

Town of Crewe  
Economic Development Strategic Plan

Adopted  
10 December 2012

## **Mission Statement**

The mission of the Town of Crewe's Economic Development Committee is increase town marketability for both businesses and families, encourage community involvement in the local economy, and establish a clear, fluid strategy for sustained growth.

## **Vision Statement**

The Town of Crewe will create an atmosphere conducive to economic growth while maintaining the nature and character of a "small town."

## Stakeholders

- Residents
  - Current: Many are older, grounded by strong community ties and lineage
  - Future: Younger, families; drawn in by small-town environment that is easily accessible to other areas
- Employees
  - Current: some local, many at Piedmont, Nottoway CC, and Ft. Pickett; few travel to Richmond and other areas
  - Future: Local business and industry, Ft. Pickett, FASTC facility, state assets
- Business Owners
  - Current: Long-established businesses, well-known members of the community
  - Future: Maintain the “well-known” aspect of business owners, increased focus on tourism and agriculture
- Faith-Based and Community Organizations/non-profits
  - Current: Decreasing in numbers, strong community ties and active involvement
  - Future: Continued involvement, growth in numbers
- Visitors
  - Current: Mostly travelers along 460
  - Future: Tourists for railroad and music history; include 360 travelers; take advantage of the local Civil War sites
- Region
  - Current: Economically depressed, heavily dependent on state resources
  - Future: Sustained through tourism and business
- Commonwealth
  - Area state resources include Nottoway Correctional Center, VCBR, Piedmont Geriatric, Ft. Pickett, and the Virginia Tech research center
  - The local school system provides opportunity for collaboration

## **Objective 1: Eliminate blight**

The outward appearance of a community is often an indication—conscious or otherwise—of the internal atmosphere. The *Broken Window Theory* tells us that apathy toward blight and petty crime result in more serious crime, low citizen morale, and ultimately being passed over by prospective industry. Conversely, when citizen morale is high through crime reduction, community involvement, and town beautification, businesses and families will choose to relocate to the town. For this reason, the first and most prominent goal of the Economic development Committee is to eliminate blight.

### **Goal 1: Improve Infrastructure**

#### Strategies:

- Repair sidewalks
  - Work with VDOT in prioritizing road/sidewalk projects
  - Utilize Department of Corrections labor

### **Goal 2: Increase government efficiency for implementing and enforcing blight policies**

#### Strategies:

- Review town ordinances and make necessary changes for efficiency
- Codify and organize ordinances into a single document
- Implement a zero-tolerance policy for building code violations

### **Goal 3: Engage residents in beautification**

#### Strategies:

- Implement a biannual town-wide neighborhood cleanup
- Utilize student community service
- Create a neighbor-helping-neighbor database of individuals and faith based and community organizations willing to assist elderly and disabled residents with yard work and home repairs
  - Explore AARP's createthegood.com program as a possible starting point

### **Goal 4: Give Main Street a “face lift”**

#### Strategies:

- Utilize inmates at the Nottoway Work Center for landscaping and trash upkeep
- Organize a roundtable discussion with Main Street property owners
  - Determine logistics, including condition buildings, what kind of business they can accommodate
  - Create a working document on buildings and availability
  - Collaborate on how the town can help owners attract new business

- Explore possible tax abatement program for owners bringing in business
- Explore downtown grant options
- Give attention to back roads and alleys

**Objective 2: Create a sustained, engaged citizenry**

The success of a town lies primarily with the motivation and interest of its residents. A happy, healthy, friendly community will be seen externally as an ideal place to work, live, and raise a family. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, involvement can come in many forms—from lively policy discussion with a neighbor, to attending events around town, to keeping up with the community on social networking sites. The methods of interaction are virtually limitless.

Goal 1: Keep citizens informed and involved in local governance

Strategies:

- Create an Annual Report to showcase the accomplishments and challenges the Town faced both the previous and upcoming years.
- Utilize social media to promote involvement
  - Expand the use of the Town’s Facebook page
  - Create a YouTube page featuring events around town, interviews with local residents and business owners, and other useful information
  - Highlight town activities regularly

Goal 2: Sponsor a “Know Your Community” series

Strategies:

- Invite local business owners, and community members to talk about themselves in a public setting
- Post video recordings on YouTube

Goal 4: Increase the overall physical health of the community

Strategies:

- Partner with the Crewe-Burkeville Recreation Association and increase the availability of outdoor facilities
  - Gauge the interest in new youth sports
  - Build an attractive, flat green area for sports and recreation
- Make available a single walking/biking route attaching the east and west sides of town
- Extend the walking path around the park
- Create a pedestrian crossing from the north side of 460 to the south, at or near the park

- Form a citizen’s taskforce to recommend ideas, solutions, and strategies for improving town health
  - Include Rec Association, Country Club, eatery owner representative, Chamber of Commerce, and other engaged citizens
- Explore a partnership with the Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) campaign

**Objective 3: Draw in visitors**

Visitors are the lifeline of any community. The initial appeal of the Town for individuals and families “passing by” is critical for the success of small businesses, and attracting future residents. At a recent Virginia Municipal League conference, an official from another community remarked, “I’ve heard of Crewe; but we know it as ‘halfway between Smithfield and Blacksburg.’” The Town is ideally sandwiched between two major highways, within reasonable driving distance from the coast, the mountains, and the City of Richmond. Combined with eliminating blight, efficiently utilizing location and external resources is the most effective way of bringing in visitors.

Goal 1: Create marketing strategy for the Town

Strategies:

- Create a memorable, positive, and unique slogan for the Town
  - Sponsor contest for best slogan, promoted through radio and high school marketing class
- Partner with local colleges for part-time marketing or public administration intern

Goal 2: Utilize major highways for advertising

Strategies:

- 460 advertising
  - Currently, the Town of Crewe has one of few stretches of 460 where the speed limit drops to 35 mph. With proper advertisement and signage, passers-by will opt to rest for a few moments, or overnight in and around town. Such advertisement should include tourist highlights, as well as food and information, always maintaining the small town atmosphere.
- 360 signage
  - Similar to the 460 advertisement, signs should be included on Rt 360 informing drivers of the food, lodging, and tourist options.

### Goal 3: Create an informational pamphlet on the Town

#### Strategies:

- Partner with Chamber of Commerce
- Distribute to key locations—Dine In Crewe, Crewe Station, the Railroad Museum, etc.
- Have supply available at events—Homecoming, concerts, etc.

### Goal 4: Increase tourism

#### Strategies:

- Aid in the furtherance of the Virginia Crossroads concert series
- Build a platform on the Rt. 49 bridge overlooking the rail yard
- Promote music and railroad history throughout the region

## **Objective 4: Encourage small business development**

Big industry businesses are in high demand: one big business relocating to a community can create thousands of jobs, increase the tax base, and transform a community overnight. But with high demand and low supply, Crewe cannot afford to wait to win the big business lottery. We must focus on retaining our small businesses, and encouraging new small business development.

### Goal 1: Explore the possibility of an indoor farmer's market

#### Strategies:

- Work with local property owners to find an ideal central location
  - An ideal location includes visibility from the highway
- Research grant funding for related industry
- Promote as a small business incubator as well
- Gain buy-in from existing businesses

### Goal 2: Encourage the expansion of local business

#### Strategies:

- Encourage local buying
- Emphasize the convenience and personal, “down-home” attention one receives at places like Bookers, Crittenden’s, and our other great small businesses.
- Encourage business owners to collaborate on deals and discounts for individuals shopping at other local establishments. For example, buy X gallons of paint at Booker’s, get produce free at A & J Produce.
- Create a local business coupon book to give to residents—similar to the Val-Pak offered in the metro-Richmond area
- Explore the possibility of an “open house” day, especially in conjunction with other scheduled Town events

Goal 3: Research reduction in cost of water for small businesses

Strategies:

- Analyze current flat water and sewer rates for businesses and determine possible alternatives: tiers dependent on usage
- Analyze water used by state assets: Nottoway Correctional, VCBR, Piedmont Geriatric for possible fee increase
  - Compare with other Correctional and health facility prices

Goal 4: Develop a community profile for potential business owners

Strategies:

- Partner with the County to obtain information
- Establish, print, and make available a short executive summary and longer profile of the Town for potential business owners to include:
  - History
  - Demographics
  - Workforce availability
  - Utilities and infrastructure,
  - Information on the surrounding area
  - Emphasis on the nearby state assets
  - Emphasis on nearby transportation assets
  - Emphasis on the low cost of living and reasonably priced property

Goal 5: Increase advertisement of local businesses

Strategies:

- Keep an updated list of business information on the Town's website
- Organize database by goods and services provided