



2020 Community Meeting Recap for the City of Colstrip

This document is a summary of the 2020 CEDs community meeting. This meeting was 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 impact of COVID, and closing of units 1 & 2 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.

Colstrip CEDS Meeting 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 meeting responses.

Strengths

Parks and Recreation	Healthcare infrastructure in place/supported by tax district & recruiting \$ available.
Money and tax base	Employment (Fully Employed)
Volunteer Fire Dept	Castle Rock Lake fishing and recreation
Strong Civic and Church Organizations	Effective Local Government
Active planning board/addresses issues	Infrastructure
Geothermal Options	Schools, School System, excess buildings
Sustainable and Reliable Water	Police department
Avista and Rosebud County Impact \$\$	SHAC (Arts)
City Hall	Meeting Center
Library	Senior Citizens Center/Assisted Living Facility
Health Department	More County Outreach
Senior/Community Van Transportation	Wave/Cycle of younger families
Interlocal Agreements	Supportive Major Industries
Quality of Life/Aesthetics of Area	Proximity to Billings
SEMDC / Annual Reports	Low property taxes
EMS/Ambulance Service/First Resp. Trg.	CIF Impact \$\$/ \$10 million
People of Colstrip / Community Support	Rail Infrastructure
Proximity to Forest	Biomass possibilities
Safe Community	Professionals Per Capita is high
Workforce Training Support	Home Based Businesses
Business Innovation Center	Billings Hospital Support
CPRD	Diverse Community
Housing Needs Study	Housing Options Increased
Assisted Living Facility	Long term Coal Contracts /Coal Country
Day Care Business	Job Opportunities – Good Paying
Quality of Life	Deep water well at Colstrip
Fishing Opportunities	Pharmacy
Colstrip Resident in Legislature	Class 4 Rating for Fire Insurance
Local Businesses	Skilled Labor Force, Technical and Professional
Energy Infrastructure in place – 4" gas line, Railroad Tracks, Transmission Lines	CDBG Grants: Public Facilities / Economic Development
Trails (9+ miles) and Parks (32)	IBCLC Building – Opportunities
Airport – Instrument Rated/Small Jets	Students from Outside District
Wild Life In Town (Bird Watching)	CDKC Credits for HS Students

CEI	Sports Illustrated Sports Town MT/USA
Expanded Airport Hangars	Strategic location for airport to fill Tankers during fire season
Golf Course	Swimming Pool/Splash Park
Ash Pond Construction and issues	Low Utility Cost
Low Cost of Living	Safe Community/Police Coverage 24/7
Medical Clinic (Unique Services)	Located on Oversized Loads Highway
Growth Plans: 4 counties and 5 cities	Yellowstone River water to Colstrip/Water Rights Opportunity for City
Hunting and Wildlife Income for area	Opportunity for RV space
Area F+	Shooting Range
NW Energy \$\$	Potential for CO2 Capture
Bird Watching Opportunities	New Mountain Bike Trail by Western Energy
Utility Training Center Opportunity	COVID-19 Impact Response.

Concerns

Environmental Interests and the “War on Coal” /Coal Supply future unknown	EPA/DEQ Regulations
Aging Infrastructure/Coal Plant	Senior and Aging Population
Land Locked and Lack of Land to develop	SCADA Water Plant and Sewer Sludge Mgmt
Housing Market Flat to Declining	Negative Perception (East and West)
Developing Investments in the Community	Local, State and Federal Elections Impact on Coal Industry.
Remote	Developing Infrastructure for aging communities
Absentee Ownership of Industry	Industry/ not diversified
No Zoning for Industry	Lack of Exit Strategy
People Leave town to shop / Internet	“Coal town” perceptions State-wide
Deer in City	Lack of centralized business district
Retail visibility	Lack of available commercial / Retail space
Lack of Single Family/Low Income Housing	Extreme environmentalism/no oversight
Wind farm subsidies from fed govt.	Solar subsidies
Lack of employment diversity	Lack of Chamber of Commerce
Skilled Labor Retirement Gaps	Lack of Confidence in Future of Coal Jobs
Overall Economic Uncertainty with closing of Units 1 and 2 in 2020 / Concern 3 & 4	Shift Work Effects on Community/Regional Commute vs. Living in Colstrip
Shrinking Student Population	Overhaul Scheduling
Skilled Labor Force Recruitment -attract-	Long Term Water Supply/Surge Pond
Uncertain Future/Future \$\$ from taxes	Revenue for the Med Clinic
Colstrip Long Range Planning (10-30 yrs)	Public Services Training
Recruitment of Public Services Employees	Community Communications and Notices
Community Involvement /Reactionary	Post Office Appearance/Safety Issues
Seasonal Demand for Services	Community Center
Mine Reclamation Holdups (release)	Otter Creek Impacts on Area Ranchers
COVID-19 Impact	Legislative Redistricting Splits Colstrip

Advanced Close Date 2023	Basic Infrastructure: Water & Sewer
Bond Release Progress Slow	Interventions NWE
Long Term Water Agreement	Water Pipeline Condition/Rights
No Plumber	NW Energy Depreciation Pressure
Higher Power Prices/Impacts	Vacant Housing
Wind on Transmission Line	Tax Base Future
Outfitting/Hunting Access	SHAC
Major Industry spokesperson	Community Communication – Online Options, Social Media
2025 Washington Legislation	Community Apathetic
Railway Diversified Currently	Lack of Doctor/hard to attract healthcare professionals / Tele-health
Coal/Labor Contracts	Unwilling Power Plant Owners

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/Quality of Life/Infrastructure

Improve Broadband / Internet Security

Colstrip Internet service is unreliable. Improve broadband speed, capacity and reliability.

Recruit Businesses that will Create Jobs

Capitalize on existing infrastructure assets to encourage recruiting businesses.

SCADA- Water /Sewer Contracts

Replace the water treatment equipment and software.

Sludge- Waste Water (Sewer)

Upgrades on the waste water treatment equipment.

Water

Develop water agreement, assess pipeline condition, secure water rights if possible to ensure viability of water source for Colstrip.

Telecommuting Opportunities

Attract tele-cmoonuting work opportunities for residents to secure remote jobs.

Proposed Economic/Housing/Quality of Life Projects (Those receiving votes)

- Broadband / Internet- 6 Votes
- SCADA Water /Sewer Contract - 2 Votes
- Sludge Management System - 2 Votes
- Water – 10 Votes
- Telecommuting - 1 Vote