

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) 2023



2023 Community Meeting Recap for the Community of Forsyth

Annually, Southeastern Montana Development Corporation (SEMDC) initiates public input throughout a four-county region to assist in developing a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). In the past, we have held community meetings to gain insight into trends, strengths, and concerns in various communities. This year we held in-person meetings to invite conversation about the current state of each community, to discuss 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.

This year it was especially important to host community meetings because of the economic impacts on our region recently. 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)

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Forsyth CEDS Meeting 2023

Group Discussion

Rather than perform a typical Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats assessment, SEMDC led the group through the exercise by having them first examine the results of last year's meeting and then adding or modifying the information already developed. The lists below are what the group developed through meeting responses.

Strengths

10 Churches	Lodging
Active Chamber of Commerce	Low Cost of Living
Addition of Family General Corporation on Main Street in Forsyth	Movie Theater
Adult basic and Community-Based Ed.	Museum
Active Pals Program	Natural Resource Development Services-Energy Hub
Airport	New Businesses
Archery	New festival at Rosebud County Fairgrounds / County Fair
Assisted Living	New Hutterite Colony/Diversity
Bowling Alley	Oil Production Increase
Broadband Grant (pending)	Parks
Car Dealership	PER Water Complete
Child Care Services	Pool
Coal Demand Increase	Possible Stop for Passenger Train Activity
Community Activities – Darts, Christmas	Potential for Large Cattle Processing Facility
Community Attitudes/School Sports	Proactive City Government – City Leadership
Community Foundation	Prince Construction
Community Newspaper	Proximity to MCC Ag Advancement Center
Community Service/Generosity	Proximity to Yellowstone River
Computer Hub	Public Health Response to COVID 19
County Seat	Public Transportation Program in place
County/City Growth Plans	Quality Internet to Work from Home
Courthouse	Quality Nursing Home/Clinic Funded – Increased Revenue.
Diversified Ag Base	Quigley Shoot
Duck Days/Octoberfest	Radio station in the community
Emergency service radios are all digital	Railroad
Established Businesses	Rebrand Community
Extension Service/MSU	Recreation Area and Parks
Fairgrounds Facility / Events	Residential Homes Occupied
Financial Institution	Riverview Villa
Front Street Improvements / Main Street Program 50k.	RV Park
Golf Course	Seeking Funding for Next Gen 911
Good School/Sports Programs/High Involvement	Senior Center-Very Active 2 groups

Great People/Hospitality	Shooting Range
Grocery/Pharmacy	Stroll, Youth Sports
Handicap Fishing Access	Suicide Prevention Training
Hospital, good medical, and telehealth	Telecommunications Co-op in Community
Hunting/Fishing/Outdoor Recreation	Town and County have CIP's
Integrated Behavioral Health Program Avail.	UV System Installed (sewer)
IT Support for Businesses offered thru Range	Watts Murals
Jobs for residents of the area	Water / Waste Director
Large Veteran Population	Water Tower Project
Levee	Wind Farm Development Impact \$\$
Library	Vacant Lots – room to build
Location/Transportation	

Concerns

2nd water tower	Large Corporate Interest in the Community
Affordable Housing	Levee Certification
Aging population	Limited Local Food Accessibility
Availability of Labor in both the Service Sector and in Skilled Trades	Main Street Business District Suffering
Building Abatements	Medical Professionals
City Website/Keeping up content on all	Mental Health Services
Coal Board \$\$ Availability	Need for Recreational Development for families, hunting, bird watching, fishing access, biking, hiking trails, etc.
Coal Future Uncertain of Money	Need to actively maintain websites representing community
Commercial/Industrial Move-In Ready Bldgs	No Place for Local Artists to Showcase
Computer Tech Support	No Recreation Center
County Emergency Services Bldg	No Tourism Plan
Difficulty Getting Grants and Diminishing Pool	No Walking Path
Downturn in Ag Economy	Oil and Wind Development Impacts
Empty Lots/Run down Housing	Perception of drugs in the community
Fed & State \$\$ decreasing	Pool
Fish Ladder Improvements	Potential for Increase in Taxes with Loss of Colstrip
Fluctuations in Fed/State Hwy \$\$ (Prince)	Power Plant Closures
Future for BNSF Employees if train is rerouted	Quiet Zone
Hospice Care	Rail Crossing Dafer Options
Housing – assisted living and workforce, single family	Recruitment of Employees/Labor Force
Inability to get water out of town/pools there	Recycling Drop Offs
Increase in Drug Activity	Rental Housing
Lack of Foster Care in the area, CASA needs volunteers	School Population Decreasing

Increased Online Shopping	Sidewalk construction DOT (filling in gaps)
Intake water need PER - Improvement	Storm Drains
Irrigation District Infrastructure \$\$ Needed	Streets
Junked Cars	Threat of BNSF Railroad Changes
Lack Business Promotion/more local business	Utility concerns/Urban versus rural – costs associated with mandates and density
Lack of ag processing facilities locally/PULSE	Veteran Services
Lack of Billboards / Marketing	

Working Groups

In this second activity, the group was asked to discuss projects that would assist in addressing some of the weaknesses or needs in the community. At the end of the identification of meaningful projects, the group was asked to vote for specific projects. They were allowed to place 3 checkmarks as they chose on various projects, they felt were the most important.

Economy

Alternative Crop (Hemp) Market/Process

Develop and promote hemp or other alternative crop market and establish a processing facility.

Big Sky Passenger Rail

Joining the committee to promote and support the passenger rail throughout southern Montana

Create Tourism and Marketing Plan with a Mapping

Placement of signs throughout the County to direct traffic off the interstate and take tourists across and throughout the County to see historical sites. Establish signage, improve internet presence, improve facilities, improve boat launch, and promote Quigley event. Include billboards and rebranding.

Encourage the Development of Commercial Real Estate

The existing stock of commercial real estate sites is limited to non-existent. Evaluate current sites and encourage re-development or initial development of move-in ready sites.

Market Job/Workforce Opportunities

Find non-traditional ways to educate the public about skilled trade types of jobs. Begin at the High School/Middle School level. Utilize job fairs, apprenticeship programs, and One MT program.

Workforce Re-training Opportunities

Offer to retrain employees affected by coal impacts.

Community Development Employee

Explore options to fund new position for the county.

Projects for Economy

Community Development Employee 1 Vote

Housing/Quality of Life

Market the Trail System and River Access

Marketing the trails and river access to visitors and potential residents gives more opportunities for the community to showcase offerings.

Meeting Space

A venue for meetings that are larger and allows for catering and or other services.

River Trail System Grant \$\$

Complete a trail system along the river for community members to walk and exercise.

Community Rebranding Project

Continue project

Workforce Housing

Housing for professionals such as teachers and medical workers.

Quality of Life receiving votes

Rebranding – 2 Votes

Workforce Housing – 3 Votes

Infrastructure

City Lift Station

Fund with County

County Landfill Cell

Front Street Remodel

Front Street is scheduled on the 5-year plan for being reconstructed by MT DOT. Form committee to begin to look at what can be done to make it attractive, functional, and

Levee Project - Certification

Work with federal agencies to obtain recertification on existing levee structures.

MT DOT TA Grant (Sidewalks)

Work DOT to repair sidewalks.

Water Intake Needs for City.

Projects for Infrastructure receiving votes.

Levee Project – 3 Votes

Front Street – 1 Votes

County Landfill – 1 Vote