

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) 2022



2022 Community Meeting Recap for the Community of Forsyth

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
Corporation (SEMDC)

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Forsyth 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 Churches	Lodging
Active Chamber of Commerce	Low Cost of Living
Addition of Family General Corporation on Main Street in Forsyth	Movie Theater
Adult basic and community-based ed.	Museum
Airport	Natural Resource Development Services
Archery	New Businesses
Ash Pond Mitigation may potentially create	New festival at Rosebud County Fairgrounds
Assisted Living	New Hutterite Colony/Diversity
Bowling Alley	Oil Production Increase
Broadband Grant (pending)	Parks
Car Dealership	PER Water Complete
Child Care Services	Pool
Coal Demand Increase	Possible stop for passenger train activity
Community Activities – Darts, Christmas	Potential for Large Cattle Processing Facility
Community Attitudes/School Sports	Proactive City Government – City Leadership
Community Foundation	Prince Construction
Community Newspaper	Proximity to MCC Ag Advancement Center
Community Service/Generosity	Proximity to Yellowstone River
County Fair	Public Health Response to COVID 19
County seat	Public Transportation Program in place
County/City Growth Plans	Quality Internet to Work From Home
Courthouse	Quality Nursing Home/Clinic Funded
Diversified Ag Base/Irrigation Availability	Quigley Shoot
Duck Days/Octoberfest	Radio station in the community
Emergency service radios are all digital	Railroad
Established Businesses	Rebrand Community
Extension Service/MSU	Recreation Area and Parks
Fairgrounds Facility and Improvements	Residential Homes Occupied
Financial Institution	Riverview Villa
Front Street Improvements	RV Park
Golf Course	Seeking Funding for Next Gen 911
Good School/Sports Programs/High Involvement	Senior Center-Very Active

Great People/Hospitality	Shooting Range
Grocery/Pharmacy	Stroll, Youth Sports
Handicap Fishing Access	Suicide Prevention Training
Hospital, good medical, and telehealth	Telecommunications Co-op in Community
Hunting/Fishing/Outdoor Recreation	Town and County have CIP's
Integrated Behavioral Health Program Avail.	UV System Installed (sewer)
IT Support for Businesses offered thru Range	Veteran Services
Jobs for residents of the area	Watts Murals
Large Veteran Population	Water / Waste Director
Levee	Water Tower Project
Library	Wind Farm Development Impact \$\$
Location/Transportation	

Concerns

2nd water tower	Lack of Foster Care in the area, CASA needs volunteers
Affordable Housing	Large Corporate Interest in the Community
Aging population	Levee Certification
Availability of Labor in both the Service Sector and in Skilled Trades	Limited local food accessibility
Building Abatements	Main Street business district suffering
City Website/Keeping up content on all	Medical Professionals
Coal Board \$\$ Availability	Mental Health Services
Coal Future uncertain of money	Need for Recreational Development for families, hunting, bird watching, fishing access, biking, hiking trails, etc.
Commercial/Industrial Move-In Ready Bldgs	Need to actively maintain websites representing community
Computer Tech Support	No place for local artists to showcase
County Emergency Services Bldg	No recreation center
Difficulty getting grants and diminishing pool	No tourism plan
Downturn in Ag Economy	No walking path
Empty Lots/Run down Housing	Oil and Wind Development Impacts
Fed & State \$\$ decreasing	Perception of drugs in the community
Fish ladder improvements	Pool
Fluctuations in Fed/State Hwy \$\$ (Prince)	Potential for Increase in Taxes with Loss of Colstrip
Future for BNSF Employees if train is rerouted	Power Plant Closures
Hospice Care	Quiet Zone
Housing – assisted living and workforce, single family	Recruitment of employees/labor force
Inability to get water out of town/pools there	Recycling Drop Offs
Increase in Drug Activity	Rental Housing

Increased Online Shopping	School Population Decreasing
Intake water need PER - Improvement	Sidewalk construction DOT (filling in gaps)
Junked Cars	Storm Drains
Lack Business Promotion/more local business	Streets
Lack of ag processing facilities locally/PULSE	Threat of BNSF Railroad Changes
Lack of Billboards / Marketing	Utility concerns/Urban versus rural – costs associated with mandates and density

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

Alternative Crop (Hemp) Market/Process

Develop and promote hemp or other alternative crop market and establish a processing facility.

Big Sky Passenger Rail

Joining the committee to promote and support the passenger rail throughout southern Montana

Capital Improvement Plan

Need updated capital improvement plan

Create Tourism and Marketing Plan with a Mapping

Placement of signs throughout the County to direct traffic off the interstate and take tourists across and throughout the County to see historical sites. Establish signage, improve internet presence, improve facilities, improve boat launch, and promote Quigley event. Include billboards and rebranding.

Encourage the Development of Commercial Real Estate

The existing stock of commercial real estate sites is limited to non-existent. Evaluate current sites and encourage re-development or initial development of move-in ready sites.

Market Job/Workforce Opportunities

Find non-traditional ways to educate the public about skilled trade types of jobs. Begin at the High School/Middle School level. Utilize job fairs, apprenticeship programs, and One MT program.

Workforce Re-training Opportunities

Offer to retrain employees affected by coal impacts.

Projects for Economy

None

Housing/Quality of Life

Market the Trail System and River Access

Marketing the trails and river access to visitors and potential residents gives more opportunities for the community to showcase offerings.

Meeting Space

A venue for meetings that are larger and allows for catering and or other services.

River Trail System Grant \$\$

Complete a trail system along the river for community members to walk and exercise.

Southeastern Montana Tourism Appointee

Need a representative from Forsyth on the SEMT board of directors.

Quality of Life receiving votes

River Trail System – 1 Vote

Infrastructure

Front Street Remodel

Front Street is scheduled on the 5-year plan for being reconstructed by MT DOT. Form committee to begin to look at what can be done to make it attractive, functional, and safe.

Levee Project - Certification

Work with federal agencies to obtain recertification on existing levee structures.

Lift Station

Rosebud water and sewer district needs new lift station

MT DOT TA Grant (Sidewalks)

Work DOT to repair sidewalks

Water Intake (PER)

Complete the Preliminary Engineering Report, secure funding, and implement projects to address needs in the city water supply including:

- Replace water intake structure floor and work platform that are at end of life
- Upgrade water intake pipe that has plugged off completely on two occasions
- Overhaul Villa Booster station to provide required water flows
- Update water plant control system that can no longer meet operational requirements
- Install water tank to provide required pressure to Quincer's subdivision

Projects for Infrastructure receiving votes

Water Intake – 4 Votes

Levee Project – 4 Votes

Front Street – 2 Votes