First Impressions 

**Team Report Form**

Community Visited: Hill City Date Visited: 9/20/16

Pre-visit web search: How easy was it to get information on the community you were visiting? Did it accurately reflect what you saw? Did you have difficulties obtaining information on the community through a web search?

The website was good and accurately reflected what we saw in the community.

1. The “Five-Minute” Impression: After taking a five-minute drive through the community without stopping, the following reactions were noted. The following observations were noted when entering the community from major entrances (signs, streetscapes, buildings, etc.)

Clean, lots well kept. Campgrounds sign was covered; Junky north of Dollar General; Church signs need repainted; Welcome to Ringneck Country & Lions sign covered by trees. Approaching from the east was not quite as favorable – outside city limits.

2. Downtown Business Area

Describe the buildings, signs, infrastructure, etc. Explain what type of businesses you observed and give a description of the variety and quality of merchandise displayed.

Describe the customer service received when you entered those retail businesses. (Were you greeted? Did you have to ask for assistance?) What public amenities were available (drinking fountains, benches, public restrooms, etc.) Comment on landscaping and streetscaping. Did you have difficulty finding parking? Could you access multiple services from where you parked?

Casey’s was friendly and helpful. They recommended 2 new restaurants. Finish Line was also friendly and helpful, however they stated there was nothing to do. Mission Mart was not so attractive, junky. The Flower Shop was friendly but seemed pretty empty. The Drug Store also seemed to have empty shelves. The Lumberyard was run down. The grocery store was well stocked and nice variety of items. Friendly service. Liked the step ladders to help reach upper shelves. There did not appear to be a theme or much landscaping downtown. There were several empty buildings. Main Street seemed pretty dead. There was a nice park however.

1. Other Retail Shopping Areas

Describe other retail shopping areas. Were the areas attractive and easy to access?

Found mostly on Highway 24. Attractive for highway frontage with easy access and parking.

4. Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas

Is there a defined area where manufacturing industries could easily locate/expand? If so, describe.

Really did not find an industrial park. On the south side of town is the power plant and the recycling center.

5. Health Care Services

Comment on the availability and apparent quality of hospitals and emergency medical services. Comment on the availability and condition of facilities for physicians, dentists, optometrists, public health and other healthcare providers. What long-term care services, assisted living or nursing facilities exist in the community?

Found the hospital and information from the city website.

6. Housing

Give a brief description of the existing mix of housing stock. Does the local market have housing that would appeal to all income wages? What challenges do you see in regards to finding acceptable housing? (Neighborhoods, size, properties for sale, etc.) What kind of rental properties did you observe for persons interested in building or simply living in the community prior to buying housing?

Only one link on the website for realtors and it didn’t work. Not many houses for sale were observed, however there were several vacant. New apartments are available. We were able to obtain nice list of rentals at City Hall. We noticed several properties which needed clean-up. Noticed senior living facilities. Graham Estate was a nice building but it didn’t seem very inviting.

7. Schools

What schools are present? (Head Start, Preschool, K-8, High School, Post-Secondary, etc.) Do the schools appear to be adequate in size? Are the buildings and grounds well-maintained? Were you able to find print information in the community that helped assess the quality of the educational system?

Discovery World Preschool – 20 child capacity. Hill City Early Childhood Center – Head Start – 33 children. USD 281 Grade School & Jr/Sr High School – 32 teachers, 20 other staff. Student to teacher rations is 12.76 to 1. Approximately 400 students enrolled. Better than state average in quality. They appeared adequate in size for the population of Hill City and the school grounds seemed well maintained.

1. Childcare

What childcare service are available? Is it affordable?

Was unable to find out much from City Hall or Chamber Office.

Amy’s Daycare, Christie Gosselin Day Care Home, Tenderheart Day Care Home, Marcy Lynn Day Care Home.

1. Faith/Religion

Comment on the number of denominations and the physical appearances of the churches represented in the community. Did you observe any evidence of church-sponsored community services?

There are a variety of churches in the community and they are well maintained.

1. Civic

Tell about the variety of nonprofit organizations and clubs within the community.

Did you observe any evidence of civic organization activity?

We asked about organizations and things to do at the city office. She didn’t know much about organizations other than what was on the website.

1. Public Infrastructure

Comment in general on the streets, street signage, sidewalks, parking, lighting, restrooms, landscaping, and streetscapes in areas **other than downtown**

Did you observe land-use planning?

Streets were maintained. Some areas with unpaved roads were less attractive. Less desirable areas were hidden by vegetation. Light poles in northeast part of town need painted.

Comment on city/town hall (How were you received? Was there information about the town available?)

They received good information at city hall. The entrance was congested and could use some work to make the flow of traffic easier.

Police/fire protection:

Library: Staff at the library was very helpful and there were several displays for viewing. It was clean and well kept.

City parks (walking tracks, ballparks, playgrounds, sports complex)

Very nice park with gazebo and picnic shelter. Clean restrooms and walking trail. It was good to see the sand volleyball and basketball courts for the kids. The walking trail and park restrooms could use some signage however.

1. Recreation/Tourism

Is the community well-known for any particular attraction or event? Do they have a community slogan that capitalizes on that asset?

Did you see any indication of significant events taking place in the community that would be of interest to both visitors and residents?

Chamber office mentioned the Duck Unlimited Meal and the shooting range. Also that fair is always a busy time and that Chamber sponsors a “Business After Hours.” At Christmas there is Santa in the Park and this year a barbershop quartette will sing in the gazebo.

Elaborate on any significant natural or manmade features that have the potential of drawing people to the community.

Is there an obvious visitor’s center, chamber of commerce office, main street office, or other facility that serves the needs of visitors? Comment on the staff, facilities, signage, visibility, etc.

Chamber office was difficult to find and needs signage. She didn’t know much about community organizations others than what was on the website. She mentioned the golf course and that the fall is a big time for special events as it is hunting season.

Are there any restaurants, specialty shops or attractions that would bring you back to this community in the near future?

The Mexican restaurant was very good and service was excellent

1. Wrap-up

What are the most positive things you observed about the community?

Businesses along HWY 24 were very helpful

Service in the restaurant was excellent

The grocery store is a real asset to the community and well stocked

Have an exceptional newspaper which reports positive items and tells you what is going on in the community

What are the biggest obstacles/challenges facing this community?

There is a need for signage in the community

Hospitality training or education on what is available within the community

The downtown business district has many rundown and vacant buildings

What will you remember most about this community six month from now (positive or negative)?

It appears the community pulls together to help folks in times of need

Really liked the grocery store and the ladders to help reach upper shelves

Exceptional newspaper which reports the positive

That HWY 24 really is the heart of the business district and not the actual downtown. The downtown business district is old and has some dilapidated junky buildings.



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