

2020 Community Survey Recap for Ashland

This document is a summary of the 2020 CEDS community surveys. These surveys were designed to ascertain 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 it was especially important to seek community feedback because of the COVID impacts on our region. 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 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.

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Ashland Assessment and CEDS Update

Community Surveys 2020

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 through survey responses.

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
Fitness Center (2)	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

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	Hwy 212 Deadliest Hwy in Montana 2019
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	

Working Groups

In this second activity, survey respondents were asked to rank projects that would assist in addressing some of the weaknesses or needs in the community. The following projects are ranked in order of votes received on the survey.

Quality of Life/Economy/Housing/Services/Infrastructure

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.

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.

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.

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.

Top Projects Receiving Votes

SPED \$\$ - 1

Walkway/Sidewalks - 2

Speed Signage – 1

Community Center/Park – 1

Tongue River Trail - 1