



## 2011 Community Meeting Recap for the City of Miles City

This document is a summary of the 2011 CEDS community meetings. These meetings were designed to discuss local findings from the five-year CEDS document created last year 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 was especially important to host a community meeting because of the many natural resource development projects currently going on, expanding, and those that are proposed to begin in the next few years. There will be many impacts on communities in south eastern Montana, and the goal is to maximise positive impacts and mitigate negative ones. The more communities understand the impacts, proactively plan, and communicate within the community and region, the better the outcomes will be.

This document summarises the thoughts, ideas, and projects discussed at the community meeting. It also summarises some of the findings from the survey that was passed out at the meetings

# Miles City CEDS Meeting 2011

## Group Discussion

The first activity in this community meeting was to brainstorm strengths, weaknesses, and influential factors in Miles City. This was a way to open up discussion, and begin looking at the various aspects that enhance or hinder this community. Due to the resource industry that is developing locally and regionally, we asked the community to not only think of strengths, weaknesses, and influential factors, but also think ahead to how this industry may affect this area.

## Strengths

Medical Hub	Economic Diversity
Financial Hub	Food / Restaurant options
County Seat	Education Hub
Transportation (rail / hwy /air/ crossroads)	Convention center being built
Schools: Community College (education offered pre-k through – college)	Clean air / Attractive / Healthy Living
Strong Ag economy, ag clusters, and Natural Resource Base	Good quality of Life
Fort Keogh	Rivers and plenty of outdoor recreation
Good paying jobs through Gov't	Some Land growth potential
Low cost of living	Culture / symphony / art center / range riders
Events – Bucking horse sale/car show	Farmers Market
Good, caring, hardworking people	Great telecommunications – IT and fiber are great
Strong volunteerism	Active Leadership community
Strong Historical / Pre. Community	Strong Sports supports
Livestock center and grain terminal	Economic Development Center
Good roads and access	Increase in Truck Traffic
Auto parts / Ag Support	3 car dealerships – more variety

## Concerns

No Industrial Infrastructure / land / zoning	Parking concerns downtown
Lack of Cell Phone service outside of town	Water infrastructure needs upgrade, difficult to meet regulations /mandates
Economic development is weak / lack of motives for industry to move here	Need for downtown development and diversity
Housing / Costs of housing	Concern with / annexation (can we annex ahead of time)
City and County lack of communication and difficult local relationships	Lack of available rail spur for transpo

*(Concerns regarding nearby and potential natural resource development)*

How it will impact the local ag economy and culture?	Jobs / living wage will increase due to natural resource dev. How will this effect local business? Will people move for increased salaries?
Additional noise, coal dust, diesel, etc with the Tongue River Rail coal trains.	Demand on Emergency services and security would increase
Will there be detrimental effects to the Yellowstone and local land	Concerns about availability for housing for Seniors as housing costs increase and availability decrease
Is development going to be sustainable? Boom/Bust?	Need to Learn from other Boom towns so we can be proactive
There will be a higher demand for goods and services	Air service (increase in other areas – will they drop it in M.C.?)
More People coming in is a concern – change in attitude is needed (more people is not the problem)	Haynes Interchange - already congested – Major upgrade needed
Concern that the money will leave	Increase in truck Traffic, impacts on roads
Need for Impact Tax?	Increase rail traffic

## Influential Factors

Need for capital (For ex. in housing)	Fluctuation with costs of services
Environmental regulations & societal Pressure for “green” communities	Increase / decrease in Wages
Decrease of Gov’t money	Healthcare – and government intervention/insurance rates
FEMA (flood Plain / Insurance)	Internet and communications companies
National and State Gov’t regulations/protocol	Competition among rural / urban / metropolitan / business
Geographic Distances / Services / Econ / Access	Growth timeline (how fast will growth occur and how planned will be?)
Banking / Econ regulatory burden	Lack of Available Housing
Impacts from Development (in Ag / Econ)	Prices of groceries (Transportation costs and “middle man”)
	Sprawl and Land Development

## Working Groups

In this second activity, we divided the group up to discuss the following themes in more detail: Economy, Housing, Quality of life, Infrastructure and Services. Groups were asked to discuss various concerns, and were encouraged to propose a project that could tackle the issue at hand. After the themes were discussed, we came back as a group to review

each issue. Each person was given three stickers which they would use to vote on certain projects they deemed more important. They could put all three stickers on one project, or one sticker on each project. This prioritisation of projects will give SEMDC and the community an idea of what the community would like to see accomplished. Below is a summary of each group's main concerns and projects associated.

## **Economy**

### ***Lack of clear point of contact for development***

When people plan to move, open a business, develop, or bring in an industry, Miles City does not have a central point of contact for potential develop questions regarding things such as zoning, state rules and regulations, housing codes, land use, etc. People have to go to many different entities to find answers, and sometimes answers are not complete/correct. This does not allow for fluid transactions/sales and does not exhibit a pro-economic development mentality.

### ***Lack of understanding regarding natural resource extraction***

There is a lack of clarity as to how fast the natural resource industry will expand locally and what that will mean for the community at large. There were certain stigmas discussed related to natural resource extraction, and fears that may not come to fruition. It was recommended that the community look towards other natural resource communities and learn about how to maximise the "boom," minimize the "bust," and plan for sustainable and healthy communities.

### ***Traffic studies and infrastructure enhancement***

The traffic has increased greatly in the Haynes Avenue area as well as the West End. This will increase with more natural resource developments. It was also discussed that there is a lack of parking in the downtown area, and with an interest in improving the Main Street, parking needs to be improved.

### ***City and County separated***

The City and County do not have a very productive relationship as there is lack of good communication. This creates difficulty in making sound decisions and proactive steps regarding the local economy and development.

### **Proposed Economic Projects**

- Enhance City/County Communication (**2 votes**)
- Establish point of contact for new businesses and citizens (**2 votes**)
- Evaluating People in Miles City Regarding Growth. (**1 vote**)
- Develop Training for Energy Industry (Safety / Heavy quip etc)
- Cultural / Marketing for Cowboy Hall of Fame

## **Housing**

### ***Floodplain issues***

The designated floodplain stifles development and weights financially on community, as it limits land to be developed on and is costly to get insurance.

### ***Lack of Senior Housing and Assisted Living***

There is currently a lack of housing options for seniors and those with disabilities. It was discussed that there is a fear that the housing market will go up and fewer houses will be available or for affordable for seniors due to the increased population that comes with natural resource development.

### ***Lack of Available Land / Private Property Issues***

Even though there is ample land around Miles City, very little of it is available because it is currently owned. This 'land-locked' atmosphere makes it difficult to develop and expand outside of the city.

### **Proposed Housing Projects**

Expand Housing Downtown **(2 vote)**

Investigate financing for Housing / elderly Housing **(2 votes)**

Congregate Housing **(2 votes)**

Re-assess flood Plain **(2 votes)**

## **Quality of Life**

### ***Youth feel "bored"***

The community members at the meeting felt like there are plenty of things to do in the community that youth could become involved in. They felt that perhaps it is a matter of promoting some of those activities more widely.

### ***High suicide rate***

Miles City's suicide rate is one of the highest in the Country, and is a critical mental health issue in the community.

### ***No youth support /housing to get out of difficult situations***

Those youth who are in difficult situations at home, in between homes, or have been removed from a previous living arrangement have no safe space to go, and no intermediate place to stay.

### **Projects**

Indoor Recreation Center **(4 votes)**

Home / shelter / projects for youth who need to get out of difficult situations

Increase Mental Health Service (i.e. homeless shelter)

## **Services and Infrastructure**

### ***Transportation & Traffic in & out of downtown***

There is increasing traffic in and out of the City, especial on Haynes Avenue. This can be detrimental in regards to increased number of accidents, traffic, and wear on the roads.

### ***Water Pipes aging***

The water pipes are ageing, which will be a costly repair. It was also mentioned at the meeting that the water system is delicate and also needs to meet government regulations.

***Dependant on government assistance for Infrastructure***

There was discussion on how it is frustrating there is such a dependence on government assistance, especially in a time where federal and state money is fluctuating so much.

**Projects**

Transportation Study **(4 votes)**

East Valley Water Line **(3 votes)**

Develop Industrial Sector / Services to area **(2 votes)**

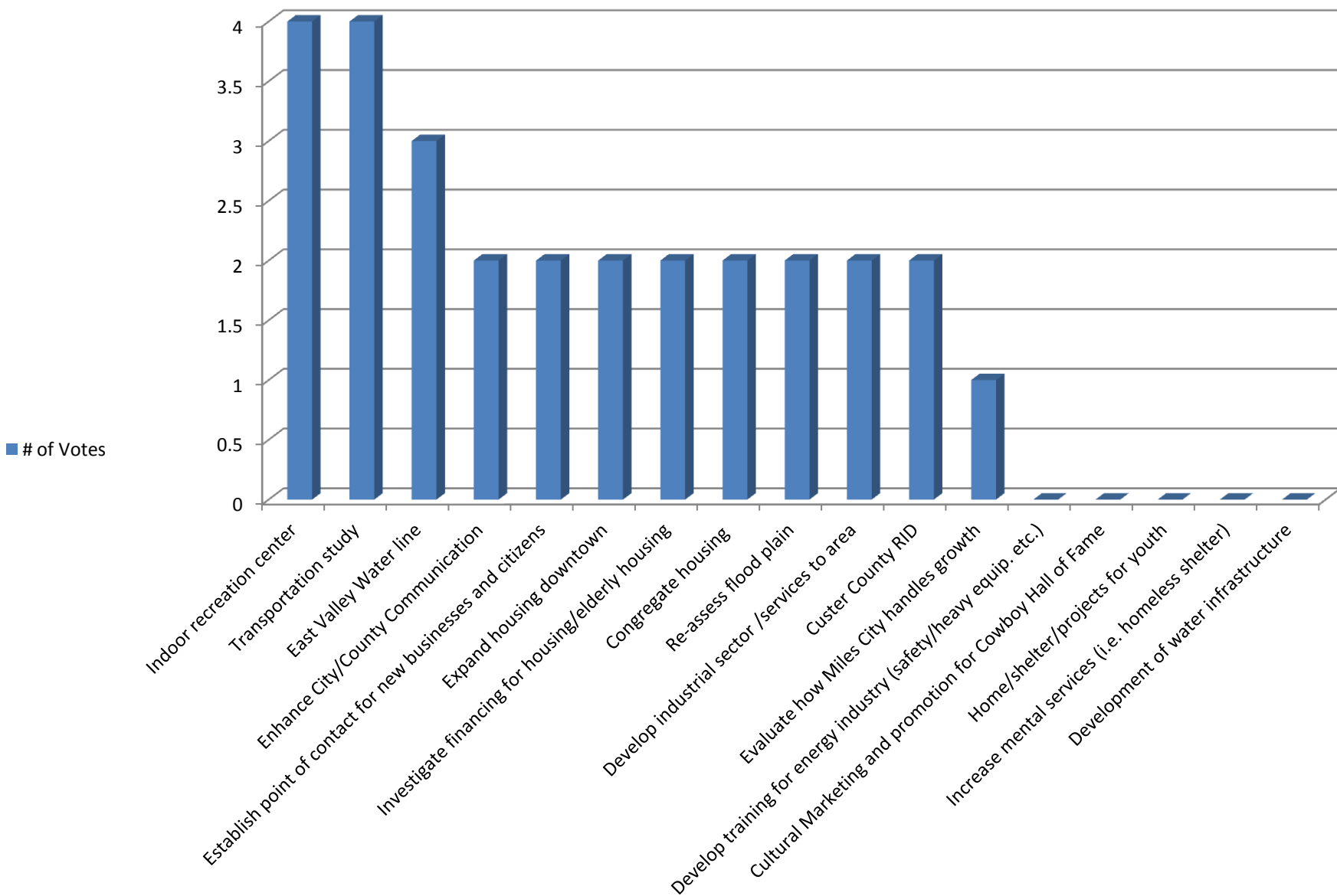
Custer County RID #1 **(2 votes)**

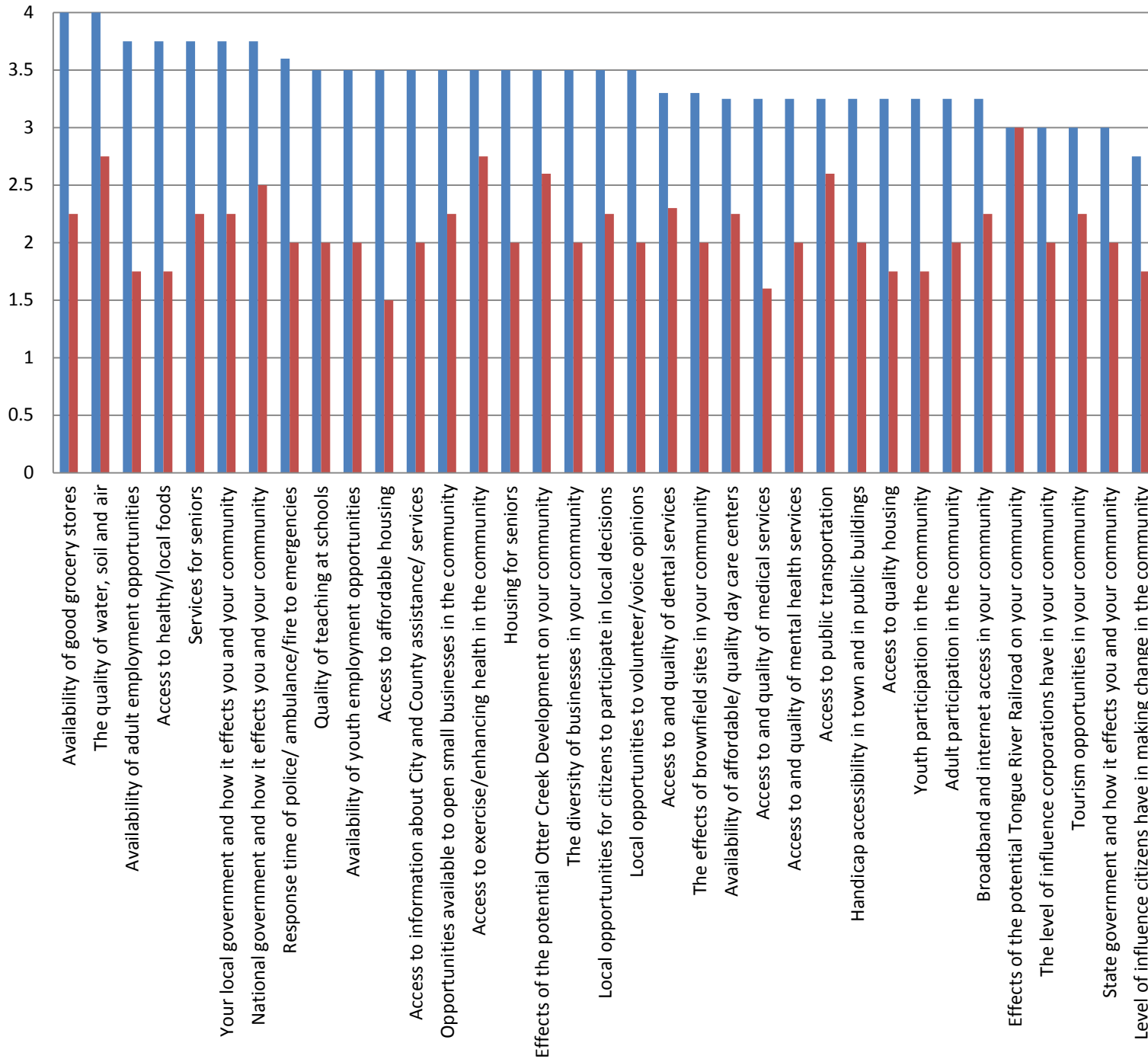
Development of Water contaminant

## **Projects and Survey Results**

The following pages are charts illustrating the prioritization of all projects and the results from the survey passed out at the meeting.

## Miles City CEDS 2011 - Proposed Projects





**Miles City CEDS Survey Results 2011**

Total surveys collected: 14

Scale: 1-4

**1** Not at all Important/Completely Unsatisfied

**4** Very Important/ Completely Satisfied

■ How important is this to you? (avg.)

■ How satisfied are you with...? (avg.)