

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) 2023



2023 Community Meeting Recap for the Community of Miles City

Annually, the Southeastern Montana Development Corporation (SEMDC) initiates public input throughout a four-county region to assist in developing a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). We hold community meetings to gain insight into various community trends, strengths, and concerns. This year, we held in-person meetings 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 vital to host community meetings because of recent economic 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 its impacts, proactively plan, and communicate within the community and region, the better the outcomes will be.

Developed by:

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Corporation (SEMDC)

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Miles City CEDS Meeting 2023

Group Discussion

Rather than perform a typical Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats assessment, SEMDC led the group through the exercise by having them 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

911 Dispatch Improvements	Increase in Food Trucks
Access to National Corporations in the community	Interstate Proximity
Active Leadership Community	Job Services Office in Miles City- Training \$\$
Active Senior Group	Largest Hospital between Billings and Dickinson
Active Youth Groups	Law Enforcement/Fire Protection
Affordable housing projects	Leadership Miles City Program
Ag Advancement Center	Legislative representation
MT Health Network	Live Music Events
Airport and Upcoming Improvements	Livestock Pavilion Complex at Fairgrounds
Auto parts / Ag Support	Livestock Sales Barn - New
BLM Office in Miles City	MC Dispatch City-Prevailing Wages
Brosz Engineering	MC Head start
Car dealerships - variety	MCC Community Service/Athletes
CCMC Flood Control Project	MCC CDL Classes
Cell Phone coverage	MCC Interpersonal Skills Class
Childcare Centers Added	MCC Nursing Program Fully Accredited
CIP – County Includes Fairgrounds	MCC Workforce Training Programs
City adopted Long Range Transportation	MSU Extension- Community Development Position
Clean air / Attractive / Healthy Living	MT Theater Upgrades
Coal Seam Fire Mitigation	National Guard Armory
Community Health Center – Integrated Health Program	New generation of business professionals
Council on Aging/Aging Hub	New MCC Programs/MCC Certificate Programs/Enrollment Up/Meat Processing
County Joined Big Sky Rail Authority	Oncology Services HRH and Billings Clinic
County Fire Department New building	One Health Expansion
County Seat	Ortho Montana at HRH
County Storm Drain Study	Pathways Program at High School
Critical Care Facility/Air Transport Service for emergencies	Pet Store in Miles City
Culture / Art Center / Range Riders	Pipeline Activity
Custer County Fund for Animals	Police Department – Moved
Custer County Event Center	Possible new Senior Center
Custer County Transit Service	Potential for Transco Expansion
Radio Stations	Potential Opportunity for Downtown
Depot To Be Deeded to County, FWL Visitor Center	Professional Services

Detention Center	Proximity to Colstrip
Dialysis Care	Quantity/Quality of Non-Profits
Diversified Ag economy and ag clusters	Regional Employers (Private and Public)
DNRC Eastern Land Office	Retail Development Growth
Eastern Montana Industries	Revamped Main Street
Economic and Business Diversity	Rivers and plenty of outdoor recreation
Economic Development Center	Rocks Program
Education Hub	Roundabout
EMS/Ambulance/Equipment	SBDC Office in Miles City at MCC
Events – Bucking horse sale/car show	Schools: Community College (education offered pre-k through college)
Events Agri Sports Complex/Hockey	Splash Pad Wibaux Park
Event Agri Sport Complex/ Open Skate	Stable Economic Base
Extension of Firehall/Transit Center	Stockman Bank Hub
Farmers Market	Strategically located between Wright, WY, and Sidney, MT, for locating oil service industry businesses.
Financial Hub/Banking Community	Strong Chamber of Commerce, established
Food / Restaurant options	Strong Church Community
Food Bank/Soup Kitchen	Strong Historical / Pre. Community
Fort Keogh	Strong Sports support
GIS Upgrades – County-Funded Position	Strong volunteerism
Good-paying jobs through Gov't	Strong Western Cultural Heritage
Good quality of Life	Opportunity Zone
Good roads and access	Tourism into community
Good, caring, hardworking people	Town and Country Club
Government Service Center	Trail System and parks with Improved Signage
Grid United – Transmission Line Project	Transportation (rail / Hwy /crossroads)
Great telecommunications – IT and fiber are great	Truck Traffic Re-routed
Growth Policy-County Completed	Trucking services expanded
Heart Grant-Mental Health Mobile Response Team	Tussler Bridge Improvements
Historic buildings and funding to maintain them	VA moving Clinic to old Rue 21 Building
Hospital – offers services from birth to hospice	Variety of Meat Processing Facilities
Hotels that can host small conventions	Woodriff Park Possible Improvements
HS Softball Field Improvements	Wind Energy Development
Improvements to West End Lease Situation	Youth Hockey \$\$

Concerns

Ag Economy is under pressure - expenses	Maintenance of the Public Library Building
Animal control issues	MC Taxes
Ambulance delays, aging community increased calls.	MCC/State Funding Concerns
Bakken Traffic Decreasing	Lack of Public/Commercial Air Service
Bathroom Denton Field	Lack of workforce – unemployment low - cannibalize each other for labor

Bender Park needs upgrades.	Lacking Entertainment for Young People
City Growth Policy/ CIP Plan	Low-Income Housing availability
City Firehall	Low pay base affects recruitment for jobs.
City Hall Building	MDU Electric rates are increasing
Codes not enforced- town looks blighted.	Men's clothing store
Coal Seam Fires	Miles City HS is not working with MCC.
Concern that the money will leave as the older generation leaves	Miles City Star – New Owners
Connor Stadium-Baseball Grandstand-needs replaced	MFG-Industry Zone
Consolidation of 911 Services	Money generated in eastern MT going to western MT
County Roads – Cost, Maintenance, Quality	More active adult and adult protective services for the elderly
Demand for Emergency services and security would increase with more population.	More and more potential employees are unable to pass drug tests.
Deteriorating Pipes/ Sinkhole	No Building Inspector
Difficult to attract/recruit new people and hard to retain them, Doctors, Nurses, etc.	No Certified Planner for City/County
DNRC/water rights	No City CIP (Capital Improvement Plan)
EMS Service Regulations/Avail Personnel	No meeting attendance- uninformed residents
EPA/Water Quality mandates	No Grocery Store on the North Side
Façade Improvement Grant, not used	No Parks and Rec Dept, aging trees, decrease in beautification.
Federal government budgets are decreasing.	No online access to city forms
Flood insurance costs increase.	No Senior Center
Flood Protection/Levee Funding is not available.	No taxi cabs after 9 pm
Flooding in underpass	Not Enough Softball Fields
Grain Terminal and lack of rail loop	Parking concerns downtown – One Health
Grant Writer needed for City/County.	Proximity to Interstate
Hockey Building needs repairing and new seating.	Quality of Loan Request Collateral
Housing and rent prices are high. Lack options	Regulations Associated with Floodplain- impacts
Increased Crime Rate	Revamped Mainstreet- Still needs work
Increase in truck Traffic impacts on roads	Rural Broadband and Cell Service Reliability
Increased rail traffic requires additional overpasses, quiet zones, and safe crossings.	School Special Education Staff recruitment difficult
Industry Growth Impacting Infrastructure	Senior housing options, transition, Eagles Manor (cleanliness, safe housing options)
Increased Drug Activity	Single Family moderately priced homes in limited supply
Lack of Mental Health Services to serve all needs	Southgate Subdivision has only one exit in and out, with numerous homes. It may be a safety issue.
Lack of available rail offloading	Statewide tax structure- future??
Lack of drug and alcohol rehabilitation centers	Tax base limited

lack of economic/community development	Traffic increase on Truck Route/need more signage.
Lack of Knowledge about MCC	VA Site
Lack of Local Advertising	Undeveloped areas have many restrictions for development.
Lack of measure of success tool	Water Intake
Lack of planned industrial development, whether in the City or County.	Water/sewer infrastructure needs upgrades, challenging to meet regulations / Mainline 95% Capacity.
Lack of Public Transportation	Website Updates City
Marijuana Tax, loss of income	Westend Improvements

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. The group was asked to vote for specific projects at the end of identifying meaningful projects. They were allowed to place 3 checkmarks on various projects they felt were the most important.

Economy

Event/Convention Center Phase III

Work toward completing the Event Center, adding an amphitheater, stage, hangar door, and landscaping.

GIS Business Recruitment Tools

Continue to develop GIS tools utilizing ArcGIS within the County. Past focus has been Next Gen 911 and Emergency Services. Expand services to include a business recruitment tool for Miles City to market and provide information and statistics about Custer County and Miles City.

Local Government Study for an Empowered Community

In June, the community will vote on conducting a study exploring various local government options for the City's management. Residents must be well-informed about each option's available choices and potential outcomes. Meetings and informational pamphlets should be accessible to all residents.

North Montana and Industrial Park Sewer

The sewer is at 96% capacity. This prevents companies from expanding and for new companies to come in. This issue is negatively impacting several major employers. We need to replace the sewer lines.

MCYHA Improvements

Support the necessary improvements to the Agri Sports Complex so additional hockey events can be hosted during the winter months as this creates additional revenue for Miles City businesses in an off-season and further diversify the overall economy in Miles City by strengthening tourism revenues.

Milligan Project

One Health Building is being moved to the renovated Milligan Building.

Westend Development

Continue to work with the City of Miles City toward industrial development on the west end of Miles City. Also, support tourism efforts and beautification efforts to make the entrance to Miles City more inviting.

Implementation of Cannabis Tax

Allowing cannabis shops to operate in Custer County and collect taxes to increase revenue to the County to fund projects.

Proposed Economic Projects Receiving Votes

North Montana and Industrial Park Sewer – 1 Vote

West End Development – 1 Vote

Local Government Study – 5 Votes

Implementation of Cannabis Tax – 7 Votes

Housing

Affordable Housing - Subdivision

Encourage the development of workforce housing in an effort to expand affordable housing options for new employees.

MCC Housing Needs

Establish additional housing for MCC as their enrollment is expanding. Needs for married student housing as well.

Senior Housing / Assisted Living

Encourage the development of transition-style housing for seniors and assisted living options other than nursing homes.

Proposed Housing Projects Receiving Votes

Senior Housing – 5 Votes

Affordable Housing – 4 Votes

Quality of Life

Art Museum Revitalization

The Waterworks Art Museum is in need of expansion, repairs, and renovations to establish a more robust community hub for artists and visitors.

Centra and MCC Development

Expansion of Centra to increase public access to a variety of activities and to create more opportunities for sports at MCC. This expansion could support additional youth programs and allow for increased public usage. A 15,000-square-foot building is required for MCC programs to foster growth, recruitment, and retention.

Depot Transformation

The County is working on transferring the deed from BNSF, aiming to leverage it for the economic benefit of Miles City. A \$2 million grant from Fish and Wildlife will aid in renovating it into a visitor center.

Elderly In-Home Care Funding

Exploration of funding options to support seniors in accessing in-home health care services.

Makerspace and Business Incubator

There's a necessity for a Business Innovation Center housing a Makerspace for community enrichment.

Miles City Marketing (Tourism, Entrepreneurship, Resident Attraction)

Support initiatives to market Miles City to potential businesses, entrepreneurs, and young residents. Continued focus on tourism marketing. Improve the overall content management of critical organizations such as the City, County, and Economic Development. Embrace a unified marketing theme to promote Miles City effectively.

Senior/Community Center

With the current senior center condemned and unusable, a new location is imperative for seniors to gather. Additionally, there's a requirement for a community center, possibly with a pool.

Trails, Art Walks, and Tree Maintenance

Enhance outdoor activities in Miles City by establishing and maintaining a designated trail system that includes an Art Walk for residents and visitors. Establish a Parks and Recreation Department for Miles City to oversee the maintenance of trails and aging trees.

Youth Facilities

Develop areas such as a Skate Park, Pool, and activity spaces for youth to engage in positive activities and avoid potential trouble.

Proposed Quality of Life Projects Receiving Votes.

Trails and Art Walk – 3 Votes

Youth Facilities – 3 Votes

Depot- 4 Votes

Senior Center – 6 Votes

Services and Infrastructure

CCMC Flood Control Initiative

Miles City is still contending with challenges linked to the uncertified existing levee and floodplain issues. Securing Section 205 funding has been successful, and a dedicated steering committee with sub-committees is actively advancing the project. The primary phase involves initiating a feasibility study, which the Corps of Engineers will carry out.

City Fire Department Building

A section of the fire department building is facing condemnation, necessitating funding for replacement.

Fairgrounds Infrastructure Enhancement

Enhance the water and sewer infrastructure at the fairgrounds.

Landfill Expansion Project

Expand the landfill to accommodate the growing needs of the community.

MCC Sewer Line Replacement

Plan to replace the sewer line stretching from MCC to Haynes.

Mobile Integrated Health Care Investment

Invest in Mobile Integrated Health Care to alleviate strain on the ambulance service.

Police Building Renovation

The police department has been relocated to a different building that requires substantial updates and remodeling. Considering the building's age, this will be an ongoing project.

School Building Maintenance and Upgrades

Sustained maintenance and capital improvement projects are crucial for all school buildings, including the college. Essential funding is required to uphold infrastructure. Washington Middle School specifically requires immediate attention for a sewer issue.

Transmission Siting Grant Acquisition

Collaborate with the Montana Department of Commerce and Grid United to secure funding for transmission siting Grant.

Proposed Infrastructure Projects Receiving Votes.

School Building Maintenance – 2 Votes

Landfill Updates – 4 Vote

Firehall – 9 Votes