



2017 Community Meeting Recap for Ashland

This document is a summary of the 2017 CEDS community meetings. These meetings were designed to discuss local findings for the five-year CEDS document being 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 2017

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 Coverage At Clinic
Outdoor recreation	Current Demographics and income levels help in getting grants
TRECO	EMS Service
Transportation corridor	Lodging, fuel, food
Food Service	Agriculture
Natural Resources	Very Basic Services Offered
Hunting Opportunities	Saw Mill Business Operating
Biomass Opportunities	Saw Mill Site
US Forest Service Complex	Agriculture
Law Enforcement Satellite Site	Very Basic Services Offered
Improved Cell Phone Service – pretty good coverage	Relatively diverse, stable business community although limited in types of services

Concerns

Housing (all types)	Housing/Rentals
Emergency services current and future/Need physician at medical clinic	Employment Opportunities slim now and concerned with more people moving in
Land and buildings for new businesses/development is limited	Infrastructure - water / electricity / sewer
Limited Services/Supplies	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
Impact of recent fires on forest	Competition for current jobs when higher pay jobs
Clearance to log on Federal Land	Floodplain issues – Otter Creek/Tongue River
Environmental Rules/Regulations	Workforce availability/hard to attract law enforcement
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

Assistance to Ashland Forest Products

Kiln evaluation at existing mill site to assist with drying wood products and thereby expanding product line. Consider assistance with BSTF for purchase of equipment association with new green wood line expansion. Biomass opportunities at existing mill. Potential for EDA funding for a building if mill is able to expand (on cooperation with Northern Cheyenne).

Quality of Life

Park

Playing areas for children or greenspace areas are desired. Consider assisting with Civic Group to be a champion for these types of projects.

Speed Limit Signs

The west end of town continues to have difficulty with Hwy 212 traffic being too fast and the dangerous curve near Rabbit Town. Need speed limit signs to begin earlier and consider more warnings for the curve at the bottom of the hill.

Services and Infrastructure

Ashland Public School

This school is in bad repair. Roof has been in for a Quality Schools Project for several years. Has not received funding due to legislative actions. Also, school is limited in being able to complete grants through DOI to receive needed funding. Potential boiler replacement.

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.

Public Water Analysis

The infrastructure in town is in need of repair.