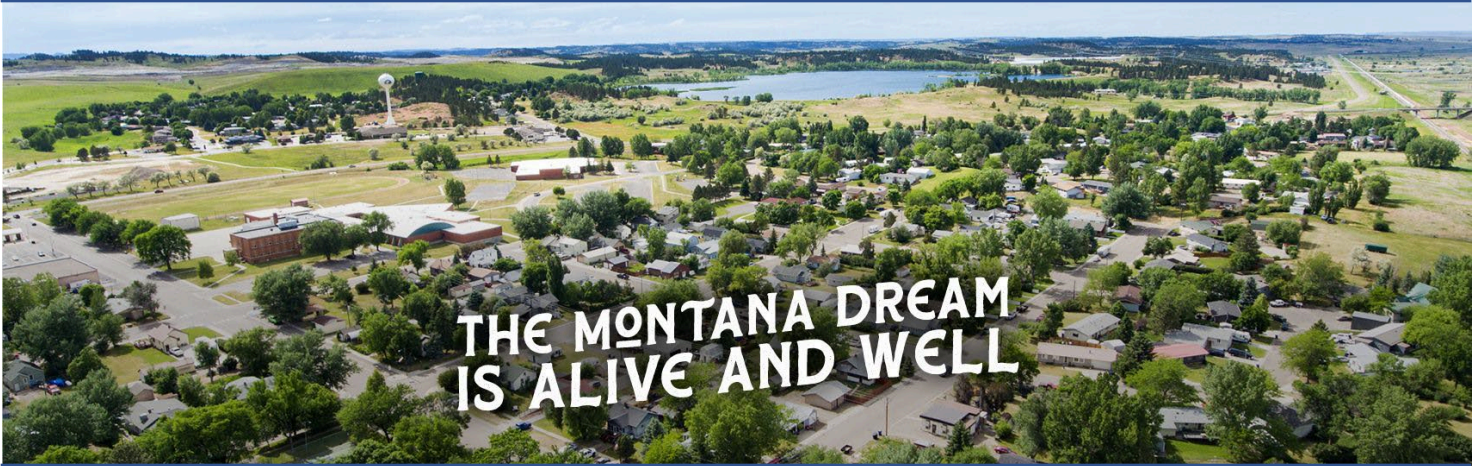


## Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) 2022



### 2022 Community Meeting Recap for the Community of Colstrip

Annually, Southeastern Montana Development Corporation (SEMDC) initiates public input throughout a four-county region to assist in developing a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). In the past, we have held community meetings to gain insight into trends, strengths, and concerns in various communities. This year we held in-person meetings but also designed surveys to invite conversation about the current state of each community, to discuss how things have changed from last year, and to note what projects are priorities to be completed for the following year(s). These conversations are incorporated into a five-year CEDS planning document created by SEMDC to be utilized in the process to assist the communities in Southeastern Montana.

This year it was especially important to host community meetings because of the economic impacts on our region recently. 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 its impacts, proactively plan, and communicate within the community and region, the better the outcomes will be.

Developed by:

Southeastern Montana Development  
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## Colstrip CEDS Meeting 2022

### 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 year's meeting and then adding or modifying the information already developed. The lists below are what the group developed through meeting responses.

### Strengths

10-year Government water Supply agreement	Low property taxes
200 Acre Industrial Site at Peabody	Low Utility Cost
30-year agreement - Feasibility Study (water)	Marketing-Diversification Strategy
Active planning board/addresses issues	Money and tax base
Airport – Instrument Rated/Small Jets	More County Outreach
Area F+	New Mountain Bike Trail by Western Energy
Ash Pond Construction and issues	NW Energy \$\$
Avista and Rosebud County Impact \$\$	Nuclear
Beautification Committee	Opportunity for RV space
Billings Hospital Support	Parks and Recreation
Biomass possibilities	People of Colstrip / Community Support
Bird Watching Opportunities	Pharmacy
Broadband Grant	Police department
Business Innovation Center-Meeting Space	Potential for CO2 Capture
Castle Rock Lake fishing and recreation	Professionals Per Capita are high
CDBG Grants: Public Facilities / Economic Development	Property Value Increased
CDKC Credits for HS Students	Proximity to Billings
CEI	Proximity to forest
CIF Impact \$\$/ \$10 million	Quality of Life/Aesthetics of Area
City Hall	Rail Infrastructure
Class 4 Rating for Fire Insurance	Safe Community/Police Coverage 24/7
CMC Doc	Schools, School System, excess buildings
Colstrip Resident in Legislature	SEMDC / Annual Reports
CPRD	Senior/Community Van Transportation
Diverse Community	SHAC (Arts)
Effective Local Government	Shooting Range
Employment (Fully Employed)	Skilled Labor Force, Technical and Professional
EMS/Ambulance Service/First Resp. Trg.	Sports Illustrated Sports Town MT/USA
Expanded Airport Hangars	Strategic location for the airport to fill Tankers
Fishing Opportunities	Strong Civic and Church Organizations
Geothermal Options	Students from Outside District
Golf Course	Supportive Major Industries
Growth Plans: 4 counties and 5 cities	Sustainable and Reliable Water
Health Department	Swimming Pool/Splash Park

Healthcare infrastructure/supported tax district & recruiting \$	Trails (9+ miles) and Parks (32)
Home Based Businesses	Transmission Line
Housing Needs Study	Utility Training Center Opportunity
Hunting and Wildlife Income for the area	Value added energy
Increase in Retiree Population	Volunteer Fire Dept
Interlocal Agreements	Unit 1 & 2 Commercial Options
Job Opportunities – Good Paying	Water Feasibility Study
Library	Wave/Cycle of younger families
Local Businesses	Wildlife In Town (Bird Watching)
Located on Oversized Loads Highway	Workforce Training Support
Long-term Coal Contracts /Coal Country	Yellowstone River water to Colstrip/Water Rights Opportunity for City
Low Cost of Living	

## Concerns

“Coal town” perceptions State-wide	Major Industry spokesperson
2025 Washington Legislation	Mine Reclamation Holdups (release)
Absentee Ownership of Industry	Negative Perception (East and West)
Advanced Close Date 2023	No Plumber
Aging Infrastructure/Coal Plant	No Zoning for Industry
Area C Road	Nuclear
Assisted Living	NW Energy Depreciation Pressure
Basic Infrastructure: Water & Sewer	Outfitting/Hunting Access
Bond Release Progress Slow	Out-of-state non-union workers
Coal/Labor Contracts	Industry/ not diversified
Colstrip Long-Range Planning (10-30 yrs)	People Leave town to shop / Internet
Community Apathetic	Pond water level
Community Communication – Online Options,	Post Office Appearance/Safety Issues
Community Involvement /Reactionary	Professionals / Telehealth
Community Involvement /Reactionary	Public Health
Daycare	Public Services Training
Deer in City	Railway Diversified Currently
Developing Investments in the Community	Recruitment of Public Services Employees
Environmental Interests and the “War	Remote
EPA/DEQ Regulations	Renewables on Transmission Line
Extreme environmentalism/no oversight	Retail visibility
Higher Power Prices/Impacts	Seasonal Demand for Services
Increase costs -raw water	Senate Bill 87 Study
Overall Economic Uncertainty with the closing of Units	Shift Work Effects on Community/Regional Commute vs. Living in Colstrip
Interventions NWE	Shrinking Student Population
Lack of available commercial / Retail space	Skilled Labor Force Recruitment -attract-
Lack of centralized business district	Skilled Labor Retirement Gaps

Lack of Chamber of Commerce	Social Media
Lack of Confidence in the Future of Coal Jobs	Solar subsidies
Lack of Doctors/hard-attracting healthcare	Staffing -Not enough workers
Lack of employment diversity	Status of IBES
Lack of Exit Strategy	Tax Base Future- Future \$\$ from taxes
Lack of Housing (Rent & Purchase)	Unwilling Power Plant Owners
Lack of Single Family/Low Income Housing	Water Feasibility
Land Locked and Lack of Land to develop	Water Pipeline Condition/Rights
Legislative Redistricting Splits Colstrip	Wind Farms Tax Abatement
Local, State and Federal Elections Impact on Coal Industry.	Workforce

## **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 asked to vote for specific projects. They were allowed to place 3 checkmarks as they chose on various projects, they felt were the most important.

## **Economy**

### **Tax District Consolidation Study**

#### **MT Made Possible Expansion**

Continue to grow MT Made Possible

### **Proposed Economic receiving votes**

Tax District – 4 Votes

## **Housing/Quality of Life**

#### **Beautification Project**

Continue to emphasis beautification projects within the community.

#### **Business Innovation Center (BIC)**

The development of a Regional Center to act as a focal point for industrial relocation and development opportunities would be critical.

#### **Find a Daycare Site and Staffing**

Daycare is extremely limited and prohibits families from working as needed. A daycare site is needed that will meet the needs of the community.

#### **Middle School Feasibility Study**

The school will be empty and needs a plan of what can be done with the building to ensure usefulness.

### **New Horse Coral Option**

New location needed to house horses within the community

### **Recruit Businesses that will Create Jobs**

Capitalize on existing infrastructure assets to encourage recruiting businesses.

### **RV Park**

There are no RV parks available for short- or long-term rentals.

### **Status of IBCLC Options**

### **Telecommuting Opportunities**

Attract telecommuting work opportunities for residents to secure remote jobs.

### **Work Force Training Facility**

A facility is needed to retrain workers that are laid off from the coal industry.

### **Proposed Housing/Quality of Life Projects receiving votes**

Daycare Site – 9 Votes

Middle School – 6 Votes

RV Park – 3 Votes

Beautification – 3 Votes

Status IBCLC – 1 Vote

## **Infrastructure**

### **Area C Road**

Work with SEMDC, County and Westmoreland on options to repair this busy road and mitigate safety issues.

### **Improve Broadband / Internet Security**

Colstrip's Internet service is unreliable. Improve broadband speed, capacity, and reliability. Add a range antenna to the water tower

### **Post Office- Options**

A new post office facility is needed.

### **Pursue Nuclear Development Opportunity**

### **Sludge- Waste Water (Sewer) PER**

Upgrades on the wastewater treatment equipment.

### **Water Senate Bill 87 -Water Supply Options**

Develop water agreement, assess pipeline condition, and secure water rights, if possible, to ensure the future viability of water source for Colstrip that is reliable and affordable.

### **Proposed Infrastructure receiving votes**

Water- Senate Bill 87 – 12 Votes

Broadband / Internet– 7 Votes