

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) 2025



2025 Community Meeting Recap for the Community of Miles City

Annually, the Southeastern Montana Development Corporation (SEMDC) initiates public input throughout a four-county region to assist in developing a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). We hold community meetings to gain insight into various community trends, strengths, and concerns. This year, we conducted online surveys to assess how things have changed from last year and to note what projects are priorities to be completed for the following year(s). These conversations are incorporated into a five-year CEDS planning document created by SEMDC to be utilized in the process to assist the communities in Southeastern Montana.

SEMDC is working with citizens and communities to find ways to maximize positive impacts and mitigate negative ones. The more individuals in each community understand economic change and its impacts, proactively plan, and communicate within the community and region, the better the outcomes will be.

Developed by:

Southeastern Montana Development
Corporation (SEMDC)

www.semdc.org

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Miles City CEDS Meeting 2025

Strengths

911 Dispatch Improvements	Increase in Food Trucks
Access to National Corporations in the community	Interstate Proximity
Active Leadership Community	Job Services Office in Miles City- Training \$\$
Active Senior Group	Largest Hospital between Billings and Dickinson
Active Youth Groups	Law Enforcement/Fire Protection
Affordable housing projects	Leadership Miles City Program
Ag Advancement Center	Legislative representation
MT Health Network	Live Music Events
Airport and Upcoming Improvements	Livestock Pavilion Complex at Fairgrounds
Auto parts / Ag Support	Livestock Sales Barn – New Facility
BLM Office in Miles City	MC Dispatch
Brosz Engineering	MC Head start
Car dealerships - variety	MCC Community Service / Athletes
CCMC Flood Control Project	MCC CDL Classes
Cell Phone coverage	MCC Interpersonal Skills Class
Childcare Centers Added	MCC Nursing Program Fully Accredited
CIP – County Includes Fairgrounds	MCC Workforce Training Programs
City adopted Long Range Transportation	MCC Adult Education
Clean air / Attractive / Healthy Living	MSU Extension- Community Development Position
Coal Seam Fire Mitigation	MT Theater Upgrades
Community Health Center – Integrated Health Program	Murals around Town
Council on Aging / Aging Hub	National Guard Armory
County Joined Big Sky Rail Authority	New generation of business professionals
County Fire Department New building	New MCC Programs / MCC Certificate Programs / Enrollment Up
County Housing Plan	Oncology Services HRH and Billings Clinic
County Seat	One Health Expansion
County Storm Drain Study	Ortho Montana at HRH
Critical Care Facility / Air Transport Service for emergencies	Pathways Program at High School
Culture / Art Center / Range Riders	Development of Senior Center – to be completed Fall of 2025
Custer County Fund for Animals	Police Department – Moved
Custer County Event Center	Possible new Senior Center
Custer County Transit Service	Potential for Transco Expansion
Radio Stations	Potential Opportunity for Downtown
Depot To Be Deeded to County, FWL Visitor Center	Professional Services
Detention Center	Proximity to Colstrip
Dialysis Care	Quantity/Quality of Non-Profits
Diversified Ag economy and ag clusters	Regional Employers (Private and Public)
DNRC Eastern Land Office	Retail Development Growth
Eastern Montana Industries	Revamped Main Street

Economic and Business Diversity	Rivers and plenty of outdoor recreation
Economic Development Center	Roundabout
Education Hub	SBDC Office in Miles City at MCC
EMS/Ambulance/Equipment	Schools: Community College (education offered pre-k through college)
Events – Bucking horse sale / car show	Solar / Battery Storage
Events Agri Sports Complex / Hockey	Splash Pad Wibaux Park
Event Agri Sport Complex / Open Skate	Stable Economic Base
Transit Program	Stockman Bank Hub
Farmers Market	Strategically located between Wright, WY, and Sidney, MT, for locating oil service industry businesses.
Financial Hub / Banking Community	Strong Chamber of Commerce, established
Food / Restaurant options	Strong Church Community
Food Bank / Soup Kitchen	Strong Historical / Pre. Community
Fort Keogh	Strong Sports support
GIS Upgrades – County-Funded Position	Strong volunteerism
Good-paying jobs through Gov't	Strong Western Cultural Heritage
Good quality of Life	Opportunity Zone
Good roads and access	Tourism into community
Good, caring, hardworking people	Town and Country Club
Government Service Center	Trail System and parks with Improved Signage
Grid United – Transmission Line Project	Transmission Projects
Great telecommunications – IT and fiber are great	Transportation (rail / Hwy / crossroads)
Growth Policy-County Completed	Truck Traffic Re-routed
Heart Grant-Mental Health Mobile Response Team	Trucking services expanded
Historic buildings and funding to maintain them	Tussler Bridge Improvements
Hospital – offers services from birth to hospice	VA moving Clinic to old Rue 21 Building
Hotels that can host small conventions	Variety of Meat Processing Facilities
HS Softball Field Improvements	Woodruff Park Possible Improvements
Improvements to West End Lease Situation	Wind Energy Development
	Youth Hockey \$\$

Concerns

Affordable Housing / Rentals	Maintenance of the Public Library Building
Ag Economy is under pressure - expenses	MC Taxes
Animal control issues	MCC / State Funding Concerns
Ambulance delays, aging community increased calls.	Lack of Public / Commercial Air Service
Bakken Traffic Decreasing	Lack of workforce – unemployment low - cannibalize each other for labor
Bathroom Denton Field	Lacking Entertainment for Young People
Bender Park needs upgrades.	Low-Income Housing availability
City Growth Policy	Low pay base affects recruitment for jobs.
City Firehall	MDU Electric rates are increasing

City Hall Building	Men's clothing store
Codes not enforced- town looks blighted.	Financial Stability of City of Miles City
Coal Seam Fires	Miles City Star – New Owners
Concern that the money will leave as the older generation leaves	MFG-Industry Zone
Concerns about DOGE and stability of grant funding	Money generated in eastern MT going to western MT
Connor Stadium-Baseball Grandstand-needs replaced	More active adult and adult protective services for the elderly
Consolidation of 911 Services	More potential employees are unable to pass drug tests.
County Roads – Cost, Maintenance, Quality	No Certified Planner for City / County
Defund Fire Department and Ambulance	No meeting attendance- uninformed residents
Demand for Emergency services and security would increase with more population.	No Grocery Store on the North Side / Also Reynolds Grocery Store closing
Deteriorating Pipes / Sinkhole	No Parks and Rec Dept, aging trees, decrease in beautification.
Difficult to attract / recruit new people and hard to retain them, Doctors, Nurses, etc.	No online access to city forms
DNRC / water rights	No taxi cabs after 9 pm
EMS Service Regulations / Avail Personnel	Not Enough Softball Fields
EPA/Water Quality mandates	Parking concerns downtown – One Health
Façade Improvement Grant, not used	Proximity to Interstate
Federal government budgets are decreasing.	Quality of Loan Request Collateral
Flood insurance costs increase.	Regulations Associated with Floodplain- impacts
Flood Protection/Levee Funding is not available.	Revamped Mainstreet- Still needs work
Flooding in underpass	Rural Broadband and Cell Service Reliability
Grain Terminal and lack of rail loop	School Special Education Staff recruitment difficult
Grant Writer needed for City / County.	Senior housing options, transition, Eagles Manor (cleanliness, safe housing options)
Hockey Building needs repairing and new seating.	Single Family moderately priced homes in limited supply
Increased Crime Rate	Southgate Subdivision has only one exit in and out, with numerous homes. It may be a safety issue.
Increase in truck Traffic impacts on roads	Statewide tax structure - future??
Increased rail traffic requires additional overpasses, quiet zones, and safe crossings.	Tax base limited
Industry Growth Impacting Infrastructure	Traffic increase on Truck Route / need more signage.
Increased Drug Activity	VA Site
Lack of Mental Health Services to serve all needs	Undeveloped areas have many restrictions for development.
Lack of available rail offloading	Water Intake
Lack of drug and alcohol rehabilitation centers	Water/sewer infrastructure needs upgrades, challenging to meet regulations / Mainline 95% Capacity.
Lack of economic / community development RLF \$	Website Updates City

Lack of Knowledge about MCC	Concerns about federal workforce and how they may be affected under this administration
Lack of Local Advertising	Westend Improvements
Lack of measure of success tool	
Lack of planned industrial development, whether in the City or County.	
Loss of ROCKS Program	
Loss of Grocery Store	

Economy

Event/Convention Center Phase III

Complete the Event Center, adding amphitheater, stage, hangar door, and landscaping.

MCYHA Improvements

Support the necessary improvements to the Agri Sports Complex so additional hockey events can be hosted during the winter months to create additional revenue for Miles City businesses in offseason and further diversify the overall economy in Miles City by strengthening tourism revenues.

Westend Development

Continue to work with the City of Miles City toward industrial development on the west end of Miles City. Also, support tourism efforts and beautification efforts to make the entrance to Miles City more inviting.

Implementation of Cannabis Tax

Allowing cannabis shops to operate in Custer County and collect taxes to increase revenue to the County to fund projects.

Housing

Affordable Housing - Subdivision

Encourage the development of workforce housing to expand affordable housing options for new employees.

MCC Housing Needs

Add additional housing for MCC as enrollment is expanding. Need for married student housing.

Senior Housing / Assisted Living

Encourage the development of transition-style housing for seniors and assisted living options other than nursing homes.

New Housing Development

Housing Projects such as the Saddlehorn Apartments need to be Reviewed, Encouraged and Supported to ensure Housing Solutions are evaluated and acted upon, especially with large scale energy developments coming in the next few years. Miles City will continue to be a regional hub for construction crews for years.

Quality of Life

Art Museum Revitalization

The Waterworks Art Museum is in need of expansion, repairs, and renovations to establish a more robust community hub for artists and visitors.

Centra and MCC Development

Expansion of Centra to increase public access to a variety of activities and to create more opportunities for sports at MCC. This expansion could support additional youth programs and allow for increased public usage. A 15,000-square-foot building is required for MCC programs to foster growth, recruitment, and retention.

Depot Transformation

The County is working on transferring the deed from BNSF, aiming to leverage it for the economic benefit of the city. A \$2 million grant from Fish & Wildlife will aid in renovating it into a visitor center.

Elderly In-Home Care Funding

Exploration of funding options to support seniors in accessing in-home health care services.

Miles City Marketing (Tourism, Entrepreneurship, Resident Attraction)

Support initiatives to market Miles City to potential businesses, entrepreneurs, and young residents. Continued focus on tourism marketing. Improve the overall content management of critical organizations such as the City, County, and Economic Development. Embrace a unified marketing theme to promote Miles City effectively. Consider a Master Plan for the downtown area.

Trails, Art Walks, and Tree Maintenance

Enhance outdoor activities in Miles City by establishing and maintaining a designated trail system that includes an Art Walk for residents and visitors. Establish a Parks and Recreation Department for Miles City to oversee the maintenance of trails and aging trees.

Youth Facilities

Develop areas such as a Skate Park, Pool, and activity spaces for youth to engage in positive activities and avoid potential trouble.

Services and Infrastructure

CCMC Flood Control Initiative and System

Miles City is still contending with challenges linked to the uncertified existing levee and floodplain issues. Securing Section 205 funding has been successful, and a dedicated steering committee with sub-committees is actively advancing the project. The primary phase involves initiating a feasibility study, which the Corps of Engineers will carry out. Continue to move forward on this.

Public Water / Wastewater

Continue to explore options on the numerous public infrastructure needs involving water and sewer such as:

- * **MCC Sewer Line Replacement** - Plan to replace the sewer line from MCC to Haynes,
- * **North Montana and Industrial Park Sewer** - The sewer is at 96% capacity. This prevents companies from expanding and for new companies to come in. This issue is negatively impacting several major employers. We need to replace the sewer lines, and
- * **Fairgrounds Infrastructure Enhancement** - Enhance the water and sewer infrastructure at the fairgrounds.

Landfill Expansion Project

Expand the landfill to accommodate the growing needs of the community.

Mobile Integrated Health Care Investment

Invest in Mobile Integrated Health Care to alleviate strain on the ambulance service.

Police Building Renovation

The police department has been relocated to a different building that requires substantial updates and remodeling. Considering the building's age, this will be an ongoing project.

School Building Maintenance and Upgrades

Sustained maintenance and capital improvement projects are crucial for all school buildings, including the college. Essential funding is required to uphold infrastructure. Washington Middle School specifically requires immediate attention for a sewer issue.

Parks and Recreation District

Establish a district in Miles City and Custer County to support parks and recreation.

Expansion of Outdoor Warning System

Expand the outdoor warning siren system south of I-94.