didn’t work? What mistakes did you make? What would you do differently if given the chance to do it again?

3. What are the barriers or challenges Estacada has worked to overcome by pursuing specific economic development strategies?

4. What key strengths helped Estacada succeed?

5. Is there anything else you’d like to add?

Discussion Notes

- A lot of support early on from Clackamas County Economic Development Department, which was instrumental to success. Worked to formally organize Main Street organization in Estacada. Larger role in industrial campus (including UGB expansion, changing agricultural land to industrial land use designation).

- Current industrial campus was under ownership of a single landowner (rare) – this was lucky.

- Downtown Main Street program has been important for economic development. A previous City Manager formed an urban renewal agency (URA). Urban renewal is a great tool for downtown revitalization when used appropriately/responsibly. Plan written and adopted in 2007. In 2012, Main Street program had a staff person (became city staff – now an economic development role). In 2015, main downtown corridor (Broadway) torn up, utilities undergrounded, sidewalks widened, and planters, benches, and period lighting added (all the bells and whistles people want in downtown). This was possible because of urban renewal. Still working on downtown, but it has bolstered values and shown people that City is willing to invest in downtown.

- Grants for property owners available through urban renewal. Between façade & interior improvement grants and streetscaping, the former is more important (streetscaping doesn’t do any good with vacant buildings). Hard to get historic buildings in shape and occupied.
without some sort of public subsidy. Projects in larger cities will pencil out better (overall confidence in investment, ROI). Hopefully need for subsidies drops off over time.

- Negative feedback loop in rural downtowns – disinvestment over a long period of time. Something has to reverse the cycle – public investment is the best way to prime that pump. Investment begets investment.
  - Industrial campus – when property owner got behind the vision to expand the UGB, infrastructure to serve the new subdivision was expensive. City formed a Local Improvement District and provided financing. Business Oregon helped through special Public Works fund. If the City didn’t back that LID, it might not have happened. City had to have some skin in the game. Note: this also could have been a risk – it was a success story, but could have gone differently.
  - Main Street program is valuable in reversing the negative feedback cycle. Access to grant funding you don’t have access to otherwise. Oregon Main Street Revitalization grant – communities eligible for up to $200,000 for a catalytic project. Can be a conduit to state money.
  - Dedicated economic development staff also important

- Having staff person getting out into the business community building bridges is important. Those relationships have been most valuable in playing the role of matchmaker. If you have an ear to the ground and open dialogue with business/property owners, you know when vacancies are coming available and when a business is outgrowing its space. Also contact at City when someone wants to start a business. Almost like a real estate broker – know the inventory and know the needs of the business community. Match those up.

- Estacada does not have a formal Economic Development Strategic Plan. EOA (2019) acts as that doc. World of Economic Development is a dynamic landscape. Constantly needing to adapt.

- One thing Creswell has that Estacada doesn’t is a great location on I-5 in terms of industrial opportunities. We put our eggs in different baskets because can’t rely solely on industrial. A lot into tourism (foothills of Mount Hood/National Forest/whitewater and flatwater recreation/lake in city limits). Downtown revitalization is both a community development and economic development goal. Vibrant downtown a place of commerce, culture, community. Entrepreneurship baked into tourism and downtown revitalization. Helping businesses access resources to start up downtown.

- Our URA will sunset in 6 years and there’s a long list of projects we’d still like to complete. They set your max indebtedness when plan is formed – every year inflation, materials cost, labor costs work against you. Ours was $6.3 billion – not a lot and in 2021 that’s even less. Trying to figure out how to get our most important projects with a sum of money that has greatly diminished in value over 20-year lifetime. Could expand max indebtedness or prolonging lifespan of the agency/area. But politically kind of hot topic, no guarantee of success.
Takeaway: As soon as you’re generating revenues from your TIF district to support assumption of debt to do a project, DO THE PROJECT. No real benefit in putting it off. As soon as TIF is generating revenue, you need to service the debt and get that project done. Plan project simultaneously while waiting for revenue stream to come in – even better.

- Estacada in a fortunate position with respect to broadband. Local ISP = Resilience Connects. Local phone company for over 100 years. Well-operated business in tune with tech, now have fiber network in town serving almost entire incorporated area and now building out into unincorporated areas. City only provided franchise agreement – extent of role.

  o It would be great if there was another ISP to create a more competitive environment. For average homeowner subscriber looking to do regular stuff – those people are pretty happy. Some folks who live in unincorporated areas feel like they’re not being served well enough or fast enough – Reliance has to expand incrementally/intentionally (less capital). Not an economic development challenge, but trying to leverage it more. Trying to start conversation with Business Oregon and GPI – strategy around data center recruitment. Lacking power infrastructure, but have other infra. Feels like missed opportunity – fairly good tech environment in Estacada but haven’t used it to Economic Development advantage.

- Estacada in a unique position in Oregon – Main Street organization is a commission of the City (since 2018). Ours is called the Downtown Estacada Commission. They have less flexibility/agility than if they were an independent nonprofit to operate without being under umbrella of public agency (e.g. noticing, not eligible for some grants) – some disadvantages. But by bringing them in house and putting under Economic Development umbrella, it’s made our efforts a lot more cohesive. Main Street mission becomes city’s mission and vice versa instead of silos. Gives Main Street program ability to focus energy into other things aside from fundraising because staffing is taken care of.

City of Independence

Questions

1. Can you speak a little bit about some key economic development efforts Independence has made in the past 10 years?

   What were the most important/significant/impactful steps you took to support and encourage economic development in Independence?

2. What strategies didn’t work? What mistakes did you make? What would you do differently if given the chance to do it again?
3. What are the barriers or challenges Independence has worked to overcome by pursuing specific economic development strategies?

4. What key strengths helped Independence succeed?

5. Is there anything else you’d like to add?

Discussion Notes

- Bottom line: it’s about community engagement. Independence story started in 1996 with community feeling like things were going the wrong way. Started with Americorps RARE to do a year-long community engagement process. What would perfect Independence look like and what needs to happen to make that reality? Everyone wanted Independence to be a full-service small town – Live-Work-Play.

  o Want people to have that option. Not trying to be a bedroom community. Small towns live & die with their downtowns. Key vision = downtown needs to be vibrant hub of community. From that they created a downtown development plan to become the place we want. Started knocking projects off.

  o We were creative & entrepreneurial, active in taking next steps and implementing projects. Do plan, knock off a couple of larger projects identified by community – get people’s attention, they start to want to help more.

  o Engagement – we’re implementing the will of the community. When there’s pushback, can point to visioning process/plan – there were 800 people who said this was a good idea and we’re following it.

  o This was a larger community vision, not specifically Economic Development – all the different things we need to do. Lots of them tied to ED and supporting businesses. But downtown (e.g. wide sidewalks, benches, street lights, painted banners by local artists) is as much a livability thing as it is ED. Never a specific ED project. More of a community revitalization project, but it catalyzed investment.

- Consistency in leadership – same mayor since 1998. Understands how to goal set, convene people, hold conversations, nudge, keep things moving in right direction. Mayor hired a City Manager with right idea, who hired other staff with right idea. Gradually built attitude in city hall that aligned with the vision – got everyone on the same page about where they’re going and wherever opportunity presented itself, knocked off projects.

- Did everything in 20-year plan by 2008. Vision 2020 got 1,000 people involved out of community of 8,000. Knocked off enough of those projects that we just did Vision 2040 plan last year.

- Partnerships – find others going in the same direction (e.g. Sedcor). Can’t do everything ourselves, look for other organizations in alignment with our goals.
• Initial projects/high points (before 2008):
  o First thing in 1999 = built a public restroom on main street. Opportunistic – there was a restroom in a flood plain in riverfront park. Major problems with sewer system, got EPA money to redo it and were going to have to close the restroom there, so asked for funding to build a new restroom on Main Street out of floodplain & they gave us $300k to build it (in Downtown Development Plan).
  o Next = Downtown street scape. Created Urban Renewal District in 42 days to be able to fund it.
  o Next = Public library right in downtown (2002) – on main road through Independence to Monmouth. Cleaned up a brownfield downtown. Community wants downtown to be a vibrant revitalized place. How do we bring people downtown? One way = put library there. By doing that, we were able to put a movie theater there – brings 130k people every year. But library brings 100k every year. That was a key thing we did to bring people downtown.
  o 2002-05 = amphitheater. Keystone, 3-year project, big lift. Came out beautifully. That was the project in downtown development plan that people thought would be so cool but that there would be no way it would ever happen. Got people so excited. We have it programmed – not enough to have infrastructure there, you have to activate it. This was the first turning point for downtown.
  o MyNet in 2007 (worked on from 2002-2007).
  o Movie theater (2008) – not in the plan (more opportunistic).
  o Along the way, you have building renovations, façade grants, entrepreneurship programs to strengthen local businesses. Builds to a point where we got to a 75 room hotel w/ apartment/townhome units right downtown on gravel site. Project we just finished was in the 1996 plan. We invested $6mm in it. A lot of work. Community said that property would be a great opportunity for mixed use commercial/residential.

• Consistency of leadership has been critical to our success. Largely unchanged City Council until last 3-4 years. We have vision & identified projects. Vision documents don’t necessarily go directly onto a capital improvement plan. More like – here’s a list of things that would be great if we can do. As staff we work to figure out how we may or may not be able to squeeze these in. From staff side it’s about the eye on the big picture. When talking about sewer pipe, park, etc. – how does this help us achieve that larger vision? Looking at making improvements to river view park, e.g. How does this bring people downtown and help revitalize downtown? What else can we do while we’re ripping up sidewalks to make sure we maximize opportunity? We’re very good at leveraging success into additional successes.
  o Streetscape is an example – bigger picture, needs to be an inviting pedestrian environment. Artist doing banners was a nice bonus. We did streetscape and a
building owner downtown wanted to restore building – we went & looked at historic photos and helped him restore his building; then started façade renewal program.

- Willingness to take some risks. Even back in late 90s mayor and elected officials looking down road and seeing internet as a big thing. Providers saying you’ll get broadband in 20 years. They decided they wanted to be on the front of it, not trailing end. This ties back to vision – can point to ultimate goal (full-service, self-sustaining community).

- Community and visioning process provides a hit list of projects that people can be for. Gives them something to champion rather than just “I ran against x or y.”

- Broadband is especially important for entrepreneurship now when you can literally have a giant company from your home. Been very focused on downtown. We also have a large industrial zone and work to bring in and grow blue collar industry as well for exactly that reason. I want people making things to sell outside the community. You start that in your house or in a small building, need somewhere to grow into/expand into larger space. Broadband is funny because it’s almost taken for granted – but at the same time if you don’t have it, you’re really in trouble.

- We do a lot collaboratively – no capacity to do it all ourselves. Philosophy: We work with people who want to work with us. Some examples:
  - Youth workforce development organization.
  - Sidewalk repair program that gave kids construction skills – homeowner paid for cement, got labor for free, kids got work experience, we got good sidewalk.
  - Similar workforce group we worked with to develop a maker space with entrepreneurship curriculum.
  - On business entrepreneurship stuff we have partnered with downtown association – just got a Main Street award today for that public-private partnership – work with them on events, connecting with downtown businesses.
  - Another organization called Merit – small business one-on-one courses. We don’t know anything about teaching biz so we found a partner that does. We ended up being fiscal agent and they were getting CDBG grants so they could run their small business program (for all of Polk county but ran it from Independence).
  - Coworking space opened in downtown Independence – tried to turn them into an incubator. That owner started a spinoff nonprofit called Idea Hub. Funneled funding to do micro-entrepreneurship. Owner sacrificed one career to start another. Just opened a community kitchen – rentable space in downtown Independence. Just applied for Business Oregon’s ROI program for a Polk County-wide project to expand work across the county.
Would love to do more with school district, regional workforce organizations, community college, West Oregon university. Big players in the region we haven’t figured out how to do serious work with.

- Mostly work with businesses in a traditional sense – not a lot of incentives. Business owners place a lot of value on being engaged. Surprised at how much they appreciate me just showing up to check in, ask what problems they have/what problems they’d like to have solved (not guaranteeing I can).
  - This is where small towns have an advantage – can talk to almost every business owner in your community over the course of a year. You learn a lot.
  - We did a support program with COVID – based on our interactions with business owners about what they’re struggling with. Hugely successful (benefitted 30 businesses). We designed a one-on-one technical assistance program to have local consultants work with businesses to do things, e.g. new website, online marketing, social media.
  - When people go for permits and need help, they know to call me – I poke into building official’s office to follow up on permits, issues. Business advocate in my role.
  - No pushback about favoritism until very recently. Started to dabble in tourism/marketing/promotion – stories, photo shoots. That more than anything has generated a little “why them and not me?” It’s very minimal.
    - Emphasize that the city is a get to yes place. Let’s figure out a way to do it. That’s the culture of the city generally.

- It’s not a linear project path – multiple irons in the fire at any given time. There have been times where we bite off more than we can chew, but you just have to make it work.

- We have a Fail Fest – get well known entrepreneurs to be keynote speakers and talk about all the times they failed. Ones that created backlash usually involved not communicating well enough. We’re moving quickly and have irons in the fire – easy to forget or skip or think we only need to talk to certain people. That can cause friction.
  - Good natured comments from police chief – we do a lot of events and cops get to deal with difficult part. Don’t forget the foundation. Throw credit towards PW, PD.
  - Big one that everybody sees in half-built Independence Station building. Giant concrete skeleton in heart of downtown. 50’ tall. Wart on the nose of everything we’ve done over past 15 years that’s positive – started in 2004 and has looked like that since 2006. Public private-partnership. City could have done better due diligence & structured deal better. Embracing/admitting failure – if I had half a penny for every time someone mentions it, I would have retired 10 years ago. We’ve learned from it. And we admit it. We point to it when we’re making new
deals – we don’t want this to happen again, so that’s why this deal looks like it does.

- Lessons learned – partnerships & picking partners is important. Eyes open on what the partners are actually going to deliver. That’s been one of the biggest challenges. Getting ahead of it and being good on communication.

- EOA – we worked with our assets. We had a river and a historic downtown that didn’t look like an asset. That’s what we had to work with and that’s what we worked with.

City of Madras

Questions

1. We understand that the City of Madras has transformed its downtown over the past 10 years. Can you speak a little bit about that process?
   a. What were the conditions/barriers/opportunities that motivated downtown planning?

2. What were the most important/significant/impactful steps you took to support and encourage economic development in Madras (in general and/or specific to downtown development)?

3. What strategies didn’t work? What mistakes did you make? What would you do differently if given the chance to do it again?

4. What are the barriers or challenges Madras continues to face pursuing economic development strategies?
   a. Any specific strategies stand out?

5. What key strengths helped Madras succeed?

6. Is there anything else you’d like to share?

Discussion Notes

- Two-time mayor (40-year veteran) – Strategic updates under his leadership
  o Established Urban Renewal district in 2003
  o 2006-7 Urbanization report for the city with EcoNorthwest
  o EOA & HNA, population forecasts
  o Led to UGB expansion for a major mixed use development
  o People behind development in Bend did a similar project in Madras
  o Led to establishing Urban Reserve area (50-year) – proven to be amazingly wise

- Had a difficult time after recession
• 2010-12 housing challenges – people losing homes, so new construction wasn’t considered much
• 2017 City Council became aware of housing needs of community – asked staff to bring them the housing plan – EcoNW did that work
  o Plan has been immensely important (adopted in 2018) – w/in 3 months instituted major SDC reductions for housing based on price point and established a new housing renewal district. Only way we could do that was to:
    ▪ 1) have that in plan, but also
    ▪ 2) looked at short term objectives in housing plan, figured out which ones we wanted to complete and then actually put money in the budget to accomplish them. Amazingly simple – council adopts annual strategic plan and also has budget to accomplish it. Hasn’t always been the case in Madras.
  o Key to success in terms of implementation = Council and community to own some of the implementation steps, make sure there’s resources to implement/move forward.
• A lot of success because of airport from ED perspective
  o We consider it to be an industrial airport. Will never be a commercial airport (that’s Redmond). We don’t want to compete with that.
  o Have been able to recruit businesses at airport (aeronautic and non-aeronautic)
    ▪ Air museum & Erickson Aero Tanker? have been home runs. They have plans to expand.
    ▪ Daimler Trucks North America – Fortune 500 international company based out of Portland (corporate HQ in Swan Island), long time OR company. Testing approval grounds in Indiana – was too far away from HQ, so they wanted something closer. Ideal test conditions – outside Willamette valley (due to weather). Built a durability test track and expanded that to a 3mi high speed test track as well. 8 different platforms they test there. City is getting $350k/year in lease revenue from them to use the airport and they don’t use runways. They invested significantly in the facility…using an Enterprise Zone (something Creswell may want to look at). Those have been big for us – $250k/month that they spend in our community.
  o How do you compete in central OR for jobs & business? You have to do something different. A lot of people don’t want to be in Bend – to expensive too much activity. Don’t want to be in Redmond – commercial traffic, you have to pay a fee every time you land. More flexibility, a market towards that.
  o When we updated EOA in 2015, tried to make argument that with an unmanned air vehicle test range that we would have a need for more industrial land for our airport. We believed we needed more industrial land, but we couldn’t justify it. Expanded our industrial land by converting some highway commercial into mixed use – highway commercial + industrial zone. Has worked out really well for us.
  o We look at ED from an asset perspective and have tried to leverage that.
- From a commercial perspective, one thing we have is a highway through downtown. Fight a lot of national brands and franchises wanting to be in our community because we have 15,000 people going through downtown every day. We had to pivot.
  - Have done a lot of work in terms of urban renewal, downtown revitalization in the past 5 years. EcoNorthwest helped update action plan for Urban Renewal district. That was really helpful for us.
  - Further clarified some work/actions in that plan with consultant named Michelle Reeves – if interested in downtown revitalization, try to find a grant to have her come into your community. She’s done great work for us. Immense knowledge – consults all over the US.
  - Businesses often don’t have a sense for how to leverage storefront – help property owners and business owners increase their profit on a per/sq ft basis.
  - Also looks at built environment and how that can make activity more viable there. She uses the analogy of a grocery store as a downtown – gateway sign = front doors, aisles = streets, shelves = stores… goes through it in report.
  - “Show me don’t tell me.” You don’t need signage, you need to show people what goods/services sold in storefront.
  - Worked on art gallery here – did an excellent job. One of her consultants is head merchandiser for Ikea. She looks at storefronts, figures out how to display for business. Other consultant just does lighting.
  - Fixing up storefronts – not just brick & mortar, but also window displays
  - Got a grant about 1.5 years ago to update development code to add mixed and middle housing to it. Her report was already suggesting getting rid of parking and adding housing in downtown area – she had taken it farther than just commercial (thinks comprehensively).
  - Her work was $35k – a lot, but not too bad. She held stakeholder interviews/small group meetings with businesses. Held business summit and property owners summit. Of all consultants who come to community, everyone that came to that knows Michelle Reeves. Almost unanimous support in community – talks to them in ways that resonate. Talking to property owners about how to leverage property and make more money.
  - Project was very catalytic to our community. Still seeing the benefits.
- Question from Creswell staff: How did you deal with some people who didn’t feel as good about the city either getting involved in the work of paint schemes for individual businesses or some of that ground-level consultation that’s more role of Chamber of Commerce (working directly with individual businesses)?
  - “If you can’t beat ‘em join ‘em.” I seek those people out and make them get to meetings. Share their vitriol with someone like Michelle Reeves. Suddenly they have a cathartic dump. Also you get to have an objective 3rd party understand what they’re saying and translate that to how do we move forward.
I also don’t subscribe to the belief that there’s going to be consensus by every business. Have to find your champions, but also figure out who those vocal people are making the most noise and bring them into the process. That’s how you win people over.

I think you have to actually follow through on some of this work. Start moving forward, put resources behind it and make sure staff is doing the work and completing it under deadline. Worst thing is spending a lot of $$ on a project and then it doesn’t work out or never gets done. Worse than not doing anything at all.

• Question from Creswell staff: Interested in what you did to attract businesses that decided to locate on airfield.

  o We didn’t do anything per se. With the Air Museum, our airport manager’s father saw an article in the Oregonian about Jack Erikson wanting to leave Tillamook. Invited them for a meeting in Madras. At the time held all our important meetings at the airport (not City Hall). Got lucky that way.
  o We had a business at the Redmond airport that wanted to expand, needed a proper building – 2009 we got a $2mm grant/loan from state to build a $4mm building with everything to maintain an aircraft. That leveraged other things along the way.
  o Message there = find those businesses you can meet with, understand their needs, find state grants to help them (e.g. tourism grants for sky divers, Connect Oregon to help traded sector businesses expand).
  o Daimler actually started doing work in Madras in the 70s right when FHWA established antilock brake requirement for new vehicles. They were testing antilock braking systems in Madras at airport. They have rented a small building ever since. Then one day we got a call that they wanted to move it there.
  o Build on what you have. Don’t take those small ones for granted.

• Question from LCGOT staff: Does Madras have an active support mechanism for entrepreneurship?

  o I learned that a downtown business owner was given notice that she pay $500/month more for storefront or she needed to get out in 7 days. Been there for 10 years, lived upstairs. Stable business. Made me think that we needed to get capital for nontraditional business owners acquire and maintain property. Assets/wealth building.
  o Talked to COIC (administer a lot of EDA funding from state) and asked for money. EDA said we needed a study. Got a grant to do a Small Business Support Feasibility Study – how do we support our small businesses?
  o Included in that was wanting to learn how home-based businesses could transition to brick and mortar. Also interviewed some traded sector businesses (smaller ones) to see what they need.
  o I believe that’s a strong approach. As you focus on nontraditional business owners, it’s a strong play for getting money from EDA and other state agencies right now. Get a study to articulate the need so you can ask those partners to help you out. That’s our goal.
How do you get people selling the goods people want downtown? Displays/storefronts people like to see. E.g. soap making business. Get multipliers/cross pollination, suddenly people are making 3 stops downtown. Female business owners in our downtown are making it happen.

- Question from City staff: What is Madras’ employment shed? Do people leave town for work?
  - Yes. 2300 people come into Madras every day for work. 1400 leave. Only 800 stay.
  - I learned through studies why people are leaving our community every day – top 3 reasons are intuitive:
    - 1) I have a spouse and they work in Bend, I work in Madras, we live in Redmond.
    - 2) I have a family with kids and my parents live somewhere else in Central OR and they watch my kids for free during the week – save $ on childcare.
    - 3) Quality of life – Bend has amenities we don’t have. Also why Urban Renewal work is so important – provide more dining and retail opportunities to push back on that. COVID has changed that. People leaving major metro areas (especially Portland & Bend/Redmond markets). Madras – you can have an urban rural lifestyle. We need to start homing in on that. I’m fine to drive an hour to Costco once a month. Don’t need to be any closer. People now starting to see they can afford more on larger property in Madras and still have amazing views, etc. much better quality of life than Bend.

- Question from City staff: Is community’s access to broadband or even fast/fiber a factor in getting people to stay living and working in Madras?
  - It’s hurting us. County administrator for 6-7+ years trying to get broadband to community. Proposals are due Monday. EDA planning grant for $280k countywide broadband plan.
  - Key for broadband: communities and counties need to take leadership. New thing called Broadband Action/Advisory Teams (BAS). 5-6 across the state. Diverse consortium of people working together to address broadband issues. In every case they’re developing broadband plans, mostly at countywide level.
  - Money coming out through Business Oregon right now. State funding for the planning, but also EDA funding.
  - Get funding to create these plans. Lane County should have a BAS. I’d be trying to find a way to have a conversation with County Administrator or Commission. Use Madras’ scope of work, polish it up with community issues. Can literally advertise it right now.
  - We think of it as a 3-step process
    - Develop plan
    - Engineering/design for infrastructure we’re going to have/need in plan (like a TSP for broadband)
- Fund it – public/private partnerships, go to EDA and telecommunications office (obscure federal office) – bundle of money right now for communications on broadband
  - We hope to be there in about 2 years (applying for grants)
  - Filed grant app in January 2021, notice of approval in June 2021. Soliciting, proposals due soon. This spring will submit a grant for phase 2.
  - Key = multidisciplinary advisory team.
- Economic development takes commitment. Have to have a team or team members who are willing to get stuff done. I put in more hours than some of my counterparts. But we’re moving the needle. Eyes wide open – it doesn’t just happen by itself.
- Idea about wineries – big changes happening in wine industry. Within 15 minutes of Creswell you can go to several vineyards. So maybe there’s your marketing thing. People love wine. In downtown – wine barrel trash cans, tune up by local craftsman. Bill yourself as a winery town. Part of Economic Development strategy is trying to find a way to get retail into downtown area. Wine industry supportive stuff.
- Conversation with leadership – let’s all get on the same page and start getting base hits. Don’t get a grand slam on every at bat. Have to load the bases. Every now and then you hit the big one. Little projects along the way add up over time.
- Clean up community to create appearance it’s a nice community plus systematic changes (e.g. downtown revitalization, helping out new and existing businesses).
- Director in McMinnville would be good to interview – bright mind.

City of Sisters

Questions

1. We understand that the City of Sisters has a long history of strong visioning and economic development planning. Can you speak a little bit about some key efforts in the past 10 years?

   What were the most important/significant/impactful steps you took to support and encourage economic development in Sisters?

2. What strategies didn’t work? What mistakes did you make? What would you do differently if given the chance to do it again?

3. What are the barriers or challenges Sisters has worked to overcome by pursuing specific economic development strategies?

4. What key strengths helped Sisters succeed?

5. Is there anything else you’d like to add?
Discussion Notes

- From visioning perspective, community had two major efforts: one in the 90s and one in the early 2000s
  - Neither was particularly structured or had a real plan as to how to sustain it
- COIC (LCOG equivalent) was a key partner in our recent visioning effort (2018) – how do we build this into the fabric of the city and community (like Independence & Hillsboro that have visioning process that has lasted decades).
- Started talking about it in 2012-2013 during Great Recession – emphasis to focus a little more on traded sector economic development. Sisters pretty well known because it’s a tourist destination. Most people think of us as that even though our economy is fairly diverse/balanced/resilient – not one dimensional. If all you’re doing is driving through on Highway 20 that’s all you see.
- Economic development vision coalesced around a full-time contract with economic development with Central Oregon to have a program manager out here – not a city employee but part of team. Program has had success over the last handful of years, but got to interesting point now where we’re likely dissolving that contract partly because it has been so successful and partly because growth has become such an issue.
  - Now we’re trying to balance – we have companies here and we can be very picky, how do we support them and sustain them.
  - We also ran out of land. Just adopted new Comp Plan a couple of weeks ago with new EOA, new buildable lands inventory.
- When Great Recession hit it was an eye opener for Sisters community to say – in 2007/08/09/10 we had some traded sector, but we could use more. No opportunity like a crisis. And we had the resources of land. And it was palatable politically – all those stars aligned for us to invest in it. Some companies have come about because of that, but a lot of them were already here and have expanded with some additional support. So much of it is timing – where is the community at and who’s championing it and how does it align with everything else.
- Wanted to do comprehensive plan update somewhat sequentially while visioning work was fresh – take community visioning work and roll that into city-specific vision of the comprehensive plan. Our roadmap moving forward.
- We’ve gotten a little bigger & more sophisticated – do things more systemically and sustain efforts. 3 City Managers in 3 years before I came here. Politics have calmed down and we’ve been able to invest in some of these efforts.
- Question from Creswell staff: I have to echo your community’s sentiments about diversifying local economy around products or work that are more durable regardless of economic conditions. What role has infrastructure in your ability to attract businesses and how has that same relationship affected success of the airport?
  - Staying one step ahead on all master plans and capital improvement projects, expanding capacity and redundancy. Put yourself in a position to never have an issue. We’ve done a good job – growth has never put us in a corner.
• Traffic & transportation has been a major issue – we got a roundabout built on Highway 20 (first on a state route in 30 years). Working hard to get the other end built. Bookend alternate route kind of system that runs through our industrial area.
• Airport is one of the only privately owned publicly accessible airports in the state. Strategic investment that has helped extend sewer out to airport (forgivable IFA loan) – master plan 5 years ago. Most recent annexation the city has done. Untapped potential in terms of land & buildings they have – run an engineering company out there.

- Biggest thing for us coming out of visioning effort is how do we balance 4 focus areas – livable-connected-resilient-prosperous. We have issues with workforce housing, childcare. Even if we brought more companies here could they be functional? Other issues in terms of who’s going to work for them. Layering all that in is important.

- Difference in working with other communities – come one come all, we’ll work with you. (e.g. much more willing to work with marijuana growers because if they fail then some other business might just move in and use the building they’ve built out). Sisters complete opposite – don’t have the land. Had the luxury of being more able to choose. Looking for niche target industry. Latest economic development strategic plan revolved around that (vs. willing to accept anyone).
  • Work with the card you’re dealt. I try not to influence things without understanding community desires and where support is or isn’t.
  • We’re also influenced by proximity to Bend/Redmond. Recognize where our priorities are. Economic development is a priority but it’s lower than livability and parks, transportation, essential infrastructure, public safety, and other things, including tourism.
  • Doing a destination management initiative to look at how we manage tourism and that sector of the economy in a new creative way that small towns usually don’t have capacity to do. We need to invest more energy in that while we take a break from traded sector economic development – again, ebb & flow.

- It is very, very hard to find affordable housing in Sisters. Hard a couple years ago, with pandemic it’s gotten outrageous. Median house price up to $650k. On par with Portland and Bend. A lot of retirees, wealth from other areas moving into the region.
  • We have focus areas and then top 20 strategies (5-10 years) to move forward on. We want to advance these strategies, we want more amenities. Small town feel is what people in Bend & Redmond have lost – already worried that Sisters is losing that. It’s cherished. It’s a bit of Zoom town/pandemic phenomenon.
  • Growth for growth sake – you do want and need good living wage jobs and those things, but if that’s what you want your identity to be you have to understand the balance that comes with that. We were fortunate that design standards / built environment have helped establish identity here. Public events have played a really important part. Really strong school system. Really engaged communities (lots of small towns like that) – cultivating that is really important. We’ve had some nonprofits step up.
Citizens from Community – civility project helped community move through tough political time, now evolving into how do we convene partners in the community to get good work done, create community website, etc. City doesn’t have bandwidth, but support community doing it. An economic development tool.

One big economic development tool = are you a place that people want to be/live/associate with? E.g. wearing a shirt that says “Made in Creswell” on it. Vs. We’re going to give you a $50k forgivable loan to create X # of jobs

We created a forgivable loan program and did one loan for Laird Superfood – big deal when they came, but jury is out. Would they have come without the loan? Don’t know. And we’ve never done another loan.

- Question from LCOG: In Creswell, conversation around deliberate support for local agriculture. Is that occurring in sisters?
  - There’s agricultural around Sisters but not as much land per se (like Willamette Valley). A key component that I need to continue to support more/would love to see strengthened = how are we supporting makers spaces. Artisanal community, craftsmanship, seed to table. Most Oregon communities are well positioned if they can capitalize on that and tell a story about what is being made. Different scale, but McMinnville and other communities in wine country have done a tremendous job of integrating those.

- Why I have supported visioning – noticed in Sisters that there are a lot of groups doing tremendous work in their little sphere but not coordinating with each other or leveraging or thinking about big picture. That to me is essence of vision – how do we systematically/systemically coordinate, leverage, build, and sustain some of these things. Talking about these things for quite a while. Majority of things on this latest version were not new things. So a matter of how do we stop talking about them and actually get them done?
  - Vision or having vision is a tool to go talk to agencies that have grants or foundations that can provide funding o capacity to say hey we’ve gone through this work, we are on the same page. Now we need your help to get it done. There’s value in having that ready to go to be able to use as a tool to attract additional resources and energy.

- Our airplane has been built and is still being built in flight. Former Mayor helped champion vision. We made arrangement with COIC as public partner but also outside of Sisters to help facilitate the vision implementation team. We were a year into it when the pandemic hit. Product of trying to tread water & not go backwards. City not interested in spending $20k/year on facilitation – if this is a community vision, are other partners willing to step up as well to help fund and sustain this thing?

- Doing annual updates, work plans, reporting back to community about work they’re doing. A lot of work we already would be doing aligns with the vision.

- Buy-in is really important. Vision Implementation Team – COIC created a charter and a pledge by each member. Haven’t done as much as we ’d like because COVID. If projects are too nebulous or take too long, hard to sustain high level of energy and enthusiasm. Might lose champions.
• Scaffolding – clear expectations about what this is, what this isn’t depending on what you’re trying to accomplish. Avoiding that is important.

• Question from Creswell staff: You alluded to synchronization around political or community identity – can you speak to how that came about? Did something unify everyone? Is it anti-this or pro-something else campaign?
  o Opinion that staff really drives a lot of what’s going on. We have been fortunate to work for councils that recognize that to some extent – they’re the jury. You prep the case & present, they decide. Staff has to be bought in to what’s the purpose, where is it going. Community has to be more pro-focused, but same talking point we use during comp plan.
  o Some people associated comprehensive plan with growth – no, comp plan means we can manage the growth that will come whether we want it to or not.
  o Same with vision – it allows us to shape change happening in community whether we want it or note. Recognizing that is really important. We also know that if it’s positive THIS then we avoid negative THAT.
  o City of Sisters has 3200 people. Surrounding area around sisters is 10k people – most people who say “I live in…” don’t actually. That’s why County was a very key stakeholder – partly to know that time would come where they’re updating their comprehensive plan and we know if we’re doing UGB expansion we have to coordinate about adjacent plans. Some feel good parts of visioning, but also nuts & bolts – roadmap.
  o COIC was a really key player as well. Those are the most important: COIC, County, City – but also school district, fire district, all those players.

• Question from LCOG staff: Any other good examples for this topic?
  o Re: broader visioning – Independence & Hillsboro. Also Newport. All 3 of those have taken different flavors of city vision vs. community vision vs. somewhere in the middle. We had guest speakers come from some of those communities, speak to executive committee under vision.
  o Janell Rule at COIC has been our vision facilitator since we started Vision Implementation Team. She would be a great person to talk to.