



2011 Community Meeting Recap for the City of Colstrip

This document is a summary of the 2011 CEDS community meetings. These meetings were designed to discuss local findings from the five-year CEDS document created last year 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).

This year was especially important to host a community meeting because of the 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 south eastern Montana, and the goal is to maximise positive impacts and mitigate negative ones. The more communities understand the impacts, proactively plan, and communicate within the community and region, the better the outcomes will be.

This document summarises the thoughts, ideas, and projects discussed at the community meeting. It also summarises some of the findings from the survey that was passed out at the meetings

Colstrip CEDS Meeting 2011

Group Discussion

The first activity in this community meeting was to brainstorm strengths, weaknesses, and influential factors in Colstrip. This was a way to open up discussion, and begin looking at the various aspects that enhance or hinder this community. Due to the resource industry that is developing locally and regionally, we asked the community to not only think of strengths, weaknesses, and influential factors, but also think ahead to how this industry may affect this area.

Strengths

Parking and Recreation	Medical Center
Money and tax Base	Employment (Fully Employed)
Volunteer Fire Dept	Castle rock Lake fishing
More Churches than Bars	Effective Local Government
Trained Labor Pool	Infrastructure
Safe Community	Schools
Good Community support	Police department
Deer hunting	SHAC (Arts)
City Hall	Meeting Center

Concerns

Environmental Interests and the "War on Coal"	Lack of ethnic diversity
Aging Infrastructure	Senior and Aging Population
Land Locked and Lack of Land to develop	Difficult to Attract / Keep Labor force
Lack of Housing (Buy and rent)	Negative Perception (East and West)
Developing Investments in the Community	Otter Creek developments may take away trained labor force here for higher wages there
Remote	Developing Infrastructure for aging communities
Absentee Ownership of Industry	Industry ("haves and have nots") / not diversified
No Zoning for Industry	Lack of Opportunity for Labor Opportunities
People Leave town to shop	"Coal town" perceptions State-wide

Influential Factors

Cell/communications companies for Broadband Etc.	Environmental entities
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PPL (Large corp.) what are their interests?	how to change their minds?
State Legislation – Unbalanced	Regulatory Agencies
Natural Resources	Diverse population in the area
Apathy and lack of volunteerism	Churches (High Level of Attendance)
Energy Policy (National)	High Income Level /compensation level decreases grant opportunities and increases Apathy
Otter Creek Development	Remoteness (Pro & con)
Two Unions in town	New Town / People came from all over
A culture of “Fat, Dumb, and Happy”	20 Miles from N. Cheyenne Reservation

Working Groups

In this second activity, we divided the group up to discuss the following themes in more detail: Economy, Housing, Quality of life, Infrastructure and Services. Groups were asked to discuss various concerns, and were encouraged to propose a project that could tackle the issue at hand. After the themes were discussed, we came back as a group to review each issue. Each person was given three stickers which they would use to vote on certain projects they deemed more important. They could put all three stickers on one project, or one sticker on each project. This prioritisation of projects will give SEMDC and the community an idea of what the community would like to see accomplished. Below is a summary of each group’s main concerns and projects associated.

Economy/Housing/Quality of Life

Lack of Economic Diversity / Industry

Colstrip’s economy is based on coal mining and the coal-fired power plant. There is little diversity. It was expressed at the meeting that it would be nice to have other types of industry or manufacturing.

Issues with developing adequate housing

There is limited land to build single family and rental housing. This problem is make more dynamic because PPL owns most of the land in town and PPL has concerns with liability (1 bullet)

People have to travel for basic services

Veterinary services, auto repair, day care, and a pharmacy are all examples of services that are not located in Colstrip but are needed. Not only is this detrimental because of the issues of accessibility and cost of travel, but once people leave town to buy one thing to find a service, more money will travel out of the community.

Zoning issues in town

Zoning issues in town need to be assessed and changed to allow for more healthy community development, small scale commercial and housing.

Need to enhance the public perception of Colstrip

Many people state wide perceive Colstrip as an ugly dirty coal mining town. However many people who live in Colstrip love it, feel that it is clean, and has things such as bike trails and a pond.

Need to market local assets and tourism

There are many local opportunities for hunting, fishing, bird watching etc. which should be marketed more.

There is a lack of elderly care, housing and services, as well as a growing elderly population

With a growing ageing population services such as a pharmacy, retirement/nursing home, and local recreation are in great need. It is detrimental to a community for seniors to leave to a larger town with more services.

Proposed Economic Projects

Develop Tourism and Marketing **(4 votes)**

Colstrip Housing Authority **(2 votes)**

Develop economic diversification and enhancing entrepreneurship **(2 votes)**

(Start up businesses such as a doggy day care, travelling vet services, or a liquor store could be viable)

Encourage development **(1 vote)**

Develop more lodging

Business Incubator / Help Business go from step one to next

Services and Infrastructure

Need for a business district

There is no "Main Street" in Colstrip where most of the businesses are located. A Business district would be helpful to stimulate business as well as promote more development.

Lack of Trades

There is a need for local services such as plumbing etc. There also appears to be a lack of interest in starting up trades.

Potential brain drain with Otter creek

It is possible that people working in Colstrip will look to become hired in Otter Creek area because of higher wages.

Need for entertainment

Other than outdoor recreation and a few local bars and restaurants there is limited local entertainment. The lack of local entertainment also send people outside of the community to spend money.

Need for elderly transportation

The elderly population is growing in this community, and especially with the lack of services locally, there is a need for a form of public transportation to help elderly access these services.

Expensive utilities

It was a suggestion to have a gas pipeline that goes to Forsyth be developed.

Tele-communication services

There are few options for high quality connection to the internet (broadband etc.). There is lack of cell phone connectivity directly outside of town.

Proposed Projects

Retirement Centers **(6 bullets)**

Enhanced Business district **(6 bullets)**

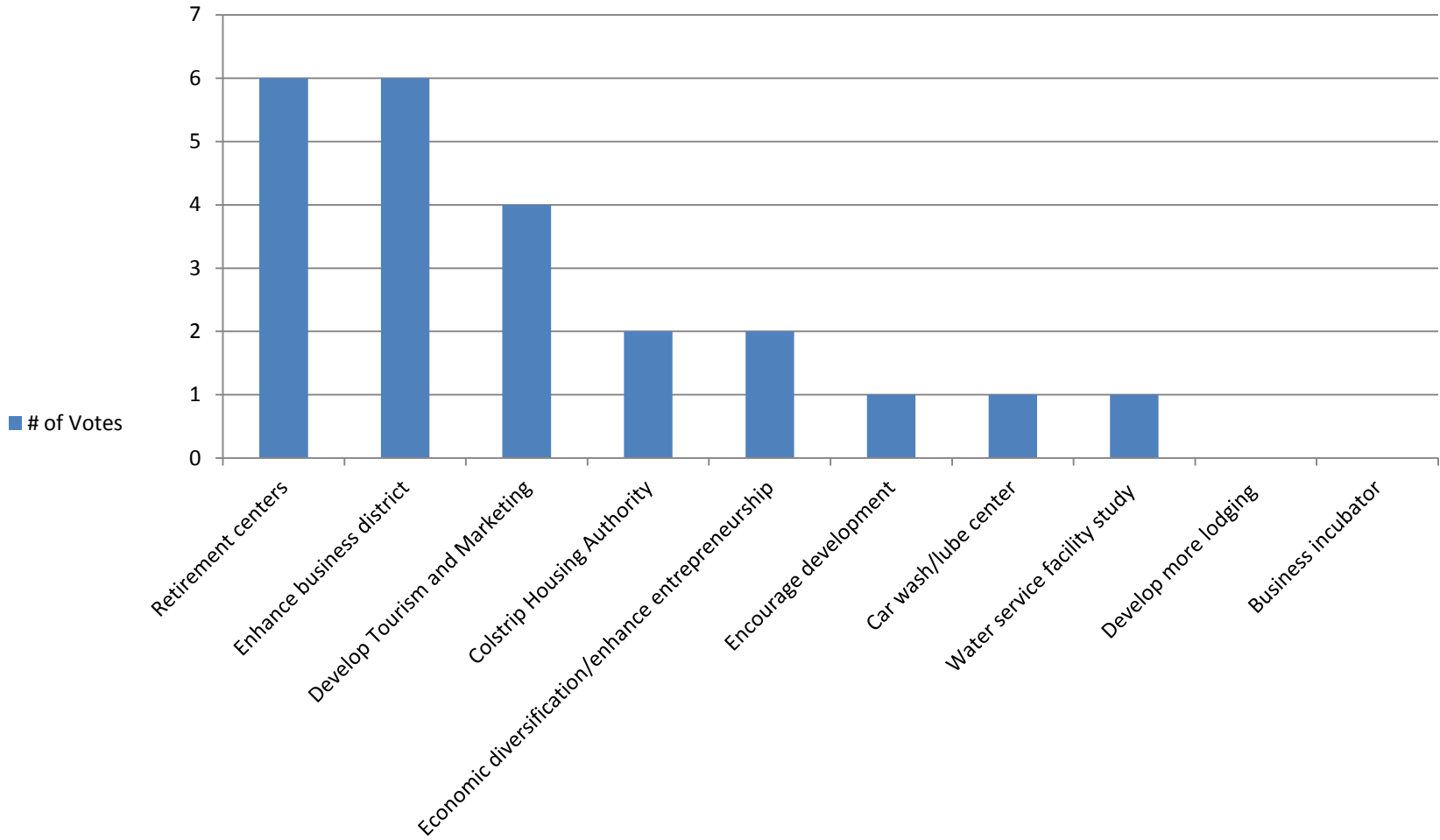
Car wash / Lube Center **(1 bullet)**

Water Service facility Study **(1 bullet)**

Projects and Survey Results

The following pages are charts illustrating the prioritization of all projects and the results from the survey passed out at the meeting.

Colstrip CEDS 2011 - Proposed Projects



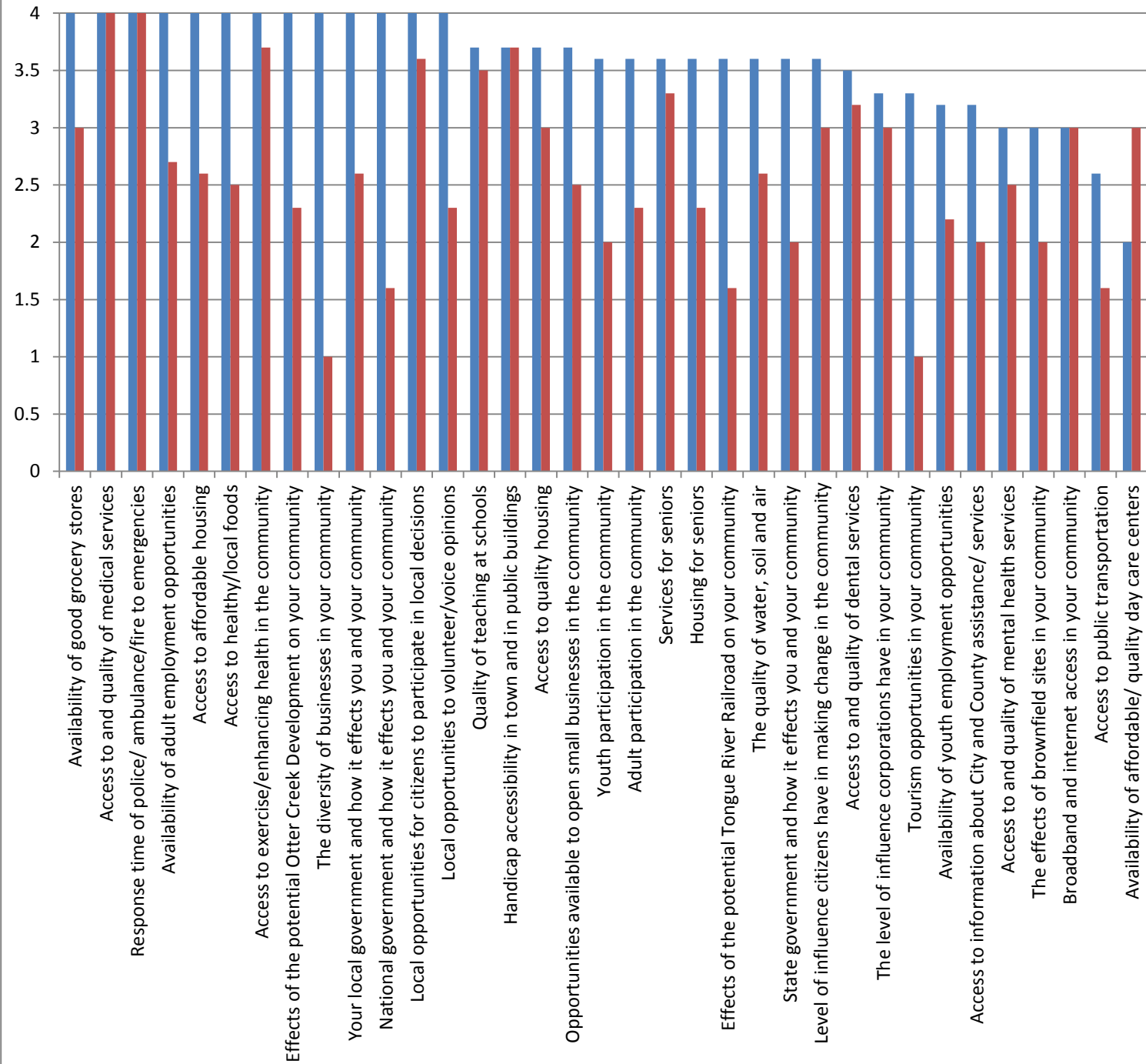
Colstrip CEDS Survey Results 2011

Total surveys collected: 4

Scale: 1-4

1 Not at all Important/Completely Unsatisfied

4 Very Important/Completely Satisfied



■ How important is this to you? (avg.)

■ How satisfied are you with...? (avg.)