

2019 Community Meeting Recap for Ashland

This document is a summary of the 2019 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).

This year was especially important to host a community meeting because of the many changes in natural resource development projects. 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 outcomes will be.

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

Ashland Assessment and CEDS Update Community Meeting 2019

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 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	Fire Department/Equipment Upgrades
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
Vacant Convenience Store re-opened	Health Fairs sponsored by clinic
Very diverse cultures represented	Buildings Available for Businesses
Fitness Center (2)	Ashland Public Remodel in Process

Concerns

Housing (all types)	Housing/Rentals
Emergency services current and future/Recruitment of Staff	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	Condition of Ashland Public School
Radical Environmental Groups	Basic services – limited with construction
Lack of sidewalks	Costs associated with upkeep etc. of roads and infrastructure development
Cell Service reliability/Broadband Availability	Limited air Transportation/Emergency Flights

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
Youth Center	Lack of Chamber of Commerce
Need for SPED \$\$ at school	Clinic needs physical therapist/Rehab services
Clinic has a lot of professional staff turnover	Medical Evac Air Transport
Lack Emergency Space at Clinic	Lack of EMT's to transport/Ambulance
Sawmill Viability/Future	Traffic Speed/Law Enforcement thru town
Main Street Businesses For Sale	Lack of Tourism Draw or Focus
Law Enforcement Personnel/Recruitment	Hwy 212 Deadliest Hwy in Montana 2019

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.

Quality of Life/Economy/Housing/Services/Infrastructure

Ashland Public School Repairs/Remodel

The school was constructed over 40 years ago. There are items in need of repair and update. This is the only public school in Ashland and this region of Rosebud County. Stable student population. Phases 1 and 2 are funded. Need to secure funding for Phase 3.

SPED \$\$

School personnel are maxxed out on the number of students they can handle in their SPED program. There is a need for more resources in this region to address special education needs for students at Ashland Public

Speed Limit Signs

The east end of town does not have flashing lights warning trucks to reduce speed as they come in to Ashland. Need more emphasis on speed reduction through Ashland to encourage safety.

Walkway Project/Sidewalk Project

There are few sidewalks through Ashland and also a need for a walking trail to Rabbit Town. This is a major traffic corridor and safety for residents is key. Many residents walk to their destinations in this community and don't have vehicles to drive.

Public Transport Study

Residents have to go to Lame Deer or Forsyth. Review availability of public transport to see if the need in Ashland warrants providing the service or collaborate with other communities that already have programs such as Powder River County and Lame Deer.

Community Center/Park

Establish Community Center and park that could be utilized by Seniors or Youth.

Tongue River Road Trail

Establish a trail system along the Tongue River Road that could be used by Amish population. They frequently drive buggies along that road and school children ride horses and walk to school. Trucks and other traffic drive at a high rate of speed and it is dangerous.

Projects Receiving Votes

SPED \$\$ - 1

Ashland Public – 3

Walkway/Sidewalks - 3

Speed Signage - 2