



2015 Community Meeting Recap for Ashland

This document is a summary of the 2015 CEDS community meetings. These meetings were designed to discuss local findings from the five-year CEDS document created by SEMDC, and to get community feedback as to what the current state of the community is, how things have changed from last year, and what projects are priorities to be completed for the following year(s).

For several years, Ashland has been at the center of many natural resource development projects currently going on, expanding, and those that are proposed to begin in the next few years. There will be many impacts on communities in southeastern Montana, and the goal is to maximize positive impacts and mitigate negative ones. The more communities understand the impacts, proactively plan, and communicate within the community and region, the better the outcome will be.

This document summarizes the thoughts, ideas, and projects discussed at the community meeting.

Ashland Assessment and CEDS Update Community Meeting 2015

Group Discussion

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

Strengths

US and private forest land	St. Labre
Tourism & educational opportunities	Heritage Living Center
Health Clinic and mental health services	Doctor At Clinic
Outdoor recreation	Current Demographics and income levels help in getting grants
TRECO	Otter Creek
Transportation corridors	Lodging, fuel, food
Food Service	Facing possible growth
Natural Resources	EMS Service
Hunting Opportunities	Saw Mill Business Operating
Biomass Opportunities	Saw Mill Site
US Forest Service Complex	Agriculture
Law Enforcement Satellite Site	Good Basic Services Offered
Improved Cell Phone Service	Otter Creek Coal Reserves

Concerns

Housing (all types)	Housing/Rentals
Emergency services current and future	Employment Opportunities slim now and concerned with more people moving in
Land and buildings for new businesses/development is limited	Infrastructure water / electricity / sewer
Basic Services	Limited schooling -no capacity and space
Radical Environmental Groups	Basic services – limited with construction
Lack of sidewalks	Costs associated with upkeep etc. of roads and infrastructure development
Stability of eating establishments	Limited air Transportation
Location in regards to mine issues because of lack of municipality government and mine located in PR County	Competition for current jobs when higher pay jobs
Coal Seam fires	Floodplain issues – Otter Creek/Tongue River
Impact of recent fires on forest	Workforce availability
Environmental Rules/Regulations	Limited Wildlife Numbers
Child Care	Lack of Public High School in the Community
Limited EMS Staffing/Major Highway	Labor Force competition/lack of workers

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 given three stickers and asked to vote for specific projects. They were allowed to place their stickers as they chose with one sticker by three various projects or all their stickers by a particular project.

Economy/Housing

TIF District Evaluation

Ashland has developable areas that would be greatly affected if Otter Creek became a reality. Propose to investigate the possibility of a TIF District.

Quality of Life

Coal Seam Fires

After the forest fires of 2012, there are many coal seam fires burning. Establish inventory of burning fires and assess public safety and feasibility of extinguishing fires.

Projects (That received votes)

Services and Infrastructure

Sidewalk and Lighting Project

There are few sidewalks and very little lighting along the main thoroughfare through Ashland and this also happens to be a busy US Highway with a great deal of traffic. Many residents walk to their destinations in this community and don't have vehicles to drive.

Projects (That received votes)

Sidewalk/Lighting Project – 2 Votes

Coal Seam Fires – 2 Votes

TIF District – 2 Votes