

2021 - 2025 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

Village of Crestline



2021 - 2025
CEDS



CONTENTS

Introduction	2
CEDS Process.....	3
Summary Background.....	4
Swot Analysis.....	7
Action Plan.....	9
Economic Resilience.....	14
Evaluation Framework.....	15
Funding and Initiatives.....	16
Public Comment.....	19

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INTRODUCTION

A Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is a locally-driven plan for economic development. The CEDS process is an effective method for coordinating economic development efforts, engaging stakeholders, and establishing a strategic guide for collaboration. A diverse group of local representatives from the private, public, and nonprofit sectors make up the Strategy Committee, which is responsible for developing and updating the CEDS.

The Village of Crestline contracted the Bowling Green State University (BGSU) Center for Regional Development (CRD) to act as the lead agency for the development of this first CEDS for the village. The CEDS process is overseen by the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) and CRD is an EDA University Center. The CEDS process commenced with the first Strategy Committee meeting in May 2020 and concluded when the CEDS was finalized in January 2021.

Cover photo is courtesy of Ohio Perspectives.

CEDS PROCESS

Summary Background

Provides an overview of the village's previous efforts and its current economic situation.

Stakeholder Outreach

Collects input from community members to determine their priorities and help guide the SWOT Analysis.

SWOT Analysis

Identifies the village's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

Action Plan

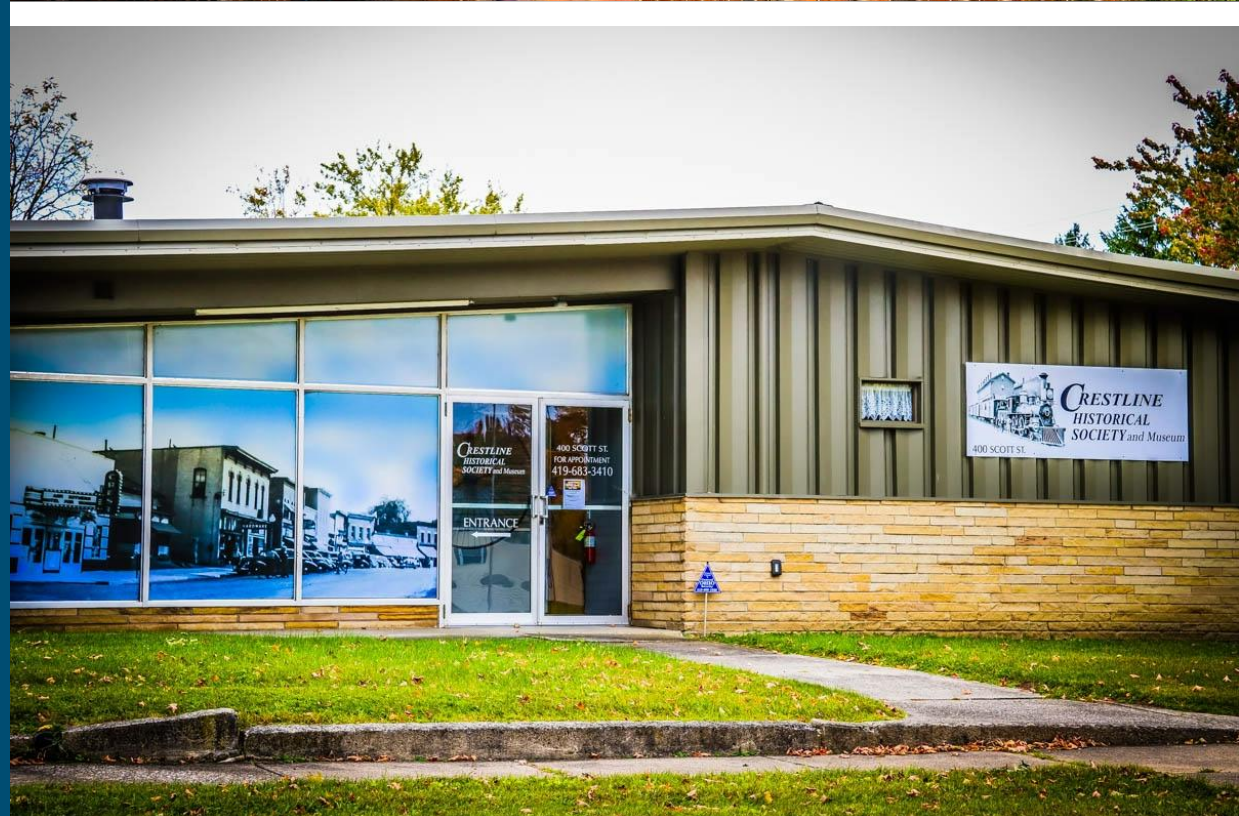
Integrates tactics and priorities identified throughout the process and produces an actionable plan.

Economic Resilience

Uncovers the village's vulnerabilities and incorporates methods to prevent and respond to economic disruptions.

Evaluation Framework

Develops methods and metrics for assessing the progress and effectiveness of the plan.



SUMMARY BACKGROUND

To start the CEDS process, the CRD research team collected data and plans at the village and county level to gain an understanding of the current economic situation and previous efforts related to economic development. The information collected provided a foundation for the planning process.

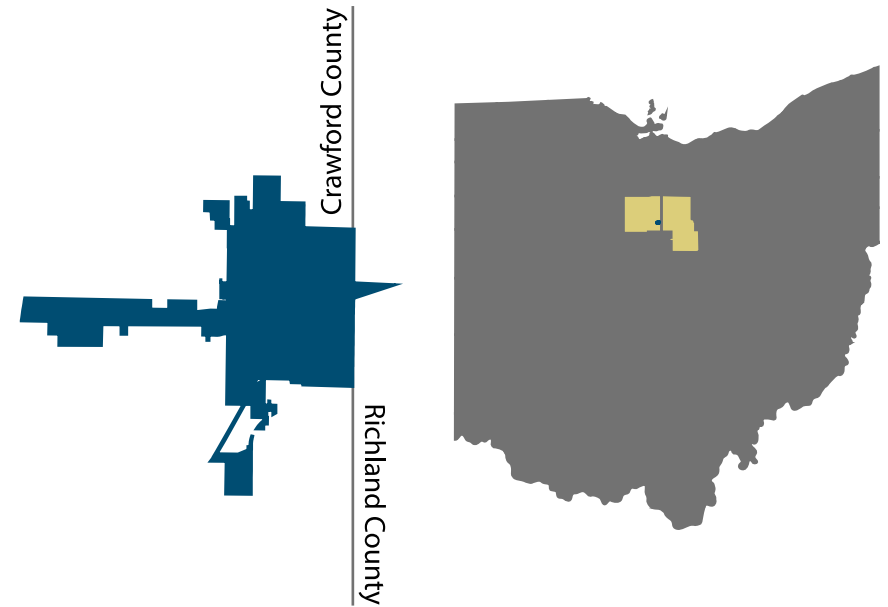
Some key strengths and opportunities for Crestline emerged from the analysis of the economic data and plans. One strength is that the region enjoys a low cost of living. Furthermore, Crawford County and Richland County's 2019 cost of living indexes are lower than those of all the counties that touch them and Ohio's index (Emsi).

A major opportunity appeared, as retail leakage data showed that more than \$25 million in spending by locals on the retail trade and food and drink leaks out of the village (Esri). This means that the village has an opportunity to get locals to spend more money in Crestline by expanding and attracting businesses in those industries.

Another opportunity and strength became apparent after reviewing the U.S. Census Bureau's OnTheMap commuting data for the village. 2017 data for private primary jobs shows that nearly all of Crestline's residents (93.1%) are employed outside the village. Despite working elsewhere, people choose to live in Crestline.

The commuting data points to an opportunity to further grow the community by marketing the village to potential residents. In addition to attracting more residents, the commuting data, coupled with the retail leakage data, shows there is the potential to provide more job opportunities. This would increase the tax base and assist with efforts to attract residents to Crestline.

Another strength, which may be connected to why people choose to live in Crestline, is the village has followed its plans to improve its public facilities, particularly its buildings. The village's last major plan, the 2004 Comprehensive Land Use Plan, called for building a new school complex and a community center, which were accomplished.



Village of Crestline



Transportation Access and Sites for Development¹

Some of Crestline's greatest assets are its access to rail lines (gray) and highways going north-south, State Route 61 (white), and east-west, U.S. Route 30 (gold). The village also recently annexed more than 150 acres of land (stars) near the U.S. 30 and S.R. 61 interchange to make the land available for development.

The Hub (photo on the right) is one of the most recently renovated buildings in Crestline and sits in the center of the village. The owners named it based on their desire to attract a business to occupy it that would make it a gathering place for the community.



Leakage opportunities

\$25,440,821 in spending on retail and food & drink by Crestline residents is spent outside the village.²

1,548 people are living in Crestline but work outside the village.³

¹Geographic data is courtesy of Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) Transportation Information Mapping System (TIMS)

²Esri and Infogroup, Retail MarketPlace Profile, 2017

³U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap, Inflow/Outflow, Private Primary Jobs, 2017

The data and plan analysis also uncovered some key challenges. One of the village's greatest weaknesses and the impetus for the CEDS process is its infrastructure. The most critical infrastructure issue is the wastewater treatment plant is at capacity, which prevents the village from growing.

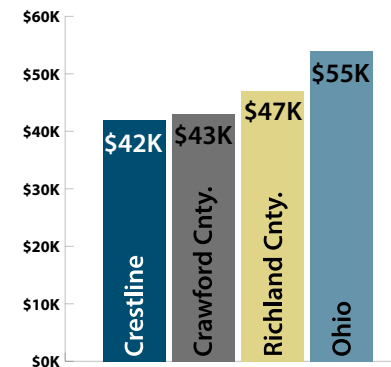
Another key issue for the village is that its residents' income is at the low end for the region. The 2018 median household income estimate for Crestline (\$42,038) is lower than those of Crawford County (\$42,892), Richland County (\$47,346), and Ohio (\$54,533) (ACS).

A review of Crestline's demographic data uncovered two key threats to the workforce. One threat is the village's 2018 prime working age (25 – 54) population rate estimate (32%) is smaller than those of Crawford County (36%), Richland County (37%), and Ohio (38%) (ACS). Crestline's prime working age population rate has decreased and is projected to continue decreasing through 2030 (Emsi).

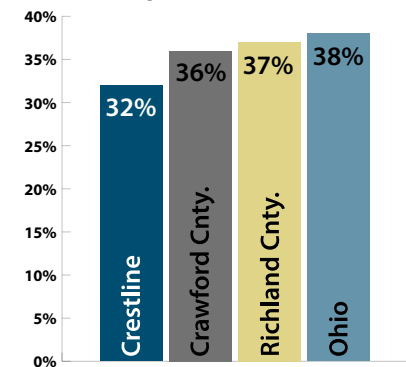
Another potential issue is the village's educational attainment rates, specifically the percentage of Crestline residents with a bachelor's degree or higher. Crestline's 2018 bachelor's degree or higher attainment rate estimate (10%) was lower than those of Crawford County (16%), Richland County (18%), and Ohio (30%) (ACS). Higher rates of residents with bachelor's and graduate degrees are typically associated with higher earnings and may impact the types of industries the village can attract.



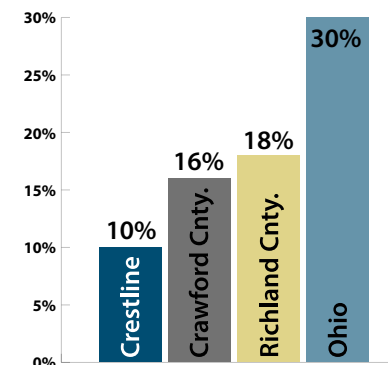
Median Household Income¹



Ages 25 - 54 Population %¹



Bachelor's Degree or Higher Attainment¹

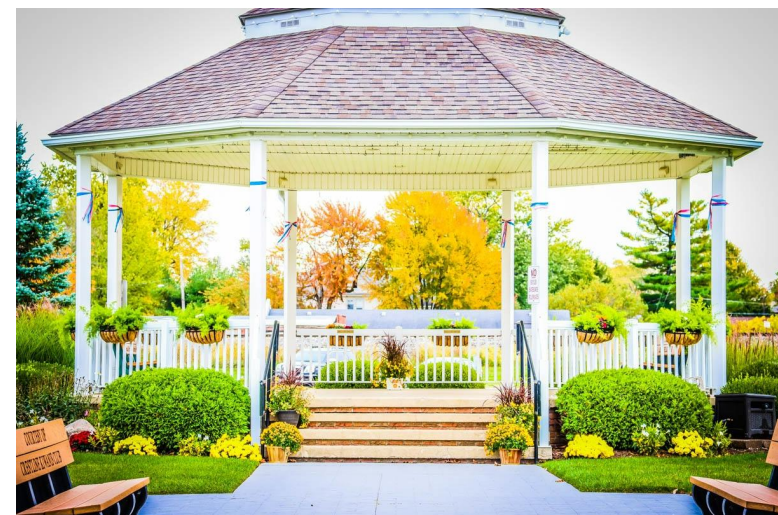


¹U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5-year data, 2018

SWOT ANALYSIS

CRD conducted an analysis of Crestline's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) to identify the village's greatest assets for development and factors that could limit its economic potential. The research team derived the SWOT analysis from an analysis of economic indicators, components of existing plans, and data collected from an outreach process.

The outreach process consisted of a public survey, focus group, and stakeholder interviews. 149 community members answered at least one question on the public survey. Strategy committee members participated in a focus group and interviews. The input provided in the outreach process helped the research team identify the community members' priorities and create a framework for the SWOT analysis.



SWOT ANALYSIS RESULTS

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STRENGTHS

- Community spirit/pride
- Community members
- Safe
- Small town/quiet
- Cost of living
- Location - proximity to cities
- Downtown development/revitalization
- New village leadership
- Rail and highway access
- Community development
- Public facilities - parks, pool, community center, new school
- Local businesses

WEAKNESSES

- Infrastructure
- Public transportation
- Job opportunities
- Labor force
- Low income
- Affordable, quality housing
- Recreational activities/cultural amenities for young people
- Economic development
- School quality
- Resistance to change
- Local support and funding for development
- Long-term planning

OPPORTUNITIES

- Marketing
- Develop annexed land by interchange
- Regional collaboration and partnerships
- Business attraction
- Community member involvement
- Small business development
- Additional retail and food & drink
- School partnerships
- Outreach to employers
- Bedroom community

THREATS

- School reputation
- Regional varsity jacket mentality
- Housing options
- Perception of community
- Working age population decline
- Educational attainment
- Workforce gap between skills and employer needs

ACTION PLAN

The previous parts of the CEDS process led up to its main purpose: creating a plan for the community. Strategy Committee members transformed the results of the SWOT analysis into a strategic framework, which guided the development of activities for the implementation of the plan.



Vision: As a business-friendly and welcoming community, the Village of Crestline is committed to the continuous enhancement of infrastructure and a great quality of life by supporting an environment whereby commerce, education, and employment can thrive, resulting in a strong and vibrant local economy to work, live, and play.

GOAL 1

Attract, expand, and retain businesses, and maintain and renovate aging infrastructure.

Objective 1A: Develop the annexed land at the US 30 and SR 61 interchange.

Action Step 1A.1: Determine the most suitable zoning for the annexed land.

Timeline: 1 year | Stakeholders: Village administration and council, and community members

Action Step 1A.2: Extend the sewer system to the site.

Timeline: 3 - 4 years | Stakeholders: Village administration and council, and EPA

Action Step 1A.3: Generate site metrics and data for development.

Timeline: 2 years - ongoing | Stakeholders: Village administration and council, and developers

Objective 1B: Upgrade the wastewater treatment plant and replace the main water line and sewer line controls.

Action Step 1B.1: Create a plan for upgrading the wastewater treatment plant and collection system.

Timeline: 1 year | Stakeholders: Village administration and council, and engineers

Action Step 1B.2: Acquire funding for the wastewater treatment plant and collection system.

Timeline: 1 year | Stakeholders: Village administration and council

Action Step 1B.3: Remove the stormwater from the sanitary sewer.

Timeline: 5+ years | Stakeholders: Village administration and council

Objective 1C: Create and maintain short- and long-term capital improvement plans.

Action Step 1C.1: Form a committee of village stakeholders including elected officials, citizens, and businesses to discuss and determine capital improvements needed to move the village forward.

Timeline: 1 year | Stakeholders: Village administration and council, businesses, and citizens

Action Step 1C.2: Have each council committee work with department heads to come up with a 5-year plan of improvements in their area.

Timeline: 1 year | Stakeholders: Village administration and council

Action Step 1C.3: Reach out to and develop partnerships with neighboring communities.

Timeline: 1 year | Stakeholders: Village administration

Objective 1D: Regularly communicate with businesses in the village to monitor and assist with their needs and issues.

Action Step 1D.1: Meet individually with new and existing businesses.

Timeline: 1 year - ongoing | Stakeholders: Village administration

Action Step 1D.2: Hold quarterly business roundtables.

Timeline: 1 year - ongoing | Stakeholders: Village administration

GOAL 2

Continue to develop and revitalize Downtown Crestline.

Objective 2A: Increase the amount of retail and food and drink establishments in the downtown area.

Action Step 2A.1: Generate a start-up loan process.

Timeline: 2 years | Stakeholders: Village administration and council, and businesses

Action Step 2A.2: Advertise the Hub and downtown to recruit new restaurants and retail.

Timeline: 1 - 3 years | Stakeholders: Village administration

Objective 2B: Stimulate site development and acquire additional developers.

Action Step 2B.1: Produce a plan to create sites downtown.

Timeline: 5 years | Stakeholders: Village administration and council, and business committee

Action Step 2B.2: Create economic incentives for development.

Timeline: 1 year | Stakeholders: Village administration and council

Action Step 2B.3: Advertise opportunities and incentives.

Timeline: 1 year | Stakeholders: Village administration and council

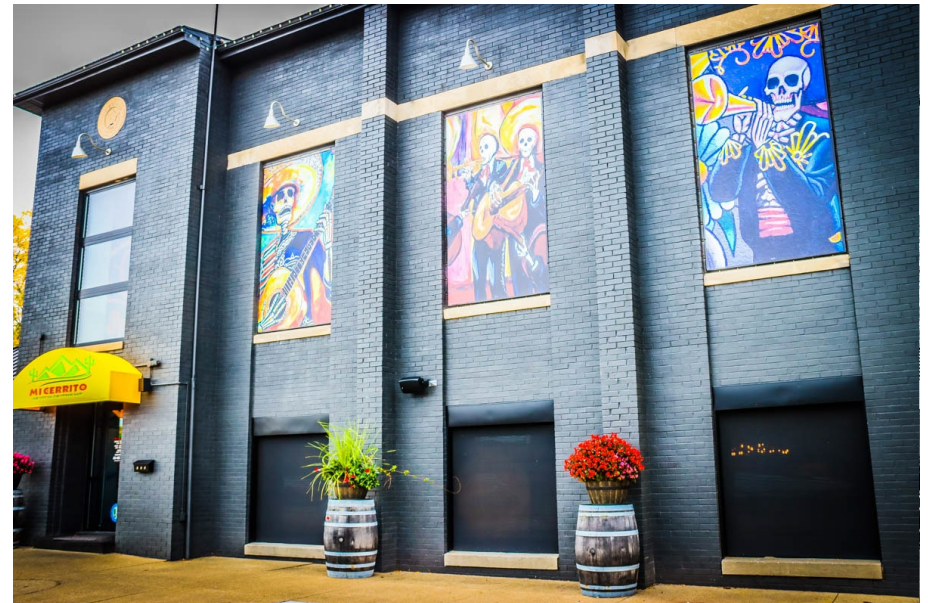
Objective 2C: Enhance the infrastructure downtown, including streets, sidewalks, and curbs.

Action Step 2C.1: Form a committee to develop branding/placemaking strategies.

Timeline: 2 years | Stakeholders: Village administration

Action Step 2C.2: Develop a plan for downtown infrastructure improvements.

Timeline: 1 year - ongoing | Stakeholders: Village administration and council



Crestline's newest restaurant, Mi Cerrito, was an exciting development for the village. The owners revamped the building, which added culture, art, and other attractive features to the downtown area.

GOAL 3

Ensure a high quality of life for current and potential residents and businesses.

Objective 3A: Recruit housing developers to increase the stock of affordable, quality housing.

Action Step 3A.1: Search for an appropriate site for development.

Timeline: 1 year - ongoing | Stakeholders: Village administration

Action Step 3A.2: Maintain relationships with developers.

Timeline: Ongoing | Stakeholders: Village administration and council, and businesses

Objective 3B: Add new and upgrade existing cultural and recreational amenities.

Action Step 3B.1: Collaborate with neighboring communities to connect bike and walking paths.

Timeline: Ongoing | Stakeholders: Village administration

Action Step 3B.2: Produce a plan to connect the bike and walking path from the village to Lowe-Volk Park.

Timeline: 1 - 5 years | Stakeholders: Village administration and council

Action Step 3B.3: Generate a plan to create a dog park.

Timeline: 1 - 2 years | Stakeholders: Village administration and council

Objective 3C: Boost the appearance of the village and reduce blight.

Action Step 3C.1: Maintain the village's connection with the Crawford County Land Bank.

Timeline: Ongoing | Stakeholders: Village administration and council

Action Step 3C.2: Start a volunteer group or committee that will reach out to community groups for assistance with litter pick up, mowing, and trimming of easements.

Timeline: 1 year - ongoing | Stakeholders: United Way and Community Development Team

Action Step 3C.3: Invest more resources to maintain the Paramore Creek.

Timeline: 3 - 5 years | Stakeholders: Village administration and council

Objective 3D: Regularly connect with community members to increase their involvement in community matters and promote positivity.

Action Step 3D.1: Hold quarterly townhall meetings for community members at the community center.

Timeline: 1 year - ongoing | Stakeholders: Village administration and council

Action Step 3D.2: Ensure that people who might be marginalized, such as those that have disabilities or belong to other minority groups, are being reached and have equal access to engagement opportunities and opportunities to provide input on infrastructure projects.

Timeline: 1 year - ongoing | Stakeholders: Village administration

GOAL 4

Support an educated and skilled workforce to meet current and future employer needs.

Objective 4A: Improve the quality and outcomes of the Crestline Public Schools.

Action Step 4A.1: Continue efforts to improve curriculum and extracurricular opportunities.

Timeline: 1 - 2 years - ongoing | Stakeholders: School district administration and school board

Action Step 4A.2: Increase tutoring and mentorship programs with community partners.

Timeline: 1 - 2 years - ongoing | Stakeholders: School district administration, community leaders, business owners, and United Way

Action Step 4A.3: Expand opportunities for community involvement and pride.

Timeline: Ongoing | Stakeholders: School district administration, families, boosters, PTO, and community members

Objective 4B: Implement a career pathways initiative.

Action Step 4B.1: Host a career fair at the high school.

Timeline: 1 - 2 years | Stakeholders: School district administration and businesses

Action Step 4B.2: Get involved in the wage tours.

Timeline: 1 - 2 years | Stakeholders: School district administration, Crawford County Partnership, and county chambers of commerce

Objective 4C: Invigorate partnerships between employers and the education system.

Action Step 4C.1: Engage with employers through existing networks.

Timeline: Ongoing | Stakeholders: School district administration and area employers



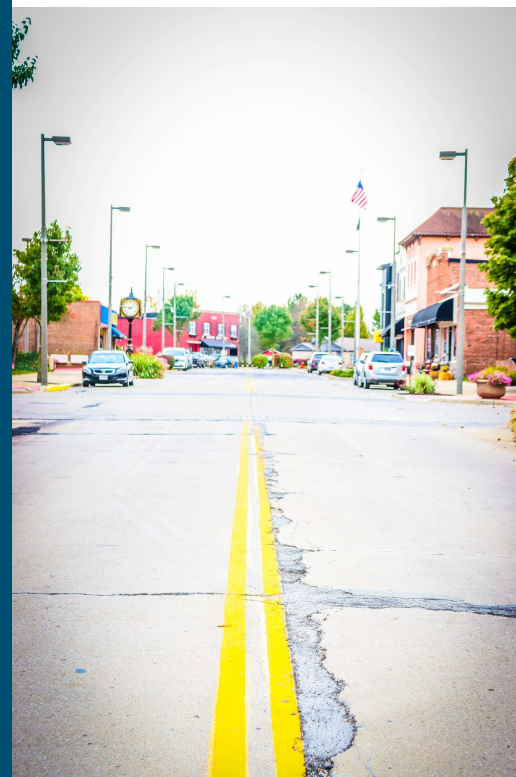
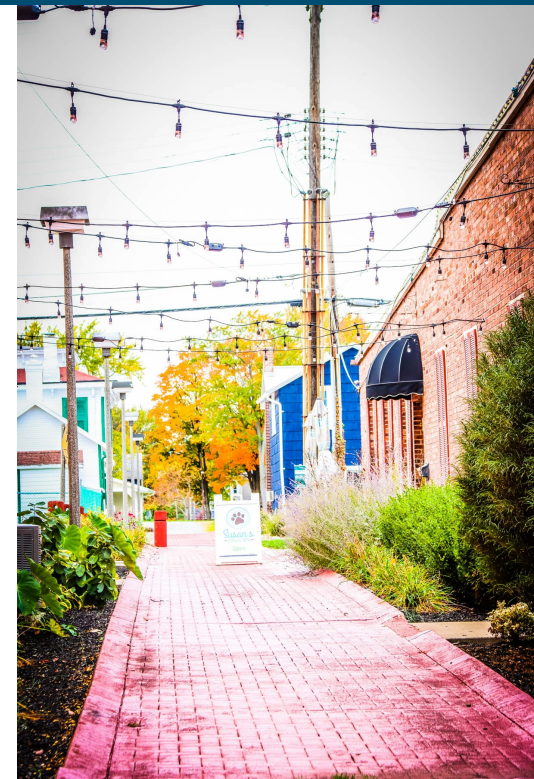
2020 Crestline High School graduates pose for photos after their graduation ceremony.

ECONOMIC RESILIENCE

A community's ability to avoid, withstand, and rapidly recover from serious economic disruptions is linked to its economic vitality. This process provides a mechanism for a community to identify areas in which it might be vulnerable to different disruptions, like the loss of a major employer or a pandemic. While a community's chief focus should be on implementing proactive measures to prevent such disruptions, communities should also utilize efforts that respond to disruptions.

Throughout the planning process, topics related to the resiliency of Crestline's economy were discussed. Additionally, the strategy committee met to specifically discuss the topic. While the committee had previously discussed past and current major economic shocks, like the COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting gave them a chance to discuss other potential disruptions. Discussing these potential scenarios helped them identify Crestline's vulnerabilities and ways to improve the village's ability to prevent and respond to various economic disruptions.

The strategy committee determined that the most crucial effort the village needed to carry out to prevent such disruptions was communicating with businesses and community members. Although the village had previously offered opportunities to connect and gain feedback from businesses and community members, the committee decided the opportunities needed to be offered more frequently and robustly. Providing more opportunities to receive and share information with the community will allow the village to more effectively prevent and respond to issues. The committee added these activities to the action plan.



EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

This development of the evaluation framework helps ensure the successful implementation of the plan. There are two parts to this evaluation: assessing the progress of the plan's implementation and assessing whether the action steps are achieving the intended outcomes. The strategy committee developed metrics to measure the progress of the plan in reaching the vision, goals, and objectives. The village administration will collect data for the metrics to share with the strategy committee, so they can determine if the plan needs any adjustments.



Goal 1:
Attract, expand,
and retain
businesses, and
maintain and
renovate aging
infrastructure.

Metrics

- Increase the number of new and existing businesses
- Increase the amount of public sector capital investments
- Increase the amount of private sector investments
- Increase the number of jobs created by new and expanded businesses
- Increase the average wages or salaries of jobs attracted

- Increase population for ages 25 - 54
- Increase citizen satisfaction with overall progress
- Decrease the poverty rate
- Increase per capita income
- Stabilize the tax rate
- Increase tax revenue
- Increase the number of building permits issued

Metrics

Goal 3:
Ensure a high
quality of life for
current and
potential residents
and businesses.

Goal 2:
Continue to
develop and
revitalize
Downtown
Crestline.

Metrics

- Increase the number of new and existing businesses downtown
- Increase the amount of public sector capital investments downtown
- Increase the amount of private sector investments downtown
- Increase visitor and citizen satisfaction with downtown progress

- Increase the Ohio School Report Card district grade
- Increase the high school graduation rate
- Increase the labor force participation rate
- Increase educational attainment rates by level
- Increase business satisfaction with the workforce

Metrics

Goal 4:
Support an
educated and
skilled workforce
to meet current
and future
employer needs.

FUNDING AND INITIATIVES

Securing financial resources is key to achieving many of the CEDS' goals and objectives. This can be strengthened by also taking advantage of existing initiatives and efforts that align with the goals and objectives. The following table provides a summary of a number of potential funding opportunities and initiatives.

Federal Resources		
U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA)	Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance (EAA) Programs	The EDA's Public Works and EAA programs provide economically distressed communities and regions with funding to address a wide variety of economic needs. Two of the EDA's funding priorities are critical infrastructure and work in Opportunity Zones.
	Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act	The EDA's CARES Act funding opportunity extends the EAA program above and makes every community eligible, as the coronavirus pandemic constitutes the "Special Need" required under the EAA program.
U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development (RD)	Water & Waste Disposal Loan & Grant Program	The USDA RD's Water & Waste Disposal Loan & Grant Program provides funding for clean and reliable drinking water systems, sanitary sewage disposal, sanitary solid waste disposal, and storm water drainage to households and businesses in eligible rural areas.
State Resources		
Ohio Development Services Agency (ODSA)	Rural Industrial Park Loan Program (RIPL)	The ODSA's RIPL program provides low-interest direct loans to assist eligible applicants, which includes municipalities, in financing the development and improvement of industrial parks and related off-site public infrastructure improvements. The loan may be used to finance up to 75% of allowable project costs and at least 50% of the outstanding loan balance may be forgiven upon successful completion of the project.

	Economic Development Loan and Public Infrastructure Grant Program	The ODSA's Economic Development Loan and Public Infrastructure Grant Program provides funding to local government applicants for both economic development loan and public infrastructure projects. Public off-site infrastructure funds are retained as a grant by the local government. In the case of a loan, the local government grantee loans the funds to the beneficiary business for fixed asset financing projects and the funds are repaid to the local government Revolving Loan Fund.
	Ohio Opportunity Zone Tax Credit Program	The Ohio Opportunity Zone Tax Credit Program provides a nonrefundable tax credit against the individual income tax for taxpayers that invest in projects located in designated Ohio Opportunity Zones. A portion of the Village of Crestline is in an Opportunity Zone.
	Community Housing Impact and Preservation Program (CHIP)	The CHIP program provides funding to local governments to improve and provide affordable housing for low- and moderate-income (LMI) citizens. The grants are awarded competitively and encourage a flexible, community-wide approach to improving and providing affordable housing for LMI persons, and strengthening neighborhoods through community collaboration.
Local Resource		
	Tax Increment Financing (TIF)	Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is an economic development mechanism available to local governments in Ohio to finance public infrastructure improvements and, in certain circumstances, residential rehabilitation. Payments derived from the increased assessed value of any improvement to real property beyond that amount are directed towards a separate fund to finance the construction of public infrastructure defined within the TIF legislation.

Other Resources

Project for Public Spaces (PPS)	Southwest Airlines Heart of the Community	The PPS serves as a central hub of the global placemaking movement, connecting people to ideas, resources, expertise, and partners. PPS partners with Southwest Airlines on the Heart of the Community grant program, which provides financial and technical assistance to local community partners who seek to bring new life to their public spaces and to strengthen their communities for a more resilient future.
National Endowment for the Arts	Our Town	The National Endowment for the Arts' Our Town is a creative placemaking grant program that supports projects that integrate arts, culture, and design activities into efforts that strengthen communities by advancing local economic, physical, and/or social outcomes. The program requires a partnership between a local government entity and nonprofit organization, one of which must be a cultural organization; and should engage in partnerships with other sectors.
The Community Foundation for Crawford County	Grant Program	The Community Foundation for Crawford County's grant program provides funding to nonprofits and governmental units for projects that support the needs of the residents of Crawford County. Grants are awarded to a variety of community projects including new projects, school projects that impact a broad spectrum of the school population, and programs for human services.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The Strategy Committee shared a draft copy of the CEDS report with the community to get their input on it, before finalizing the report. The public comment period opened on December 10, 2020 and closed on January 10, 2021, during which multiple community members submitted comments. Four themes appeared in the comments. One theme was excitement about the creation of a plan with specifics. Community members reacted positively to the strategy and mostly provided recommendations for implementing the plan, which is the foundation of the next two themes.

The second theme was community involvement. Commenters stressed the importance of getting buy-in and assistance from community members. In addition to getting community members involved, involving businesses and regional collaboration was recommended. Commenters also provided ways to get the community involved, like promoting the performing arts.

The third theme was remaining open-minded and flexible. There were two reasons for these suggestions. One reason for this suggestion was that the stakeholders might find ways to improve the plan that better serve the community, as they carry it out. The other reason to remain open-minded and flexible is to accept that the community will change, as a result of implementing the plan.

The final theme found in the comments was an interest in addressing two areas in the action plan that commenters thought were particularly important: improving aesthetics and infrastructure. To improve the appearance of the community, commenters suggested have a community clean-up day, during which large items could be picked up, and replacing street signs and other village signage. The comments that emphasized the importance of infrastructure improvements focused on streets and sidewalks. In particular, concerns about street and sidewalk accessibility for people with disabilities were expressed.

Overall, the comments demonstrate the community's excitement for the plan and interest in getting involved in its implementation. The community is a great resource for getting ideas and assistance. Not only is the community interested in helping and sharing feedback, the comments specified an interest in staying informed about the plan. Two-way communication will be key, so it will also be important for leaders to share information about the plan's progress and results with the community.

