

RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT REPORT

For

BELGRADE, MONTANA

March 7 – 8, 2012

In Partnership with: Northern Rocky Mountain Economic Development District, Belgrade Chamber of Commerce, City of Belgrade, Gallatin County, Triple Divide Consulting, Eureka Rural Development Partners, NorthWestern Energy, Big Sky Economic Development Authority, Montana Department of Commerce, Montana Economic Developers Association and the people of Belgrade.

INTRODUCTION

It was a privilege for the Belgrade Resource Team to spend two days in your community. Thank you for your hospitality, your time, and for sharing with the team the vision you have for Belgrade.

Before digging in to the report itself, I would like to thank Montana Department of Commerce (MDOC) for its support of the Montana Economic Developers Association (MEDA). It is a partnership between MDOC and MEDA that makes Resource Team projects available across the state.

Special thanks are due to Debe Youngberg, Belgrade Chamber of Commerce. Debe served as the champion behind this entire project and will continue to be involved with the project through activities detailed in this report. Debe had help from other people, agencies and businesses, but without her “Let’s do it” energy, the assessment would not have taken place.

In addition, I applaud each and every team member that dedicated hours of work and travel in order to participate on the team: Dick King, Triple Divide Consulting; Mel Kotur, Community Relations Manager, NorthWestern Energy; Dianne Lehm, Community Development Specialist, Big Sky EDA; Fran Viereck, Retired Program Manager, Montana Department of Commerce; and Tracy McIntyre, Executive Director, Eureka Rural Development Partners.

Each team member’s contact information is provided in the following report. Please feel free to call on any of us for additional information or support. It would be our pleasure!

The stage is now set for the future of Belgrade. There are a number of short term and long term accomplishable recommendations that the resource team has provided in this report. Each of you individually must decide what it is that you want to do—what kind of project you want to tackle. It is also important for the entire community to be involved in finding ways to accomplish its goals. A few celebrations at the successful conclusion of an activity that has involved a large number of citizens will lead to a feeling of accomplishment that will carry over into other activities. Look through the suggestions, pick out one, and get started. It can be done. It is your choice, your decision; you can do it!

Gloria O’Rourke
Team Coordinator, MEDA

PROCESS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THIS REPORT

According to Montana Department of Commerce program requirements, Resource Team Assessments are to be approved through the community's Certified Regional Development Corporation (CRDC). As a CRDC for Gallatin County was recently formed, the board of Montana Economic Developers Association (MEDA) approved the project. The Belgrade Chamber of Commerce, Gallatin County and the Northern Rocky Mountain Economic Development District served as the *local* Resource Team coordinators for the project. Montana Economic Developers Association (MEDA) provided staff support for the coordination of a resource team to assist Belgrade in evaluating its assets and challenges and in developing suggestions for improving the environment, social and economic future of the area.

Debe Youngberg, Belgrade Chamber of Commerce, served as the local contact and local team leader for the project. Under her direction, an agenda was developed, logistics arranged, as well as budgeting and publicity for the assessment. Resource team members were selected to visit, interview citizens, businesses and community leaders to develop options for projects for Belgrade. The team members were carefully selected based on their fields of expertise that local officials indicated would be needed to respond to the problem or project areas identified.

The Resource Team interviewed and received written comments from over 75 people during March 7 – 8, 2012. All notes from all listening sessions as well as those submitted via email or handwritten are included in this report. The team was available for listening to the following groups: City Government/Services including City, Council Members, Police and Central Valley Fire; Education including Local Schools, Colleges, Training Programs; Civic Leaders including Churches, Non-Profits, Private Citizens; Belgrade Chamber including Retail and Service; Agriculture Businesses/Farmers & Ranchers; Medical Providers and Support Business; Transportation/Infrastructure including Airport, Rail, Streets, Utilities; Senior Citizens; and Manufacturing and Industrial.

Each participant was asked to respond to three questions designed to begin communication and discussion and to serve as a basis for developing recommendations in this report. The three questions were:

- What do you think are the major strengths and assets in your community?
- What do you think are the major problems and challenges in your community?
- What projects would you like to see completed in two, five, ten and twenty years in your community?

Upon completion of the interviews, the team met in a work session to compare notes and share comments. The team then agreed that each team member would carefully analyze the things said, synthesize what they heard with their knowledge of programs and resources, prepare their notes and suggestions, and forward these items to be combined into this final report to the people of Belgrade.

A preliminary oral report and a summary of group recommendations were presented to the people of Belgrade the evening of March 8th.

Following the oral report, this formal written report was prepared and is presented to the people of Belgrade. Copies will be made available in print and electronically. The report is available on the MEDA website at <http://www.medamembers.org/resourceteams.html> A Town Hall Meeting is planned for Monday, May 14th, 7:00pm. The purpose of the meeting will be to briefly review the report, identify projects and set priorities for action.

**BELGRADE RESOURCE TEAM
ASSESSMENT
BELGRADE, MONTANA**

March 7- 8, 2012



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BELGRADE RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT

March 7th

- Noon Lunch with Chamber Economic Development Committee
- 1pm -2:30pm Community Tour
- 2:45pm-4pm City Government/Services = City, Council Members, Police and Central Valley Fire
- 4:05-5:30pm Education = Local Schools, Colleges, Training Programs
- 5:35-7pm Civic Leaders = Churches, Non-Profits, Private Citizens
- Dinner Rio Sabinas

March 8th

- 7:00-9am Breakfast @Belgrade Chamber Retail/Service
- 9:05-10am Agriculture Businesses/Farmers & Ranchers
- 10:05-11am Medical Providers /Support Business
- 11:05- Noon Transportation/Infrastructure- (Airport, Rail, Streets, Utilities)
- Noon- 1:15pm Lunch with Senior Center Senior needs
- 1:30-2:30 Manufacturing/Industrial
- 2:30 – 5:30 Team Work Session - Dinner-Food Brought In
- 7pm Public Meeting- City Hall, 91 E. Central

BELGRADE, MONTANA

MAIN TOPIC LIST

BELGRADE RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT

March 7 – 8, 2012

The following list is a summary of main topics and issues that result from the Belgrade Resource Team listening to the communities address strengths, challenges and their vision for the community of Belgrade. This list serves as the outline for the Resource Team Assessment Report which will be available the last week of April. There will be a Belgrade Town Meeting held the evening of May 14th to identify and prioritize projects.

MAIN TOPIC: BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

ISSUES:

- ✘ Add value to ag products – process and ship from Belgrade
- ✘ Consider tools
 - Inter-Modal Facility
 - Financial tools such as Tax Increment Finance Districts
 - Cooperatives
- ✘ Build on excellent start-up base that already exists - Market what you have
- ✘ Be pro-active to influence development decisions
- ✘ Downtown revitalization plan
 - Marketing
 - Cohesion
 - What do we want to look like in the future?
- ✘ Broadband Redundancy – be ready for huge data load needs
- ✘ Expand retail – compliment what already exists
- ✘ Use access and market to airport

MAIN TOPIC: FAMILY ORIENTED COMMUNITY

ISSUE:

- ✘ Support the Chamber in creating more family events.
- ✘ Bike/Pedestrian paths
- ✘ Continue building interior activity options i.e., indoor soccer with splash park.
- ✘ Celebrate Belgrade's successes!
- ✘ Family restaurants
- ✘ Off-hour child care/sick child care

MAIN TOPIC: ACCESS AND TRANSPORTATION

ISSUE:

- ✘ Transportation such as rail/airport divides the community.
- ✘ Use what you have to advantage – maximize transport modules such as air, rail, trucking, interstate...
- ✘ Mitigation plan needed to prepare for increased train traffic
- ✘ Interchange
 - Ease city traffic
 - Access for 2nd industrial park
 - Improve entry way corridor

- New marketing opportunity to showcase Belgrade

MAIN TOPIC: IMMEDIATE TRAFFIC CONTROL

ISSUE:

- ✚ Madison and Broadway four-way stop
 - Plan now – more growth is coming
 - Explore creative options – Roundabout? Loop?
 - Educate/Engage/Participate with TPCC - Chamber has in the past

MAIN TOPIC: HOUSING

ISSUES:

- ✚ Prepare for more growth
- ✚ Manufactured homes and trailer cooperatives
- ✚ Beautification
- ✚ Pride of ownership

MAIN TOPIC: INFRASTRUCTURE

ISSUES:

- ✚ Curbs, sidewalks, gutters, paved streets – not easy. Sidewalks nice – but may have other priorities/alternatives, i.e. asphalt path.
- ✚ Options –
 - Special Improvement District – explore costs
 - Walkway/Bikeway – consider separating from streets – away from shoulder, own path.
 - Capital Improvement Plan and Preliminary Engineering Report
 - Finance infrastructure to Bruce Industrial Park

MAIN TOPIC: YOUTH AND SENIORS

ISSUES: YOUTH

- ✚ Identify actual needs
 - Mixed messages, i.e. “nothing to do” vs – too busy
 - Skateboard park
 - Youth amenities – family oriented options
 - Expand entrepreneur classes

ISSUES: SENIORS

- ✚ Expand Senior Center
- ✚ Elderly housing mix

MAIN TOPIC: IDENTITY – EMPOWER BELGRADE

ISSUES:

- ✚ Beautification
- ✚ Replace welcome signs
- ✚ Celebrate success
- ✚ Build on strengths – Splash Park, Fall Festival
- ✚ Branding – Determine who are we? What is our image? What do we offer?

MAIN TOPIC: CONNECT BELGRADE

ISSUES:

- ✦ All organization meeting – understand what each is doing
- ✦ Volunteer development – great crew in place but expand it
- ✦ Cohesion before new development i.e., Jackrabbit and Main Street
- ✦ Connect River Rock, Landmark, Cobblestone
- ✦ Put a team together – approach Bozeman Deaconess to begin work on Health Center

BELGRADE RESOURCE TEAM REPORTS

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MAIN TOPIC: BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

ISSUE: Add Value to Agricultural Products

Belgrade and the surrounding rural area (Central Valley) have a lot to offer for business development. The area's economy has historically been based on agriculture and Belgrade has become a center for ag-related firms doing business in the Gallatin Valley and southwest Montana. Many residents told the Assessment Team that adding value to agricultural products is an opportunity that the community needs to exploit. This is a common theme in many Montana communities, and there are some examples that demonstrate the economic feasibility of processing agricultural products (i.e., Great Falls is developing a "value-added" industrial park devoted to processing of area farms and ranches).

Recommendations:

Although adding value to agricultural products is a proven means of strengthening the local economy and creating jobs, there are many challenges that have to be overcome for such an effort to succeed. These include the capital cost of establishing processing facilities, the distance of major markets, and competition from large firms that currently service these markets at prices that can make local value-added products unprofitable. To be successful, local firms need to identify market opportunities before investors will become interested. Developing local markets for locally produced agricultural products can help small companies become successful and build the expertise needed to expand into regions with greater population bases. Belgrade should continue to encourage its local farmers' market and work with MSU to increase the university's purchase of local food supplies. A local commercial kitchen would be a big help to small value-added producers that are seeking to serve local and regional markets, such as the Bozeman Food Co-Op. If Belgrade determines that development value-added agriculture is a priority for the community, this strategy merits support from the economic development district that is currently in the process of preparing its Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for Gallatin and Park Counties.

Recommended Resources:

- The Montana Cooperative Development Center, Brian Gion, 406.727.1517
- Montana Board of Investments Value-Added Loan Program
- USDA Rural Development (Rural Business Enterprise Grant Program for feasibility studies and business plans, and Business and Industry Loan Guarantee Program)

- Montana Department of Commerce (Big Sky Economic Development Trust Program for planning grants) Debi Davidson, 406.841.2792

ISSUE: Develop Resources to Assist Business Start-up and Growth

Belgrade has already established itself as a good place to start and grow a business. The community has a large industrial park that is home to a wide variety of firms including Bacterin International Holdings, a developer of anti-infective coatings for medical applications and revolutionary bone graft material. The company is a successful spin-off from research at MSU and employs 180 workers. Almost one section in size (nearly 640 acres), Bruce Industrial Park is also home to several small manufacturing firms that have developed business to business relationships with other firms in the park, creating a supportive environment for entrepreneurs. Bruce Industrial Park is unique—there is no other similar facility in the County.

Local business owners also benefit from a very supportive relationship with the City of Belgrade. Permit applications are handled efficiently and the City has a revolving loan fund that has helped several companies meet their capital needs.

Recommendations:

The City of Belgrade is to be commended for its commitment to helping local businesses. The community should develop a marketing plan that highlights its success as a great place to locate a business. The City’s proximity to the regional airport, now called Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport, is an opportunity that needs to be realized. The pending I-90 interchange will solve many transportation problems in the area and establishment of a second industrial park on land adjacent to the interchange would enhance the community’s image as a great place to do business. In the near term, however, the City needs to develop a strategy for providing water and sewer service to the Bruce Industrial Park.

Recommended Resources:

- Montana Board of Investments Infrastructure Loan Program (source of financing for extension of City water and service to Bruce Industrial Park)
- Montana Big Sky Economic Development Trust Fund (for help with developing a marketing plan for the City) Debi Davidson, 406.841.2792

ISSUE: Market What the Community Has and Be Pro-Active

Belgrade has a great story to tell. It is great place for entrepreneurs and businesses looking to grow. The Bruce Industrial Park is a good example of the community’s positive working relationship with businesses.

Recommendations:

Under the umbrella of the local Chamber of Commerce, the community could establish a business recruitment and assistance team. This team, consisting of businesses owners,

entrepreneurs, and representatives of the City and the Economic Development District, would develop marketing information, interview local businesses, and identify priorities (i.e., improvements to the existing industrial park, establishment of a second business park as part of the I-90 Interchange project). The team could also renew the community's efforts to persuade Bozeman Deaconess Hospital to accelerate its timeline for construction of the new care center. The land has been purchased and the necessary infrastructure is in place. Reducing the need for Belgrade residents to travel to Bozeman for basic health care needs would increase the community's cohesiveness.

Recommended Resources:

- Montana Business Expansion and Attraction Program (BEAR) 406.563.5259
- Montana Small Business Development Center (SBDC)
- Montana Facility Finance Authority (care center)
- USDA Rural Development Community Facility Program (direct and guaranteed loans and grants—care center)

ISSUE: Downtown Revitalization and Expand Retail Options

Several participants in the assessment process pointed to the need to improve Belgrade's image, beautify the community, reduce vacancy in the historic downtown core, increase activity options for youth, and, in general, make the community more inviting to visitors, which would also encourage residents to spend more time in the community. They also stressed the need to increase local retail options, especially a box store that would reduce the need to drive to Bozeman to shop for basic needs, such as children's clothing.

Recommendations:

In partnership with the City, the Chamber can establish a committee to gather information regarding the infrastructure needs of the downtown core and assess the feasibility of using the downtown business district as the starting point for street, sidewalk and walking/bicycle path improvements. A new Holiday Inn Express will be constructed near the downtown core on land currently owned by Town Pump. This project will increase Belgrade's ability to attract meetings and other activities that need a conference center (the project will include a conference facility that can accommodate 150). The City and Chamber need to maintain close contact with the land owner and the developer to make sure that the project is moving forward. Another need is to gather information regarding the buildings in the downtown core (date of construction, historic significance, current condition, ownership, taxable value, current occupancy), which would be used to evaluate the potential of establishing a downtown revitalization program. This effort could also include an analysis to determine the area's eligibility for the New Markets Tax Credit Program.

Recommended Resources:

- Montana Main Street Program

- Tax Increment Financing District
- Montana Historic Preservation Office and Historic Tax Credit Program

ISSUE: Use Proximity to Airport to Promote the Community

The Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport, which is located adjacent to the City of Belgrade, is the second busiest airport in Montana. Five carriers provide service to Chicago, Denver, Minneapolis, Oakland, Phoenix, Seattle and Las Vegas. And, the airport will soon provide service to New York/Newark and Portland.

Recommendations:

The proximity of the regional airport to Belgrade provides a great opportunity to market the community to visitors and increase awareness of the community’s positive business climate and high quality of life. A key to realizing this opportunity will be the new interchange that will connect the airport to I-90. Belgrade could develop a second business park that would be accessed by the new interchange and also needs to consider signage that encourages visitors to spend time in the community. In this regard, the community’s interest in revitalizing the downtown and beautifying the community in general are both steps that will enhance the community’s appeal to visitors arriving in the area by air.

Recommended Resources:

- Industrial Tax Increment Financing District (to support infrastructure development at the new industrial park).
- Montana Tourism Infrastructure Grant Program

MAIN TOPIC: FAMILY ORIENTED COMMUNITY

ISSUE: Role of the Chamber

Many participants in the assessment meetings stressed that Belgrade is a family-oriented community and voiced their support for the local Chamber to play a leadership role in developing projects that will further strengthen this aspect of the community.

Recommendations:

The ability of the Chamber to build on the existing strength of the community as a family-friendly environment is dependent on expanding membership and increasing the organization’s revenue base. Belgrade is fortunate to have a strong Chamber to build on, and if the community adopts a business expansion and attraction program, the Chamber would be the logical place to house the program. The BEAR program would re-enforce the Chamber’s role as the community’s leader for improving the overall quality of life. The Chamber should also consider ways to increase the involvement of other organizations in these activities.

Recommended Resources:

Montana BEAR Program, 406.563.5259
Belgrade FFA and FFA alumni association and local non-profits organizations
Central Valley Fire District

ISSUE: Bike and Walking Paths

The success of Splash Park and the interest of many residents in finding other ways to tie their community together were a couple of reasons why many comments focused on the need to develop a system of bicycle and walking paths in Belgrade.

Recommendations:

There is no doubt that a network of trails tying Belgrade together would have many benefits, including encouraging a healthy life style and giving young people options to driving a car to get to activities. A trail system could also be an option to more traditional sidewalks, curbs and gutters, which, though also cited as a need by many, would be costly and increase property taxes. If a system of trails could also include a means of tying the western and eastern sections of the community, the benefits would be tremendous. Many communities that have developed a system of walking and bike trails have had the advantage of starting with abandoned railroad lines. This is not the case in Belgrade, however, so alternatives need to be identified.

Recommended Resources:

Without existing right-of-ways (such as old railroad beds), establishing a trail system is challenging. A starting point, however, would be to map existing corridors that could be used for a trail system, determine existing ownership and right-of-way status, and then to develop a plan to get started. A good source for initial planning is the Community Transportation Enhancement Program, which the City of Belgrade has already used to support several projects in the community.

MAIN TOPIC: ACCESS AND TRANSPORTATION**ISSUE: Railroad and Interstate Split the Community**

Belgrade is bifurcated by I-90 and the main line of the Montana Rail Link, dividing the community into two components. Residents of the newer subdivisions west of the transportation corridor have few services available and need to travel to the eastern half of the community for school, recreation and shopping. Many will choose to take the Interstate to Bozeman rather than cross the corridor to Belgrade's service center. The transportation corridor is also a safety hazard for the community.

Recommendations:

Some activities currently taking place in the original community need to be offered to residents of River Rock, Landmark and Cobblestone (i.e., adult education). This area is also home to a large trailer park that may need to close. The community should consider a project to develop low-income housing to ensure that families of all income levels can make Belgrade their home. The development of more family-oriented activities, local retail options, and expanded recreational assets, which are discussed elsewhere in this report, would help overcome the division caused by the transportation corridor.

Recommended Resources:

- Chamber of Commerce (such as Fall Festival)
- Community Transportation Enhancement Program (CTEP)
- USDA Rural Development (low-income housing and community facility loan and grant program)

Issue: Capitalize on Existing Strengths

As noted already, Belgrade has some existing strengths that are examples of the type of projects that can help alleviate the split caused by the transportation corridor created by I-90 and the railroad. The Fall Festival and the Splash Park are two great examples of what can be done. Both are based on community assets (agriculture and quality of life). The community is Gallatin County's center of agriculture and ag-business and is the transportation hub for the county.

Recommendations:

Until the I-90 interchange is completed, it will be difficult for the community to address other transportation-related needs (such as improving the Frontage Road between Bozeman and Belgrade and promoting a north/south grid that would alleviate traffic congestion in the downtown). On a positive note, the community is now eligible to determine how Federal aid funding is allocated. Because traffic congestion in the downtown core is a constant problem, the community should probably concentrate on alleviating that problem as a first priority following final approval of the I-90 interchange.

Recommended Resources:

- Transportation networks are critical to economic prosperity and Belgrade is well situated to become Gallatin County's center for value-added businesses, manufacturing, and processing of local ag products. There are many transportation-related projects that would enhance the community's existing strengths in these areas, but funding will be difficult to find until the interchange project is completed. The community should look into alternative ways to address the congestion in the downtown area, however, as the current situation is unacceptable. The Montana CTEP program is a potential source of funding assistance.

ISSUE: Mitigate Impact of Increased Train Traffic

There is a concern that the demand for coal from Montana and Wyoming in the Far East and the possible development of enhanced port facilities on the West Coast will increase the number of trains on Montana Rail Link's main line, resulting in even more disruptions to traffic flow between the eastern and western sections of Belgrade. Not only would this development further harm the community's efforts to build cohesiveness, it also would increase the potential safety hazard caused by closure of the rail line.

Recommendations:

Although the increase in train traffic caused by the shipment of more coal to the West Coast is not a certainty, it is an issue for many communities where the Rail Link line goes through their town. The concerns expressed by many in Belgrade regarding the impact on their community if MRL ships more coal are legitimate and need to be addressed. There is no easy solution, however. Some communities have dropped the track several feet below ground level to mitigate the impact of train traffic, but at considerable expense. Since Belgrade is not the only community confronted by this potential problem, it makes sense for the community to partner with other communities who would also experience increased train traffic caused by an increase in coal exports from Montana and Wyoming mines.

Recommended Resources:

- Because the problem identified by many in Belgrade will also affect other communities (Livingston, Butte, Drummond, Missoula, and others), and because any solution will be costly, the City should contact the Montana Departments of Commerce and Transportation as well as Montana Rail Link to propose a meeting to discuss this issue. One outcome could be a proposal to the 2013 Legislature for funding of an impact study and mitigation analysis.
- Big Sky Economic Development Trust Fund (planning grant to fund preparation work for meeting of potentially impacted communities, Montana Rail Link, and appropriate state agencies).

ISSUE: Complete the I-90 Interchange

The total estimated local cost share of the I-90 interchange project is \$24 million. The County Planning Office has submitted a TIGER 4 grant application, but local entities will still need to provide about \$7 million. Belgrade's share is \$2 million. Although this financial burden will limit the City's ability to complete other needed infrastructure improvements (i.e., sewer system expansion, walking and bicycle paths, sidewalks and curbs, etc.), the I-90 interchange project is clearly a priority for the community. The project will eliminate the safety hazard for emergency response vehicles that occurs when a train blocks the existing roadway crossings that connect the community.

Recommendations:

The need to complete the I-90 Interchange project was a dominating theme of the Belgrade assessment. Until funding is secured and the project is underway, it will be difficult to undertake other sizable projects that need funding support from public sources. City, airport and County officials have devoted considerable effort to get this key project to the construction phase and it appears that they have fully investigated all possible funding sources. Several good ideas were discussed regarding ways to ensure that the interchange, when complete, will have a positive impact on the economy and quality of life in Belgrade. Because of the vital importance of the project and its impact on financial capacity, the community should investigate the possibility of conducting a planning project to determine the feasibility of these ideas.

Recommended Resources:

- Big Sky Trust Fund
- U.S. Economic Development Administration

MAIN TOPIC: IMMEDIATE TRAFFIC CONTROL**Issue: Develop Methods to Reduce Traffic Congestion**

Please see the discussion under the issue “Capitalize on Existing Strengths.”

MAIN TOPIC: INFRASTRUCTURE**ISSUE: Improve Existing Streets and Sidewalks**

The eastern section of Belgrade is home to the historic downtown and original residential neighborhood. There is a clear need to improve existing streets and sidewalks and install curbs and gutters. Many participants in the assessment process pointed to this need as a top priority for the community.

Recommendations:

The community’s property tax base would be the primary source of funding for a community street and sidewalk improvement project. Before proceeding, the City needs to update its capital improvement plan by completing a preliminary engineering plan and financial analysis for a street and sidewalk improvement project. It will be important, however, to involve the public in this process.

Recommended Resources:

As soon as possible, the City should budget funding for the preliminary engineering plan and financial analysis. With this information, the City can engage the public and investigate the feasibility of a special improvement district that would finance the street and sidewalk improvement project.

ISSUE: Investigate Feasibility of Special Improvement Districts**Recommendations:**

As discussed above, the primary source of funding for capital improvement projects in the community will be property tax assessments, such as SIDs. Given the community's significant commitment to public education, as evidenced by the high quality of grade, middle and high school facilities, it will be important to carefully analyze the community's capacity for additional assessments. This analysis would also produce importance information for the school district. The scope of this analysis should also include an evaluation of the community's existing water and sewer system (capacity to handle growth, condition of existing facilities, and assessment of capacity for potential rate increases).

Recommended Resources:

- City of Belgrade general and street maintenance funds
- School District general funds (for cost sharing with the City)

ISSUE: Finance Infrastructure Improvements to Bruce Industrial Park

Bruce Industrial Park is one of Belgrade's greatest assets. It is home to a wide variety of companies, including several manufacturers. The Park's success gives the community's desire to establish an identity several strong themes: (1) Bring your business to a community that truly cares about your success; (2) Start your business in Belgrade and get the help you need to grow; (3) Belgrade—the heart of the central valley and the place where your business can find the workers it needs to achieve success. Although these themes are legitimate claims, the Industrial Park is without water and sewer systems. This lack of infrastructure is a potential barrier to the Park's continued success, as the cost of installation is viewed by many businesses at the Park as prohibitive.

Recommendations:

The Bruce Industrial Park is unique to the region. No other similar business location opportunity exists in Gallatin County and throughout much of Southwestern Montana. The lack of basic infrastructure systems clouds the future of the Park, however. At some point, public water and sewer systems will need to be installed. To accomplish this without placing an excessive cost burden on the companies who have located at the Park is the challenge.

Recommended Resources:

- Montana Board of Investments Infrastructure Loan Program (user fees offset State income tax liability).
- USDA Rural Development Sewer and Water Loan and Grant Programs

MAIN TOPIC: YOUTH AND SENIORS

ISSUE: Identify Actual Needs of Community's Youth

The Belgrade assessment team heard many comments regarding the lack of activities for the community's youth, especially teen-agers. Young people need to go to Bozeman to see a movie, for example.

Recommendations:

One will hear similar comments regarding the need for more activities for young people in many other communities. This issue is not unique to Belgrade. The community has assets that other communities do not. The public school's sports facilities, for example, are superb. The community is also working to develop new outdoor athletic fields and to capitalize on the popularity of its Splash Park. Several priority projects listed under other issues, such as the need for a family restaurant, would also address the need for youth activities.

Recommended Resources:

With 3,000 students in its public school system, Belgrade is home to a lot of young people. The community has provided strong support to its educational resources and completion of the outdoor athletic fields will provide more opportunities for youth to find activities in their home town. Revitalization of the downtown core, which is discussed on page 3, could also attract businesses that will attract young people.

ISSUE: Expand Senior Citizen Center

Belgrade's existing senior citizen center is inadequate. A plan for expansion of the facility has been developed. The center provides a variety of important services to the community's elderly population and expansion of the existing facility is important.

Recommendations:

The City of Belgrade probably needs to help the management of the senior center secure funding for the expansion of their facility. This assistance could include help with grant and loan applications.

Recommended Resources:

- Montana Community Development Block Grant Program
- USDA Rural Development Community Facility Loan and Grant Program

ISSUE: Shortage of Housing for Elderly Population

The assessment team received several comments regarding Belgrade’s need to develop more housing options for its elderly population.

Recommendations:

The possible need for development of additional housing for the elderly should be combined with the effort to develop affordable housing choices for low and moderate income households. The City of Belgrade is probably the most appropriate entity to address these needs. Housing options for the elderly are complicated, ranging from independent living to assisted living to memory care and other long-term care facilities. The community’s medical community should be contacted for guidance.

Recommended Resources:

- Montana Facility Finance Authority
 - USDA Rural Development Rural Rental Housing Program
 - Private Elderly Care companies
-

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Ph: (406) 582-4637x77537

Email: melvin.kotur@northwestern.com

<http://www.northwestern.com>

MAIN TOPIC: FAMILY ORIENTED COMMUNITY

ISSUE: Support the Chamber in creating more family events

All sectors of the Belgrade community expressed their appreciation for the Belgrade Chamber of Commerce and listed the Chamber as one of their most valuable assets. The Belgrade School System was also listed as a vital component of the Belgrade community. Too, the people of Belgrade repeatedly voiced their strong opinion that Belgrade is a family oriented community with young families engaged in the community. Both the Chamber and the School District are seen as major players in providing quality family activities to the community. However, an often stated concern is the need for more opportunities for families to interact in community events and keep neighbors in Belgrade, rather than going elsewhere for family activities.

Recommendations:

Engaged families are the life blood of any community. The Belgrade Chamber of Commerce has a number of very successful family events that encourage community engagement; examples include Farm Fair and Fall Festival. Learn to celebrate these wonderful successes! Comments received during the Community Assessment Interviews indicated that the Belgrade community holds a high regard for the Belgrade school system and the School District personnel. The following recommendations can help couple some of their strengths in creating more family events:

- First, continue to support your successful programs that already exist.
- Seek out opportunities for the School District and the Chamber to join forces on family events.
- Plan Chamber / School District breakfast or lunch meetings for Chamber members to brainstorm ideas for new family events, a good example is the Bozeman Chamber's Eggs & Issues Program. Appoint a facilitator, record ideas.
- Consider asking the Chamber Board to host a series of work sessions with local non-profit organizations already involved in family activities to seek out opportunities – Big Brothers Big Sisters, 4H Clubs, Scouts, Boys & Girls Club, and YMCA.
- Encourage the Chamber and/or the School District to invite a representative from the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks to present, to the Belgrade community, information on their many youth and family programs.
- Belgrade has at least 13 active churches, encourage local churches to notify the community about their family activities that are open to the public.
- Request a Belgrade service club (Lions, Kiwanis, etc.) to organize a community clean-up day that encourages families and community members to "Clean Up Belgrade". Every

spring, clean up local parks, neighborhoods, school playgrounds. Follow up with a community BBQ in the City Park.

- Solicit the School District to circulate a questioner or survey out to the students in grades K-12 to ask what they would like to see for family activities in Belgrade. What have they seen in other communities that they would like to see in Belgrade? Take the survey home and ask for family input.

Recommended Resources:

Investigate these websites for more information and ideas:

<http://fwp.mt.gov/>

http://montana.kiwanisone.org/public_district/index.aspx

http://www.lionsclubs.org/locator/lions/search_form_state.php

<http://montana4h.org/>

ISSUE: Bike / Pedestrian paths

The Belgrade Resource Team heard repeatedly that the City staff and City Council support and embrace Belgrade's children, their interests and their activities. The team also heard that the residents appreciate the small town atmosphere and that the community doesn't have the traffic problems that larger city experience. Still, we often heard that Belgrade lacks sidewalks, trails and bike paths. As a result, it's difficult for kids to ride their bikes to school, for seniors to walk around town, and for families to exercise on trails and paths.

Recommendations:

Communities that create a system of paths, trails and sidewalks that connect local gathering places like schools, parks, shops, athletic fields, and neighborhoods encourage healthy lifestyles. Walking and biking paths accommodate safe pedestrian and bike travel while providing connectivity around the town and building a sense of community. Consider the following recommendations:

- Seek out the advice of local organizations that are involved in developing trail systems. Groups like the Gallatin Valley Land Trust and Montana Conservation Corps may be able to provide expert advice on how to enhance your trail and bike path system.
- Partner with community groups and civic organizations to gather volunteers that can work to enhance, improve and expand the trail system around town.
- Think about opportunities to present a program to service clubs (Kiwanis, Lions, Exchange Club, etc) to ask for volunteer help with a section of bike path or walking trail. Often these clubs are looking for ways to contribute and volunteer in our communities.
- Develop an Adopt-A-Trail type program to maintain sidewalks, bike paths and trails around the area. Not only does this type of program help to keep your trails in good shape, but it provides for an excellent opportunity for family activities.
- Talk to the Mayor of Three Forks, or their City Council, to find out how they made their very successful new trail system work so well, where they came up with funding to install new trails, who built they trails and how they engaged community volunteers.

Recommended Resources:

Check out these organizations:

Gallatin Valley Land Trust
PO Box 7021
Bozeman, MT 59771

Office location:
25 N. Willson, Suite E
Bozeman, MT 59715

Phone: (406) 587-8404
Fax: (406) 582-1136
info@gvlt.org

- Montana Conservation Corps
- 2310 North 7th Ave Unit D, Bozeman, MT 59715
 - Mtcorps.org
 - (406) 586-0151
 - mccbozeman@mtcorps.org

City of Three Forks
206 Main Street
PO Box 187
Three Forks, Montana 59752
Telephone:(406)285-3431
Fax:(406)285-3431 www.threeforksmontana.us

ISSUE: Continue building interior activity options

As part of the discussion revolving around the main topic of Family Oriented Community, community members often recommended more opportunities for indoor family activities. As a result, continuing to pursue building interior activity options included a swimming pool, bowling alley, movie theatre, indoor soccer arena, indoor skate or splash park. The Resource Team realizes that these facilities are often private ventures, and for-profit businesses that require capital and considerable other resources. How can the Belgrade community accommodate indoor family activities? Along these same lines, the need for more family restaurants was often mentioned. There appears to be a lack of opportunities, or at least a limited opportunity, for families to remain in the Belgrade if they want to go out for a family meal – especially breakfast or lunch.

Recommendations:

While the Belgrade community has wonderful athletic fields, a splash park that is wildly successful and good neighborhood parks, the quality and quantity of indoor family recreational opportunities appears to be lacking. Facilities to bowl, swim, see a movie, play pool, roller skate, or enjoy a meal together are lacking in Belgrade. A large part of the value of these facilities lies in the sense of community that they build. They help create a community identity and keep neighbors from traveling to other nearby towns to recreate. Here are a few recommendations to consider:

- The Gallatin Valley YMCA is working on a campaign to build just such a facility. The “Y” envisions a community center with a swimming pool, a gymnasium, classroom space and other recreation opportunities similar to other YMCAs around the country. These YMCA community centers are safe, wholesome places for children and adults to find, or develop, recreational and educational activities. The

Belgrade community should consider discussing possibilities with the Gallatin Valley YMCA. The Y is already talking to the City of Bozeman about partnerships.

- Economic Development organizations can often be catalysts for attracting businesses into an area. The Belgrade community should utilize our local economic development corporation, Prospera Business Network, to investigate businesses that may be looking for opportunities to invest in Belgrade. Gallatin County, MEDA, Northern Rocky Mountain Economic Development District are all valuable resources.
- Belgrade doesn't need to reinvent the wheel. Look to other cities and towns with successful community centers and seek their advice; how did you go about the process, what were your funding sources, who were your partners, how did you overcome the hurdles are all questions that can be asked of successful communities.
- Network with other Chambers of Commerce, build relationships through the Montana League of Cities & Towns, engage real estate developers and decision makers in the financial community into the process of developing a community center and restaurants.

Recommended Resources:

Organize a team to contact these resources:

www.gallatinvalleymca.org Gallatin Valley YMCA

www.mlct.org Montana League of Cities & Towns

www.prosperabusinessnetwork.org Prospera Business Network

www.medamembers.org Montana Economic Developers Association

ISSUE: Off-hour child care/ sick child care

A large sector of the Belgrade community is comprised of young, working families, and with this sector comes the obvious need for child care - at all hours of the day. Child care at off-hours and child care for sick children appears to be lacking according to the feedback that the Resource Team received from the Belgrade community. What can be done to accommodate the need for child care at odd hours and for sick children?

Recommendations:

A helpful first step would be for the Belgrade community to clearly determine what the need is for child care, conduct a sort of Needs Assessment. From this effort you can expect to determine where the gaps exist, what child care needs are not being met, what is being done well and what is not being provided, or provided poorly.

Develop a tool to assess working mothers and fathers of their child care needs, determine what happens to sick children when their parents go to work, and define what hours are important for quality child care. A simple survey conducted through the area churches, through the school's PTA program, and at family events (a booth at Fall Festival).

Once the community knows what is lacking and what is important in Belgrade's child care system, utilize the many experts at Montana State University for advice. MSU's Department of Health and Human Development has a major focus of study on early childhood education and child services enhancing the development, education and well-being of young children

and their families. Take advantage of this fantastic local resource and partner with MSU's HHD Department to chart a course for safe, available, affordable child care in Belgrade.

Recommended Resources:

Health & Human Development

Montana State University

P.O.Box173540

Bozeman, MT 59717-3540 Tel: (406) 994-3242 Fax: (406) 994-2013

Location: 218 Herrick Hall

REPORT BY: DIANNE LEHM

Community Dev Specialist

Big Sky EDA

222 North 32nd Street, Suite 200

Billings, MT 59101

Ph: 406 256-6871, ext. 119

Email: dianne@bigskyeda.org

<http://www.bigskyeda.org>

MAIN TOPIC: BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

ISSUE: Value-added Ag products

Recommendations:

Belgrade residents expressed a desire to capitalize on the local agricultural market. To assist current and expanding businesses, new business, and inventors the resources of the Montana Manufacturing Extension Center (MMEC) would be an avenue to explore. The engineers that work with businesses through this organization provide expertise on the ins and outs of LEAN manufacturing, the patent process, and moving a business idea to reality. The MMEC field staff work with businesses to improve business processes, increase sales and reduce costs, improve product quality, productivity, and competitiveness in today economy.

Existing businesses will benefit from the Montana Procurement Technical Assistance Centers located around the State of Montana. Sub-center staff works with businesses to learn what it takes to do business with the government, what's required, how to be competitive, and how to find and understand the opportunities in your market. Staff will work with the business through the bid and proposal processes, and follow the client through the pre and post award requirements.

Business Expansion And Retention (BEAR) Program is a statewide program that assists businesses evaluate its individual strengths and needs to best determine how to take the business to the next level. This program utilizes experts in many business fields from strategic planning, financial, marketing, LEAN processes, and more to work with the business to grow and prosper.

Working through this program may also open the door to State grant dollars available for incumbent worker training (IWT). The incumbent worker training program provides eligible businesses with up to \$2,000 per employee for training to move employees up through the business. **The Incumbent Worker Training (IWT)** program can provide funding for job training for employees of small businesses. The employer must apply for an IWT grant through one of three organizations that will assess eligibility and need. Those organizations are the Business Expansion and Retention teams sponsored by the Montana Economic Developers Association, the Montana Manufacturing Extension Center at MSU Bozeman, and the Small Business Development Centers.

The Growth Through Agriculture (GTA) Program provides grants and loans for value added agricultural products projects. Some of the eligible activities under this program include equipment purchases, promotion, feasibility studies, engineering costs, and some educational business activities. In selected cases, for-profit businesses might qualify for innovative research grants. See <http://mtip.mt.gov>.

Recommended Resources:

Business Expansion And Retention (BEAR) Team
Gloria O'Rourke
Montana Economic Development Services, PLLC
118 E. Seventh St.; Suite 2A (Third Floor)
Anaconda, MT 59711
406-563-5259 Office
406-563-5476 FAX
<http://www.medamembers.org>

Kara Graetz, Gallatin County BEAR
406-582-9228

Montana Manufacturing Extension Center (MMEC)
Mark Shyne
Field Engineer
406-994-3813 office
406-581-3772 cell
Bozeman, MT

Montana Manufacturing Extension Center, <http://www.mtmanufacturingcenter.com>

State of Montana Procurement Technical Assistance Center
Maureen Jewell and Kathy Lund
406-256-6871
222 North 32nd Street, #200
Billings, MT 59101

Deanna Langman, Billings PTAC.

Montana Procurement Technical Assistance Centers, <http://bigskyeda-edc.org/marketing-to-the-government.php>

Association of Procurement Technical Assistance Centers, <http://www.aptac-us.org/new/>

State of Montana Incumbent Worker Training Program
Chris Wilhelm
Phone: (406) 444-3351
Email: ChrisWilhelm@mt.gov

Growth Through Agriculture Program
Montana Department of Agriculture
Angie Nelson, Program Manager
302 N Roberts
Helena, MT 59601
Phone: (406) 444-2402
E-mail: gta@mt.gov
Fax: (406) 444-9442
<http://agr.mt.gov/agr/Programs/Development/GrantsLoans/GTA/>

ISSUE: Consider Tools (Inter-Modal Facility, Financial Tools, TIFD, Cooperatives)

Recommendations:

The Belgrade community expressed multiple needs related to community growth. The use of a Tax Increment Finance District (TIFD) is a valuable tool in developing public infrastructure. Consider creating a TIFD that would include the areas where property has been purchased for development (the box store development and hotel) and where the community would like to see future planned growth. This would provide the Belgrade community with future resources which could be used for water, sewer, sidewalks, bike paths, infrastructure needs and as an incentive for business development within this area as allowed by current TIFD law.

Similarly the downtown core could create a revitalization district, including a TIFD which could be utilized to attract businesses with incentives to locate in Belgrade's core area.

Learn more about TIFDs by attending the workshop presentation on Tax Increment Finance Training. The TIFD concept can be challenging to explain to community members. Be familiar with the concept or have experts assist with the explanation process to the community.

Belgrade may also want to consider looking into the creation of an Industrial Tax Increment Finance District. This type of finance district could be very beneficial in developing the infrastructure and redundancy necessary for a state of art industrial park. Belgrade has the transportation systems in place that could be marketed to export businesses.

The Montana Board of Investments provides creative solutions to financial issues facing new and expanding businesses in the state of Montana. The Board administers a number of different loan programs that can be specifically tailored to meet an individual business's or local government's needs. **This may be a good tool to use in the development of the industrial park area.**

Programs are designed to stimulate economic development by assisting the private sector and local governments in financing new or expanded businesses as well as infrastructure development. Programs include the In-state Loan Program to help finance new or expanded businesses; the INTERCAP Program that provides loans to local governments; the Short Term Investment Pool (STIP) that allows state agencies and local governments short term investment opportunities; and the Unified Investment Program that invests and manages all state investment funds including state pension funds.

Recommended Resources:

MEDA PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
TAX INCREMENT FINANCE TRAINING

May 18th, Montana Tech, Butte

[Tax Increment Financing Workshop Agenda 5-18-12](#)

Sponsored by PPL Montana in Partnership with American Planning Association
West Central Chapter

Big Sky Economic Development
Community Development Department
Patty Nordlund, Dianne Lehm, Sara Hudson, Allison Corbyn
222 North 32nd Street, #200
Billings, MT 59101
406-256-6871
www.bigskyeconomicdevelopment.com

Steve Zeier
TIFD Coordinator City of Billings
510 North Broadway, 4th Floor
Billings, MT 59101
406-247-8666
496-657-8327 FAX
zeiers@ci.billings.mt.us

Montana Board of Investments
HERB KULOW, CMB
Senior Portfolio Manager
Hkulow@mt.gov
406-444-1218
Fax 406-449-6579
<http://www.investmentmt.com/default.mcp>

www.grants.gov

ISSUE: Build Startup Business Base

Recommendations:

Belgrade has a great business base and has zeroed in on the industrial manufacturing sector well. By utilizing the assistance of Montana's Small Business Administration, Montana Manufacturing Extension Center and the Small Business Development Centers to work with emerging businesses Belgrade could capitalize on this growing market. Each of these organizations can walk a business owner, entrepreneur, or second stage business through the necessary steps to start a new product, new business, or business expansion.

One-on-one outreach to the business community is a great tool to help build the community business base. Talk to business owners, thank them for being a community business and provide them with resources if needed. Be an advocate for the community. Talk to businesses you would like to see expand to the area and provide the encouragement that the community want them and show them why it's a great place to live, work and play!

Montana State University business students need experience with developing strategic planning, business plans and marketing plans. Many professors require the students to do group projects to work with a business or community to develop these types of documents, do visioning sessions, and project planning. Make use these talented folks if possible. Many of these classes will even do the research and data collection at no or low cost.

Recommended Resources:

Small Business Development Center
Bozeman SBDC
Sean Becker, SBDC Business Advisor
seanb@mtcdc.org
Montana Community Development Corporation
222 East Main Street, Suite 202
Bozeman, MT 59715
(406) 728-9234 x250
Counties Served: Gallatin, Park

Small Business Administration
Montana District Office
10 West 15th Street Suite 1100
Helena, MT59626
United States
Phone:406-441-1081
Fax:406-441-1090
<http://www.sba.gov/about-offices-content/3/3126>
www.sba.gov

MSU Bozeman Business Program Students

ISSUE: Be pro-active in development decisions

Recommendations:

Belgrade has some great business growth opportunities on the near horizon and is in a position to make the most of that advantage. If the community acts relatively quickly in forming a Tax Increment Finance District (TIFD) there is the opportunity to influence and shape the direction and cultural appeal of the community. While the initial set up of a TIFD is tedious and at times challenging, the benefits are long lasting and provide a solid base to build for the future.

Consider forming a Tax Increment Finance District for the area where proposed new box store will locate. This would be a great base for building the TIFD and providing for needed public infrastructure.

In being pro-active about development, consider an outreach program to local Belgrade businesses. Give them information on tools they might utilize to grow and expand their business. Some of these include the State of Montana business incentive programs to encourage business recruitment, development, expansion, and workforce advancement.

Planning efforts can be costly and grants are a great way to help cover those costs. The Big Sky Economic Development Trust Fund (BSTF) program is a state-funded program created by the Legislature. It is designed to assist businesses in the development of good paying jobs which promote long-term economic growth in Montana. Businesses work through a Certified Regional Development Corporation (CRDC) to obtain funding. The purpose of BSTF is to promote economic growth, create partnerships, retain and expand existing business, and encourage workforce training and job creation.

The BSTF program provides financial assistance through:

Category I Economic Development Job Creation Projects provide grants to assist businesses in creating net new eligible jobs that pay the average county wage, excluding benefits and meets the grant criteria.

Category II: Planning Projects funds are awarded to Certified Regional Development Corporations (CRDC), tribal governments and other qualified economic development organizations in areas not covered by a CRDC for planning activities. These funds can be used for creating business plans, feasibility studies, economic impact studies, workforce surveys, targeted industry analyses, preliminary engineering reports, and preliminary architectural reports.

This is a great tool for Belgrade to utilize in its community planning efforts.

The Montana Department of Commerce Business Resource Division assists communities, local economic development organizations and businesses with information and technical assistance, and financing for business startup and expansion projects in Montana. The website has a business resource guide to assist businesses.

Recommended Resources:

Big Sky Economic Development Trust Fund Program

Nancy Faroni

406-841-2744

301 S Park Ave Rm 107

Helena MT 59601

<http://bstf.mt.gov/default.mcp>

Big Sky Economic Development

Patty Nordlund, Dianne Lehm

222 North 32nd Street, #200

Billings, MT 59101

406-256-6871

Nordlund@bigskyeda.org

lehm@bigskyeda.org

Certified Regional Development Corporation (CRDC)

Beartooth RC&D

Chris Mehus

604 W. Front Street

Post Office Box 180

Joliet, MT 59041-0180

406-962-3914

Beartooth RC & D (CRDC) <http://www.beartooth.org/>

Janice Wannebo,

CRDC Program Manager

406-841-2751

Montana Department of Commerce

Business Resource Division

301 S Park Ave

Helena MT 59601

406-841-2730

Fax: 406-841-2731

TDD: 406-841-2702

<http://commerce.mt.gov/businessresources.mcp>

ISSUE: Downtown Revitalization Plan (Marketing, Cohesion, Future)

Recommendations:

The Belgrade community expressed the desire to revitalize the downtown core, build on what businesses are thriving and plan for the future to create a cohesive downtown experience. The Big Sky Economic Development Trust Fund will provide grants to assist with some planning efforts. Starting the efforts with a community based visioning and master plan for the area will provide the road map for next steps in the process. Deciding what community members wants Belgrade to look like in 5, 10, 20 years will build community consensus and build excitement for the next chapter for the community.

A part of this process may include creating a Business Improvement District for the downtown core to aid with revitalization efforts. Business Improvement District funds could be used as matching funds for work on the master plan, beautification projects, store front facades, and more.

U.S. Economic Development Administration also provides grant funding to assist with planning. Utilizing several funding sources will help fill the gap in any required matching funds to complete the project. Consider approaching local service clubs, business owners, and area

corporations about both local and corporate or foundation funding to assist with funding gaps as well.

Recommended Resources:

Big Sky Trust Fund Planning Grant
Big Sky Economic Development Trust Fund Program
Nancy Faroni
406-841-2744
301 S Park Ave Rm 107
Helena MT 59601
<http://bstf.mt.gov/default.mcp>

US Department of Commerce
John Rogers
Economic Development Administration
Montana, Wyoming and North Dakota
301 S. Park Avenue, Suite 124
P.O. Box 578
Helena, MT 59624
Phone: 406-449-5380
Fax: 406-449-5381
Email: jrogers4@eda.doc.gov
<http://www.mtfinanceonline.com/brdlocaldevelopment.mcp>

Lisa Harmon (BID & TIFD)
Executive Director
Downtown Billings Alliance
406-294-5060
lharmon@downtownbillings.com
<http://www.downtownbillings.com/aboutpages/businessimprovement.html>

Greg A. Krueger (Downtown Revitalization and TIFD)
gregk@downtownbillings.com
DOWNTOWN BILLINGS
2815 2nd Avenue North
Billings, MT 59101
406-294-5060
406-294-5061 FAX
www.eburd.com

MAIN TOPIC: FAMILY ORIENTED COMMUNITY

ISSUE: Bike/Pedestrian Paths

Recommendations:

Listening session attendees mentioned the need for more pedestrian and bike paths around the community. An effective way to capture more funding for the community is to have both a government effort and a non-profit effort to raise funds for paths and trails. With both groups partnering on fundraising efforts for a trail system it will be easier to acquire grant funding. Communities are recognizing bike/pedestrian paths are part of what make a city a community and gathering place. Be creative and look for walkway space in unusual areas, not just along the roadway. It might be an alley that can be turned into a path or an area along a ditch/canal, a flood water retention area, think of areas that may be used for dual purposes.

Bikes Belong is a coalition that provides information and grant funding to assist with getting more people using bikes. Bike paths, bike lanes, and bike parks are eligible projects that Bikes Belong may fund. This may be a resource that could link two of Belgrade's priorities together. A bike park would continue to build upon the gather places and the splash park and continue to grow the downtown core.

Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks Recreation Trails Program would be a possible source of funding for bike paths and walkways in Belgrade. The grant program will consider projects that develop linkages between homes and work places or gathering sites, trail construction and maintenance, weed control, trailhead or trailside facilities, features for disabled individuals, traffic control devices and acquisition of easements for trails.

Recommended Resources:

Bikes Belong Coalition
P. O. Box 2359
Boulder, CO 80306
303-449-4893
303-442-2936
www.bikesbelong.org

Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks Recreation Trails Grant Program
<http://fwp.mt.gov/recreation/grants/rtp/default.html>

Safe Routes to Schools

Taylor Lonsdale
Montana Safe Routes to School Coordinator
Mobility and Public Transportation
Western Transportation Institute (WTI)
Montana State University-Bozeman
PO Box 174250
Bozeman, MT 59717-4250
Phone Number: (406) 994-7031
Fax Number: (406) 994-1697
Email: taylor.lonsdale@coe.montana.edu
State Website <http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/saferoutes>
www.saferoutesinfo.org/funding-portal

Community Development Block Grant Funds

Darlene Tussing (Heritage Trail Plan/Implementation)

Active Transportation Alternates

3033 Demaret Place

Billings, MT 59106

darlene.tussing@gmail.com

406-860-6121

Montana Community Transportation Enhancement program

<http://www.mdt.mt.gov/business/ctep/>

ISSUE: Continue building interior activity options i.e., indoor soccer with splash park.

Recommendations:

Residents of Belgrade gave input on the need for new gathering places in the community. Everything from expanding the splash park to indoor soccer, and swimming pools were mentioned. Community buildings and projects can be challenging to spearhead with the diversity of interests. Trying to find an idea that could incorporate multiple options or activities would help to build community wide excitement for the project.

Belgrade is ahead of many communities by already having a splash park. This seems to be the growing trend for community water features. The expenses associated with swimming pools often makes them cost prohibitive. After carefully weighing the options, building costs, maintenance and insurance costs, etc. select what fits best with the community. From comments, Belgrade's splash park is a destination that could be expanded upon to draw the community closer.

While exploring funding options, investigate the Land and Water Conservation Fund grants. The funding guidelines may help to determine what type of activities fits best in the community and fit best with the available funds. Project funding is always a big challenge. Below are some websites to sign up for free e-newsletters to assist with searching for funds.

Montana State University Billings produces a Montana Foundation Directory about every two years. The directory gives the names and basic information on foundations that give to projects in Montana. This is a great resource if planning to seek funding through grants. There is a cost to purchase the book, but it is affordable for all the research is provided.

Recommended Resources:

Walter W. Timmerman

Land and Water Conservation Fund

Montana State Parks

1420 6th Avenue

P.O. Box 200701

Helena, MT 59620

(406) 444-3753

wtimmerman@mt.gov

<http://fwp.mt.gov/recreation/grants/lwcf/>

You can obtain information and sign up for free grants alerts on several web sites. Most have some information available at no charge, and offer additional services for a fee. I would recommend not paying for additional services. With the availability of information by electronic means, the information is available without charge by doing some research. Here are some places to start:

The Foundation Center, at www.fdncenter.org The MSU library is a cooperating collection with The Foundation Center. At the MSU library, you can access the full database of grantmakers through the “FC Search” program. Ask a librarian for assistance. You will also want to subscribe (it’s free) to the Foundation Center’s *Philanthropy News Digest*.

The Grantsmanship Center: www.tgci.com

Grant Station: <http://www.grantstation.com/>

www.seligier.com

See the Montana Community Foundation site, www.mtcf.org

Rural Community Assistance Corporation, www.rcac.org

Look for federal government information at www.grants.gov

Learn about State of Montana opportunities at <http://mt.gov> and search for grant programs by agency or department.

MSU Foundation Directory:

<http://www.msubillings.edu/library/forms/FoundationDirectoryOrder.aspx>

ISSUE: Celebrate Belgrade’s successes!

Recommendations:

Belgrade is full of wonderful successes and each one needs to be acknowledged. The Belgrade Chamber could host an annual Community Awards event and to showcase the successes. These might include Business of the Year, Youth Group Award, Volunteer Award, Belgrade Ambassador of the Year, Young Entrepreneur, etc. which points to the great things happening in the community. It could be tied into the Fall Festival or as a separate event.

ISSUE: Off-hour child care/sick child care

Recommended Resources:

Human Resource Development Council

ISSUE: Beautification/ Pride of Ownership

Recommendations:

Consider creating a beautification/ upgrade awards program. It could be tied in with the Chamber awards to help celebrate the success. The Business Improvement District would also help with the improvements and build the cohesive feeling of the community. Highlight areas, homes, businesses that are really making the effort to make their property welcoming.

MAIN TOPIC: INFRASTRUCTURE

ISSUE: Curbs, sidewalks, gutters, paved streets – not easy. Sidewalks nice – but may have other priorities/alternatives, i.e. asphalt path.

Recommended Resources:

Bikes Belong Coalition
P. O. Box 2359
Boulder, CO 80306
303-449-4893
303-442-2936
www.bikesbelong.org

Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks Recreation Trails Grant Program
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Safe Routes to Schools

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Phone Number: (406) 994-7031
Fax Number: (406) 994-1697
Email: taylor.lonsdale@coe.montana.edu
State Website <http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/saferoutes>
www.saferoutesinfo.org/funding-portal

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darlene.tussing@gmail.com
406-860-6121
Montana Community Transportation Enhancement program

<http://www.mdt.mt.gov/business/ctep/>

Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) Water Resources
Regional Office
2273 Boot Hill Court, Suite 110
Bozeman, Montana 59715
Phone: 406/586-3136
Fax: 406/587-9726

MAIN TOPIC: YOUTH AND SENIORS
ISSUES: YOUTH

Recommendations:

Belgrade community listening sessions provided a mix of responses regarding youth. Responses from youth had not been received at the time of the community meetings. Consider a Survey Belgrade Youth and see what they have to say. Are they interested in mountain bike paths, skateboard parks, an Internet/soda shop type gather spot? Find out how they spend their time after school and on weekends. What they like to do in Belgrade now. What they envision for Belgrade and why. Their responses will provide some direction on the next steps in the process and don't forget to keep them involved in the process as it moves forward.

Consider expanding the successful entrepreneur classes and consider engaging younger students at some level as resources allow.

Resources:

Montana State University students

ISSUES: SENIORS

Recommendations:

In touring Belgrade and in community listening sessions it seemed community seniors needed more space for activities and more housing options. The over 65 population is growing quickly and the need for more community service space and senior housing will increase everywhere. Consider looking at the Community Development Block Grant program for funding options to expand the current senior center or build an additional center.

Consider encouraging new single and multi-unit development to incorporate universal design standards. Universal design elements make each unit accessible to those with disabilities. Accessible housing is a key to keeping community members part of the community.

Resources:

Area Agency on Aging

MAIN TOPIC: CONNECT BELGRADE

ISSUE: All Organization Meeting

Belgrade residents voiced the issue of needing to know what other organizations in the community are doing to prevent overlaps in projects and major events scheduling. Belgrade does have an active volunteer group that has the pulse of the community and expanding on that can only strengthen the sense of community more.

Recommendations:

Form a partnership of all area non-profit groups. This group, with a representative from each organization, could meet once a quarter or every other month to share information on their organization, up-coming events, and current activities. This would help create a network of cohesive community groups and may get volunteers crossing over to assist on different events. This also makes a great network with which to garner supporting partners, support letters, etc. for future projects and grant requests.

Select an organization to host a community calendar where all events, meetings, and activities could be posted. (Belgrade Chamber, Belgrade Facebook page, Newspaper) Another possibility is to look at a web hosted site like bigtent.com where group members could also post their activities, events, and meeting schedules.

Consider joining the Montana Non-profit Association and consider having a local chapter.

Recommended Resources:

<http://www.mtnonprofit.org/>

Big Sky Economic Development

Community Development Team

Patty Nordlund, Dianne Lehm, Sara Hudson, Allison Corbyn

222 North 32nd Street, #200

Billings, MT 59101

406-256-6871

www.eburd.com (partnership of over 23 local organizations including city/county employees)

<http://www.bigtent.com/>

ISSUE: Volunteer Development

Residents of Belgrade expressed a need to expand and diversify the volunteer base in the community.

Recommendations:

At all events have a booth/contact person for individuals and groups that would like to help/volunteer in the future.

Post announcements for volunteers needed on websites, newspaper, events, and meetings.

REPORT BY: FRAN VIERECK
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Helena, MT 59601-4644
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MAIN TOPIC: ACCESS AND TRANSPORTATION

ISSUE: Transportation such as rail/airport divides the community.

We heard community members say that transportation issues such as rail, airport and Interstate 90 divide the city of Belgrade. Belgrade's population and housing have grown rapidly; its transportation systems have reacted to the explosive community growth but not quite fast enough. We heard that emergency response crews sometimes can't get across the city because of trains blocking the three railroad crossings.

Recommendations:

Safe, efficient and effective transportation make a community predictable. In a perfect transportation system, emergency services are accessed when needed and traffic moves in a safe, fluid way.

- Construction of an East Belgrade Interchange. This project is in the pre-construction phase with the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT). Considerable matching funds from Gallatin County may delay or suspend the project. With county support, it could be a federal-aid highway construction project. Without county support, the project would likely have to be funded by federal dollars only; political support would be needed.
- Enlist serious community and political support for this project now. This project is too important for Belgrade. Don't let it fail.
- The interchange would connect with Alaska Road South and provide emergency medical responders with consistent access to the south side of town (via an I 90 underpass) at all times.
- A railroad underpass at Jackrabbit Lane would provide Belgrade with emergency medical access on the west side of town even when a train is passing through.

Recommended Resources:

<http://www.mdt.mt.gov/safe>
<http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pub>

ISSUE: Use what you have to advantage

We saw and heard about Belgrade's rail line in the middle of its old town with I 90 dividing it from the newer part of town and Bozeman's airport on its eastern edge. Belgrade should use these existing assets to its best advantage by maximizing transport modules such as air, rail, trucking and the proximity to I 90.

Recommendations:

- Recruit big box store distribution centers. Wal-Mart, for example does not have a distribution center in Montana. There's one 600 miles to the west in tiny Hermiston, Oregon. Murdoch's has a small distribution facility in Belgrade; what about helping Murdoch's expand?
- Recruit more courier and cargo distribution systems. Fed-Ex has a center at the Bozeman airport. What about other couriers?
- Create a multimodal facility that transfers container shipping from rail to truck and vice versa.

Recommended Resources:

<http://resume.edjent.com/pdfs/strategicmanagment.pdf>

<http://www.algulfcoastvideo.com/WalmartDistributionCenters.pdf>

ISSUE: Mitigation plan needed to prepare for increased train traffic

We heard residents and others say that a mitigation plan is needed to prepare for increased train traffic. Coal train traffic could potentially increase to 60 trains per day as Montana's coal production increases.

Recommendations:

- With Gallatin County and the City of Bozeman's help, write an area mitigation plan for the coming coal trains.
- Involve the community.
- Include the Department of Environmental Quality and MDT's Rail and Transit Unit in the planning processes.
- Be proactive instead of reactive in this process.
- Learn from mistakes other cities and towns have made.

Recommended Resources:

<http://www.coaltrainfacts.org/key-facts>

<http://www.deq.mt.gov/ppa/default.mcp>

ISSUE: Interchange

We heard planners and residents talk about the need for a Belgrade East Interchange that would meet multiple community needs.

Recommendations:

- Construction of an East Belgrade Interchange. This project is in the pre-construction phase with the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT). Considerable matching funds from Gallatin County may delay or suspend the project. With county support, it could be a federal-aid highway construction project. Without county support, the project would likely have to be funded by federal dollars only; political support would be needed.
- Enlist serious community and political support for this project now. It's too important to Belgrade. Don't let it fail.

Recommended Resource:

<http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pub>

ISSUE: Ease city traffic

We heard and saw the need to ease city traffic, especially downtown. We saw concrete trucks, bully dumps, side dumps and end dump trucks drive past our meeting space at the Belgrade Chamber of Commerce. We also saw an endless stream of passenger cars drive through downtown during the days we listened.

Recommendations:

- Construction of an East Belgrade Interchange. This project is in the pre-construction phase with the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT). Considerable matching funds from Gallatin County may delay or suspend the project. With county support, it could be a federal-aid highway construction project. Without county support, the project would likely have to be funded by federal dollars only; political support would be needed.
- The interchange would connect with Alaska Road South and provide consistent access to the south side of town (via an I 90 underpass) at all times.
- Enlist serious community and political support for this project now. It's too important to Belgrade. Don't let it fail.
- A current MDT project called *Amsterdam Road/I 90 Eastbound On Ramp* could help ease downtown congestion. This project will occur at the Amsterdam Road exit at I 90 (where signal was installed this year). This project will allow the traveling public the option of accessing I 90 without traveling on Jackrabbit Lane.

ISSUE: Second Access to Bruce Industrial Park

A second access point for a Bruce Industrial Park is something that we heard you say. Financing for its infrastructure was also mentioned.

Recommendation:

- Developmentally, this issue is a much lower priority and should be addressed after emergency medical access and traffic congestion issues are resolved.

ISSUE: Improve entry way corridors

We heard you say that you want to improve the entry way corridor and market opportunities to showcase Belgrade on the eastern edge of town.

Recommendation:

- Construction of an East Belgrade Interchange. This project is in the pre-construction phase with the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT). Considerable matching funds from Gallatin County may delay or suspend the project. With county support, it could be a federal-aid highway construction project.
- This project will be the east entry way to Belgrade, the entry to the Bozeman airport and, a north entry to Yellowstone Park. Belgrade must capture this opportunity by developing an attractive welcome with inviting year round vegetation. Travelers heading to Yellowstone must stop in Belgrade for essentials and groceries. Belgrade can't lose out on this economic development opportunity.

Recommended Resources:

<http://travelmontana.mt.gov/>
<http://mtmainstreet.mt.gov/default.mcpix>

ISSUE: Connect Belgrade!

In our tour of the community we saw the need to physically connect River Rock, Landmark and Cobblestone subdivisions to the city. The residents of those areas need to use Belgrade services.

Recommendation:

- Construct an Interstate 90 underpass on the west end of Belgrade that connects the north side with Thorpe Road on the south side of I 90.
- The underpass will likely improve emergency medical access.

MAIN TOPIC: IMMEDIATE TRAFFIC CONTROL

ISSUE:

We heard you say that the Madison and Broadway four-way stop is an accident waiting to happen.

Recommendation:

- Construct a roundabout. There are three newer roundabouts in Helena area (behind Capital Hill Mall at Sanders Street and Butte Avenue, on Canyon Ferry Road at Lake Helena Drive and, at Colonial Drive and Saddle Drive near the South Hills Interchange) . There's a more than 50 year old roundabout at the intersection of Pacific Coast Highway and Lakewood Boulevard in Long Beach, California. Roundabouts work well. They succeed with high volumes of traffic.

Recommended Resources:

<http://www.mdt.mt.gov/travinfo/roundabouts/history.shtml>

<http://www.mdt.mt.gov/travinfo/roundabouts/>

ISSUE: We heard you say that you want to participate in transportation planning.

Recommendation:

- Create a Belgrade Transportation Policy Coordinating Committee (TPCC). (In my research, I only found one other in Montana --- in Missoula.)

Recommended Resources:

<http://www.mdt.mt.gov/search.shtml>

MAIN TOPIC: INFRASTRUCTURE

ISSUE: Curbs, Sidewalks, Gutters

We heard you say that curbs, sidewalks, gutters, paved streets are not easy to afford.

Recommendations:

- Access and utilize the Community Transportation Enhancement Program “CTEP” at MDT. (I checked with CTEP’s program manager in Helena. He said that Belgrade has \$215,000 in its CTEP account at this time.)
- CTEP funds curb, gutter and sidewalk projects, etc. CTEP also funds other projects such as bike and pedestrian paths.
- To use those funds, a community must provide a 13.42% match. Matching funds can include Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, for example. Only two Belgrade CTEP projects have occurred in the program’s history.
- Apply for a CDBG-ED planning grant for a project’s preliminary engineering report.

Recommended Resources:

<http://www.mdt.mt.gov/business/ctep/>

<http://cdbged.mt.gov/content/docs/PlanGrant/CDBGEDPlanningGrantGuidelines.pdf>

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<http://www.eurekardp.net>

MAIN TOPIC: BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

ISSUES: Add Value to Ag Products – process and ship from Belgrade

Resources:

The Growth Through Agriculture Programs and the Montana Department of Agriculture are great resources for the development of agricultural products. They can make recommendations for marketing ideas, help connect with Made In Montana Program, and have grant funds to help a business plan and train as well as purchase equipment and expansion work.

Angela Nelson, Program Manager
Growth Through Agriculture Program
Montana Department of Agriculture
302 North Roberts
PO Box 200201
Helena, MT 59620
Office: 406-444-2402
Fax: 406-444-9442
anelson@mt.gov
www.agr.mt.gov/business/GTA.asp

Angela DeYoung, Marketing specialist
Montana Department of Agriculture
302 North Roberts
PO Box 200201
Helena, MT 59620
Office: 444-0134

Collin Watters, Bureau Chief Agricultural Marketing & Business Development
Bureau
Montana Department of Agriculture
302 North Roberts
PO Box 200201
Helena, MT 59620
Office: 444-5423

Made In Montana Program
301 S. Park Ave
PO box 200505
Helena, MT 59620-0505
406-841-2757
<http://madeinmontanausa.com>

ISSUE: Consider tools, i.e., Inter-Modal Facility, Financial tools such as Tax Increment Finance Districts, Cooperatives

Recommendations: Businesses often time need additional assistance to develop financials and prepare them for contacting financial institutions. Some of the technical assistance can be tapped into by contacting the following. Most of the economic development organizations can help connect a business to the entity that best fits their needs.

Resources:

Brian Gion
Montana Cooperative Development Center
PO Box 3027
12 3rd Street NW, Suite 110
Great Falls, MT 59404
mdc@mdc.coop
406-727-1517

Stuart Leidner, CEO
Prospera Business Network
2015 Charlotte Street, Suite #1
Bozeman, Montana 59718
phone: 406-587-3113
fax: 406-587-9565

Montana World Trade Center (especially if looking at exporting anything out of the US)

Nicole Hagerman, Project Manager
Gallagher Business Bldg #257
Missoula, MT 59812-6798
Nicole@mwtc.org
406-243-6982

* The Montana World Trade Center in partnership with the Forestry Business Network is doing some great new programming on international trade opportunities in Wood.

Forestry Business Network
Craig Rawlings

(406) 240-0300.

Dave Glaser
Montana Community Development Corporation (they have a local branch in
Bozeman)
110 E. Broadway, 2nd Floor
Missoula, MT 59715
OR
222 East Main, Suite 202
Bozeman, MT 59715
Phone: (406) 728-9234
Toll Free Phone: (888) 745-5601
* Loans and SBDC, extension 200
* PTAC in Missoula, extension 218
* PTAC in Kalispell, extension 240
Fax: (406) 542-6671
E-mail: info@mtcdc.org

MEDA is also hosting a Tax Increment Finance District training on May 18th in
Butte. Contact Janet Cornish for more TIF information at:

Janet A. Cornish, Principal
Community Development Services of Montana
954 Caledonia Street
Butte, Montana 59701-9002
[406-723-7993](tel:406-723-7993)
JanAllyce@aol.com
<http://cdsofmontana.com>

Possibly explore the Montana Department of Transportation Disadvantage Business
Enterprise (DBE) for opportunities. They can do special workshops for DBE
businesses and are a good source of information. Also, connect with the Montana
SBA offices and the local SBDC office to host workshops on business planning and
business financial management.

ISSUE: Build on excellent start-up base that already exists - Market what you have

Recommendations and Resources:

Marketing is a continual struggle for most Montana companies. The USDA-Rural Development
has a program called R-MAP that Montana CDC (listed above) has received. There is a small
amount of money to help individual businesses to market and also some technical assistance
provided through that program as well.

Marketing cooperatively is also an avenue that could be explored especially within in similar
product lines (ie agricultural) or specific areas such as the downtown. Brian Gion with the
MCDC (listed above) would be a good person to visit with to determine if a marketing
cooperative could be used.

ISSUE: Be pro-active to influence development decisions

Recommendations and Resources:

Continue the communication! The Belgrade Chamber has a lot of connections in the community and could be built upon to gain public information. Some ideas (which may already be occurring):

- Set up a Belgrade Chamber facebook page
- Send survey's (short and to the point) out via emails and Facebook
- Interactive booths at community events like sporting games, Fall festival etc.
- Dan Clark with Local Government Center in Bozeman is excellent resource to help facilitate community conversation and vision planning which would help in forming the vision for the community as well as increase citizen's participation. Dan can also help do leadership training for volunteers.

ISSUE: Downtown revitalization plan – Marketing, Cohesion, What do we want to look like in the future?

Recommendations:

The Chamber of Commerce could host a planning grant through the following entities in partnership with the County or City. If the downtown businesses are actively engaged matching dollars may be raised through their participation.

Resources:

Big Sky Trust Fund
Montana CDBG-ED planning grant

There are also planning dollars for communities that are adjusting their economic base through the USDOC Economic Development Administration. Warren or Larry should be able to connect with the Northern Rockery EDD to explore that option.

ISSUE: Broadband Redundancy – be ready for huge data load needs

Recommendation and Resource:

There is an initiative about Broadband in rural communities starting across the US. www.saveruralbroadband.com that all rural communities should be aware of.

ISSUE: Use access and market to airport

Recommendations and Resources:

Montana West Economic Development did a really amazing video that plays on video kiosks in the Glacier International Airport. There is a possibility to tap into MSU and see if there are any students who could do a video showcasing why businesses should look at Belgrade and also highlight why businesses are ALREADY in Belgrade. Kim Morisaki with Montana West is a great resource to visit with. Her number is 406-257-7711 ext. 3.

MAIN TOPIC: FAMILY ORIENTED COMMUNITY

ISSUE: Support the Chamber in creating more family events.

Recommendation:

Montana Tourism Visit MT and the local tourism region would be great assets with building local events as well as creating tourism traffic for Belgrade, if desired.

Resources:

Montana Office of Tourism has two grant programs that also may be of use for this section:

- Special Events Grant Program (SECP)
- Tourism Infrastructure Investment Program (TIIP)

ISSUE: Bike/Pedestrian paths

Recommendations and Resources:

Some sources of potential funding for pathways are:

- Bikes Belong
- Kodak Green Space, we used this one to help design a segment of the Riverside Park
- Community Transportation Enhancement Program (CTEP)
- Private Foundations:
 - MSU-Billings publishes a Foundation Grant Resource Book every other year that is very helpful finding foundation grants which would be key in expanding any of the community facilities listed here.

Cooperatives are a good way at looking into Child care if enough parents are involved. Again, Brian Gion with MCDC is a good resource for this section.

MAIN TOPIC: HOUSING

ISSUE: Manufactured homes and trailer cooperatives

Recommendations:

Montana Cooperative Development (MCDC) and Neighborhood Works, Inc have recently come together on this specific issue. There is a special source of loan dollars that can be accessed that will allow manufactured home owners to purchase the land for the park. There are a lot of details still and the MCDC's Cooperative Specialists will be taking a training this summer. Brian Gion (listed above) would be able to start the exploration of this program.

Resources:

Other possible programs to discuss the need with are:

- Montana Department of Commerce- Montana Board of Housing

- HRDC Bozeman
32 South Tracy
Bozeman, Montana 59715
ph 406.587.4486
fx 406.585.3538
www.thehrdc.org

ISSUE: Beautification

Recommendations and Resources:

Again, the MSU-Billings publication for Montana Foundations may be a great resource for finding funding to help beautification projects. Another idea for beautification programs is through the DNRC local forester if Gallatin County has one and/or the NRCS offices. And, doing a beautification project around Arbor Day or Earth Day can sometimes tie into other funding sources.

MAIN TOPIC: INFRASTRUCTURE

ISSUES: Curbs, Sidewalks, Special Improvement Districts, etc.

Recommendations and Resources:

A capital improvement plan is a requirement to CDBG-Public Facilities as is the Preliminary Engineering Report. You must have these to apply for infrastructure funding through the Montana programs and it is beneficial to reference them while applying for EDA and USDA-RD funding as well. A good source for PER's and CIP's is the CDBG-PF planning grant. Jennifer Olson is the Chief of the Grant Division of Department of Commerce her number is 406-841-2773.

ISSUE: Finance infrastructure to Bruce Industrial Park

Recommendations and Resources:

For a business park probably the best funding is the Economic Development Administration program. Again, Northern Rocky EDD should be your contact to explore this option. If jobs are being created EDA can help bring infrastructure out to the business park. Another avenue to explore is Board of Investment and the InterCap Loan programs.

MAIN TOPIC: YOUTH AND SENIORS

ISSUES: YOUTH

Resources:

Potential Resources for Youth Based Projects are:

- MSU-Extension Services

- Youth Global Service Day
- Tony Hawke Foundation for Skateboard park (especially if you have a youth group leading the application)

BELGRADE LISTENING NOTES

WHAT ARE THE STRENGTHS AND ASSETS OF BELGRADE?

STRENGTHS - CITY GOVERNMENT SERVICES

- Great Schools
- Ditto – great schools
- Event Center
- Great Chamber
- Great Fire Department
- Great public services – second to none for a community our size
- People that live here – very proud and loyal to Belgrade
- Ditto, Ditto, Ditto
- Police, EMT's
- Great City Management
- Great community spirit
- Tight knit community
- We are a bedroom community but have tremendous community spirit – not a suburb.
- Bedroom community with a lot of pride and activity
- Distinct from Bozeman
- Great location
- Fall festival and other great activities
- Belgrade does its own thing for its citizens.
- Ditto all
- People live 20 miles north of Belgrade feel they are from Belgrade
- People work together and jump right in
- Hub of transportation in the valley – airport, interstate, rail
- Due to all that is here, easier to start a business here than in the surrounding areas
- Strong agricultural roots – two elevators
- Central Valley Fire District – serves 220 square miles; City has inter local agreement with Valley Fire.
- Affordability of housing
- Thoughtful community that makes good decisions.
- Montana State University
- Lots of recreation
- World Class steakhouse

STRENGTHS - EDUCATION

- The people – it is not a bedroom community – has its own character.
- Strong school system in Belgrade
- Nearness to interstate
- People and their commitment to kids- building a new elementary school.

- **Belgrade treats its kids as a priority – wonderful future leaders, kind, engaged, multi-faceted.**
- **Our students have so many interests, abilities and skills.**
- **Belgrade is a place that is friendly and invested.**
- **Our kids volunteer! They see the value of our community.**
- Businesses with which the school interacts are phenomenal supporters.
- Gallatin College – fairly new; college within the university system that offers one to two year programs. Similar mission to college of technologies. Here to serve the entire area.
- Culinary program – national competitors. (Won last year.)
- Career Transitions – workforce related training opportunities.
- CWTCC Career Workforce Community Training Center – umbrella for workforce training opportunities. One stop location for training.
- Various education entities work well together
- Schools strive to be energy efficient
- Excellent collaboration among education and training entities
- Belgrade Library – book clubs, entrepreneurship training is great for kids, literacy programs, guard family needs; Won Montana Library of the Year
- Excellent wireless infrastructure

STRENGTHS - CIVIC LEADERS, CHURCHES, NON-PROFITS, PRIVATE CITIZENS

- FFA and FFA Alumni Association
- Career Workforce Training Center
- Senior Citizen
- Food bank Truck – easy to contribute now
- Gardening program through a local church
- 1,000 New Gardens program – program at MSU to prepare soil
- Belgrade Chamber – very helpful with information and support
- Big Brothers and Big Sisters
- Small town feeling – hope to preserve it
- Fall festival and other community events – need more to engage kids
- Safe environment
- Great schools, great administration
- Caring people
- We are fortunate to have very good non-profit corporations such as United Way – After School Program
- Help Center
- Habitat for Humanity
- Volunteerism is a big strength of Belgrade.
- Supper sports programs
- Abundance of churches – at least 13 – that are active in the community
- Splash Park

- Crisis line is available for mental health and/or domestic violence.

STRENGTHS - RETAIL AND SERVICES

- Excellent chamber for a small town
- Still have small town feel
- Ditto – people know who you are
- Manufacturing in this area is pretty cool
- Business projects start here
- Education system is good – great opportunities
- Ditto – although growing still has small town feel; Belgrade much friendlier than say, Bozeman
- Community feel
- Good schools
- Good fire district
- Great chamber
- City has good working relationship with businesses
- Very fortunate to have Joe Menicucci
- Revolving Loan Fund for business gap funding
- Spin off's from parent companies –
- Three medical service entities
- **Splash Park was a home run!**
- **Fall Festival is huge – a great success.**

STRENGTHS - AGRICULTURAL BUSINESSES/FARMERS AND RANCHERS

- The people
- Access to transportation
- Water- good lands and soils
- Bozeman has lost its ag infrastructure – so it has moved to Belgrade
- Ag businesses - Belgrade Sales and Service, elevators, large animal events, cheese plant, MSU Extension Office, ag businesses, implement dealers, etc.
- Farm and Ranch Show – held in April – celebrating area farm and ranch history
 - April 27 – 29; entire fair grounds, lots of vendors all ag related, learning activities for kids to do; lecture hall – every half hour new lecture;
- Growing local food producer base – vegetables, dairy, seeds, meat processing for personal use and gaming, horse boarding; landscapers,
- Farmer's Market

STRENGTHS - MEDICAL PROVIDERS/SUPPORT BUSINESSES

- Small town atmosphere
- Good schools
- Array of professional services – adequate to serve population

- Grocery selection
- Airport
- New interchange project
- Library
- Senior Center
- Urgent care
- Primary care
- Community Help Partners
- Head Start
- PT, OT, chiropractors, pharmacies, etc.
- Central Valley Fire Dept.
- Good competition in the medical field here
- **Don't know Belgrade has the services until you need them!**
- Fire Department - Gives back the community investment in the form of service
- Paramedics are on the same level as the folks on the ambulance – so care is the same level before the ambulance arrives.
- Senior medics in the county work for our Fire Department
- **Bleeding edge of care is right in front of the cutting edge of care.**
- 1500 emergencies per year; about half a dozen people resuscitated per year
- Lots of interaction with schools and existing organizations to train on CPR, etc.
- Present at a lot of events.
- **50 fire department members that volunteer their time – up to 40,000 hours per year in time given**
- Takes a team to provide true assistance and Belgrade has that team in place.
- Belgrade now has a School District Nurse
- Streamline – HRDC community busing system that connects Bozeman, Belgrade, University and Four Corners. Free service.
- Joe Menicucci's use of CTEP funding.
- Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, 4-H
- Water park – great success – brings people in from Bozeman

STRENGTHS - TRANSPORTATION/INFRASTRUCTURE – AIRPORT, RAIL, STREETS, UTILITIES

- **Intermodal connection – good north south roads, I90 goes east west, we have rail and airport. Great position to be in!**
- Belgrade is master of own destiny in determining how to spend federal funds.
- Small community – is an asset.
- Energy boom –
- StreamLine transportation
- The community of 20 – 30 years ago is still out there – good infrastructure to build on.

STRENGTHS - SENIOR CITIZENS

- 125 volunteers involved with the Senior Citizen Center
- The people of Belgrade.
- No Bozeman traffic
- It is the only place I have lived; it is the only place to be.
- Our Director, Shannon.
- We drive in from River Rock – large outlying population.

BELGRADE LISTENING NOTES

WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES OF BELGRADE?

CHALLENGES - CITY GOVERNMENT SERVICES

- Bedroom community
- 3,000 kids in school system – majority not from town
- Train –
- Main street was not designed for the volume it is getting – throw in a train crossing and you have serious safety issues.
- Backed up train can cause serious safety issues.
- Waste Water Treatment – needs to be expanded – add more storage
- Infrastructure – small town that got big quick; still playing catch up.
- Traffic within Belgrade
- Traffic outside Belgrade – too much traffic on roads not designed for it.
- Subdivisions from “here, heck and gone” – how do we provide services?
- Bridges need upgraded
- Fire retention needed
- **There is a misperception that Belgrade’s issues are insurmountable.**
 - Note – but people choose to live here.
- A strong tax base is missing.
- Pedestrian traffic is missing – people use the street; need the tax base to pay for sidewalks.
- Need a ladder truck for the fire department.
- Living near Bozeman is a blessing and a curse; challenge is adding retail businesses.
- Parking – truck traffic can make for difficult parking.
- Do not have a central business district – challenge for promotions, i.e. – Sidewalk Sales
- Overshadowed by Bozeman – people more familiar with Bozeman.
- Shopping leakage – people go to Bozeman.
- Physical structures (train, rail, airport) may cause physical divisions in the future, i.e. school busing.
- 17 to 20 trains come through every day...more may be coming
- More coal trains coming through – dust may effect air quality
- Concerns of cuts in federal funding; grants and project funding dwindling.
- Belgrade is not a tourist destination

CHALLENGES - EDUCATION

- Not enough for students to do here –our students are diverse in what they are interested in, but we don’t have enough options for the students.
- Kids like to hang out with kids – no place for kids to hang out safely – no bowling alley, no theater, community center for kids.
- Our sidewalks don’t connect

- Challenge to keep up with future job training needs
- Belgrade will start growing again soon – transportation problems within Belgrade will grow.
- Long range capital improvements for the school system will be a challenge
- Ditto
- People work outside of Belgrade – when we need volunteers in the school, hard to find them as they are at work.
- Agencies are understaffed and underfunded.
- Those corporations funding research through MSU – get them to consider Belgrade’s workforce – educate our workforce.
- Difficult to entice Bozeman people to visit Belgrade.
- We have businesses that start small, and grow –get bought out, and leave Belgrade.
- Lack of opportunities for people, young and old, that want to stay here with a good quality job.
- Not enough day care – especially have infant care need. Need for odd hours; sick child care is non existent.
- So much truck traffic on Main Street – very tough for pedestrians and parking.
- More staffing and funding for Belgrade Library

CHALLENGES - CIVIC LEADERS, CHURCHES, NON-PROFITS, PRIVATE CITIZENS

- Emphasis on visioning for Belgrade seems to involve Main Street...needs to go much beyond inner Belgrade. Must include River Rock, Landmark, Cobblestone – - involves thousands of people.
- Delivering services such as high speed internet, Meals on Wheels, etc. – needs to improve in the Belgrade outlying areas such as River Rock.
- People in outlying areas of Belgrade don’t feel they are a part of Belgrade.
- Adult Ed services
- Belgrade school funding – people are watching to see how the funds are spent.
- Crisis of vision – must expand the vision to outer areas.
- Feel like the neglected step-child of Bozeman sometimes.
- Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport – name choice could have included Belgrade
- Wish there were more activities that engage families – community events
- More family restaurants
- Improve more parks like Lewis and Clark Parks
- We do have good volunteers but they are the same volunteers – burn out
- 40 kids waiting for a Big Brother or Big Sister in Belgrade
- Need more work on our trail systems – have some trails but they are not connected and involve walking on highway to get to another trail. No shoulders.
- Concern for trailer parks closing if they don’t get on city water and sewer

CHALLENGES - RETAIL AND SERVICES

- Always competing with Bozeman – only 9 miles away

- Business often goes to Bozeman
- No place to hold really big events – so event is held in Bozeman
- Realtors discourage home buying in Belgrade – say there are no services
- Library struggles with demand for services
- What makes up Belgrade lives outside the city limits
- Access – sometimes traffic prevents people from coming in to Belgrade
- No pediatrician
- **Need to clean up Belgrade – does not appear to be loved; need curbs, gutters, etc.**
- Groups sometimes want to disassociate themselves with Belgrade
- Ditto
- Downtown keeps moving – rail road tracks don't help
- Always the same core group that support Belgrade
- More in the audience when we have sporting events
- Grown in population but not business base – so struggle with infrastructure funding

CHALLENGES - AGRICULTURAL BUSINESSES/FARMERS AND RANCHERS

- Regulatory issues of getting your product to consumers
- Liability insurance
- Food processing and preserving
- Fragmentation of family farms – if multiple children, farm can't sustain all of the families
- Labor – paying payroll tax and workman's comp
- Developing own market and delivery system is a challenge
- The commodities market is so very complicated
- Non-compatible uses – conversion of prime land from ag to residential; how ag relates to subdivisions.
- Water use facilities – problems will only grow in the future
- Mammoth Ditch runs through the proposed city baseball fields

CHALLENGES - MEDICAL PROVIDERS/SUPPORT BUSINESSES

- **Sidewalks, curbs and gutters!**
- Summer activities for children
- Pool – youth recreation
- Lack of tax base – industry and shopping
- Trail system
- Downtown Parking
- Not an active youth development program, i.e., pool, - to stay in town and do
- The train – blocks medical services – dangerous in this sense
- Fiber – difficulties in transferring data faster
- Filling in the medical gaps, i.e., OBGYN and pediatrician.
- Ditto sidewalks, curbs, gutters

- Transportation for patients needing to get to a doctor
- Substance abuse – typical as in other communities
- No car pooling to coordinate rides
- Struggle to find meeting room that does not require payment
- Need more community service – same volunteers at every meeting

CHALLENGES - TRANSPORTATION/INFRASTRUCTURE – AIRPORT, RAIL, STREETS, UTILITIES

- Finding a way to finance the needed improvements for transportation and infrastructure – will not see as much help from the government
- Small community – difficult to find financing
- Ditto – huge challenge to put financial pieces of the puzzle together
- Four way stop – heavy traffic – add a train/pedestrian incident and serious trouble; would need to impact parking to put in a light.
- Also hemmed in by airport
- **Lots of easy answers – but the answers take money.**
- **Farm to market roads are becoming residential.**

CHALLENGES - SENIOR CITIZENS

- Sidewalks.
- Streets don't connect
- More transportation – River Rock area
- Ditto
- Belgrade gas grown so fast the taxes haven't kept up with infrastructure needs.
- Interchange – not a priority – other things more needed.
- Need freezer space and food space at the center.
- **Senior Center has full time needs with part time staff.**
- Don't limit driver's license age to 80.

BELGRADE LISTENING NOTES

WHAT ARE SOME PROJECTS OR VISION YOU HAVE FOR THE FUTURE OF BELGRADE....IN THE NEXT 2, 5, 10, 20 YEARS?

PROJECTS - CITY GOVERNMENT SERVICES

- Build airport interchange - underpass/overpass to remove train traffic vs. safety/services issues (2 years)
- Ditto, ditto, ditto, ditto
- Sewer and Water (5 years)
- Ladder Truck (tomorrow)
- Continue to work well with surrounding communities as well as the state and federal entities to complete projects and improve associations.
- Opportunity right now to get in front of the interchange – be prepared with a plan!
- Chamber ambassadors are looking for more retail opportunities that would complement, not compete with current businesses. Something like a Shopko, one-stop shop without groceries.
- Beautification projects – build a nice downtown district, not necessarily retail district.
- Continue to draw manufacturing
- Town Pump property area developed.
- Continue these kinds of conversations.
- Be prepared for the economy to start growing again – major needs that must be met at the same time.
- Interchange solve a lot of problems – but also have to address sub-quality roads.
- Keep people in the community – splash park (people from Bozeman come here),
- Event Center expansion – connect other events and activities to it.
- Park development – get them finished
- Expand transportation system – interconnected trails as we lack sidewalks
- Figure out effect of the airport on the area – as it will continue to grow
- Medical Health Care Area
- Need unified projects – consider zoning
- Pedestrian corridor down Jackrabbit Lane
- Revamp Main Street for traffic flow
- Subdivisions – have to leave the city to patrol;

PROJECTS -EDUCATION

- Rec center for kids
- Ditto – can provide training for youth center.
- More sidewalks

- Rebuild Tech Quai
- New middle school
- Expand dual enrollment opportunities with Gallatin College and Belgrade students
- House all family support programs, i.e., Headstart and Thrive - one stop shop for families.
- Capital improvements plan made well known and tied to fund schools
- More after school programs and activities for high school age students
- Continue to support Belgrade Skatepark group
- Bikepath between Manhattan and Belgrade
- Compile an economic development package for corporations interested in moving to Gallatin Valley.
- Continue to offer and promote short term training.
- Long range plans of dealing with new (it is coming!) growth; i.e., safe routes to schools
- **Develop community identity**
- Create an opportunity for all graduating students to stay in this community
- Fill the Belgrade Mercantile Building (and figure out parking)
- We provide an excellent education – let’s keep our students here!
- 21st Century Learning Center that would serve the entire valley corridor
- Resources to provide Junior Achievement as demanded in the area.
- Business recruitment – bring businesses here!
- Build that interchange.
- Build a bus system that brings people from Three Forks into Belgrade, MSU, etc.
- Swimming pool
- Continue to respond to employers needs and provide a trained workforce.
- Short term and long term plan for education growth – develop partners with the school district and training entities.
- More family activities, i.e., bowling, theater,
- Imagine a new high school that is joint Bozeman/Belgrade
- Improve bandwidth for large companies such as Oracle

PROJECTS -CIVIC LEADERS, CHURCHES, NON-PROFITS, PRIVATE CITIZENS

- Create more family community events
- Create more parks – like Lewis and Clark Park
- Adopt-A-Park; city willing to maintain parks but purchasing equipment is difficult
- Swimming pool; tennis courts; basketball courts – outdoor sports center (pending – but not the pool)
- Have events and restaurants for Belgrade - don’t want to drive to Bozeman to attend an event
- More support for the library – more computers – demand far outstrips supply
- Broaden the visioning of Belgrade to include outlying areas

PROJECTS -RETAIL AND SERVICES

- Convention center
- Interchange – more access to our town must be good
- Fill in Jackrabbit strip – blank canvas
- Bring community together – community center; we are gaining population so tap into families
- Weekend family activities – in summer have the splash park, but other times of year?
- Expand and enrich our retail options
- More choices for family oriented restaurant
- Have great sports facility but where do teams take their students to eat
- **Replicate our successes - Splash Park – home run! – Fall Harvest; spend time as a community and figure out what is working**
- Access, parking, price, service – great things Belgrade has to build on
- Create our own identity

PROJECTS -AGRICULTURAL BUSINESSES/FARMERS AND RANCHERS

- Better collaboration with providing food products to MSU
- Vegetable/food processing plant – AERO, - similar to Ronan’s
- Utilize schools as in Bozeman Farm to Schools
- Continue to add and retain value so that it is grown, processed and shipped from Belgrade
- Maintain ag infrastructure
- Shortage of meeting locations now that County Kitchen has closed

PROJECTS -MEDICAL PROVIDERS/SUPPORT BUSINESSES

- **Sidewalks, curbs and gutters!**
- **Destination town – what can we build and they will come? (not shopping – Bozeman is too close)**
- Improve fiber data transfer speeds – Opticon has begun work on this.
- OBGYN and Pediatrician here
- Bike trails
- Convention center near the Town Pump
- Organized youth activities – give kids something to do here in town so not on the highway
- Fall Festival – replicate this type of event
- Find Belgrade’s nitch – antiques? Rocks?
- Continue to pursue EMT training in high school
- Replicate water park to draw people here
- Push community service and volunteerism in the schools and in the community

PROJECTS -TRANSPORTATION/INFRASTRUCTURE – AIRPORT, RAIL, STREETS, UTILITIES

- Interchange- continue to find the finance puzzle pieces
- Duplicate rebuilding as in Valley Center

- Federally eligible routes – MDT has sway over where we spend that money. The secondary highways (Frontage Road) – MDT does not have the ability to spend federal aid money on the highway. Is it possible to have secondary highway re-labeled as primary?
- End up with a grid system – East, West, North, South – lots of options.
- New community center with a pool.

PROJECTS -SENIOR CITIZENS

- New Senior Center
- Even expand more wheels on wheels
- Need a place to hold receptions, weddings, events with a commercial kitchen
- Clothing stores
- Health center
- Establish priorities for Belgrade and do them!