First Impressions

Compiled Report Form

**Community Visited: Louisburg Date(s) Visited:** 3-17-17 (Friday)

 4-10-17 (Monday)

 3-17-17 (Friday)

**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?**

1. Very nice City website. Lots of information that was easy to find. Overall, the City’s website promotes a positive impression of the organization and the community. The library website, while not as impressive as the City’s, seemed up to date. I was impressed with “Download It” section. The Chamber website is attractive and easily navigated, but some of the information was absent or out of date.
2. The community’s websites do a great job of providing information quickly, easily and in a well-designed format. The city’s website is attractive and easy to navigate, and the chamber’s website pairs nicely, with additional community info.
3. The City’s and Chamber’s websites are nice. The Chamber website has some information missing or outdated. The library website is okay.
4. **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.)**
5. We entered town from the west on Highway 68/Amity Street. The appearance of the community as we entered town gave the impression residents care about their city. Driving around, we noticed the design and condition of the built environment varied considerably, newer development having been built to higher standards than older areas. Drainage issues (especially the absence of curb and gutter in some areas) are always a challenge.
There was considerable evidence of forward thinking and planning in the development of commercial property at both ends of Amity Street, although it appeared to not have been absorbed as quickly as anticipated.
The following observations were noted when entering the community from major entrances (signs, streetscapes, buildings, etc.)
* Good sense of entering a community with an identity.
* Highway 68/Amity Street corridor at either end of town reflected mainstream commercial development appearances of the last twenty-five years.
* Signage varied in quality and age, but was generally okay. Street name signage was aged, but staff indicated this is in the process of being updated.
1. Louisburg is an attractive, growing community. Visitors from the west or entering from U.S. Highway 69 are greeted by commercial suburban growth, but the retail centers are attractive. Kansas Highway 68 cuts through the town as Amity St., and development along the road is nestled in slightly rolling hills that give the community a very natural feel. The Amity/Metcalf intersection was significantly backed up at 8 a.m. when I drove through – potential future stoplight location? Throughout town, it’s easy to see that Louisburg is a growing community, with an abundance of newer-looking housing and housing starts. Buildings along Amity are well-maintained and attractive. Less so along Metcalf and some of the other retail areas. I had a tough time finding signage for “downtown” but found the district when I turned at the “library” sign. Additional signage could be helpful! While the town is attractive, there did not seem to be a cohesive streetscape plan. The downtown area has charm, but could benefit from a more unified look.
2. We approached the City of Louisburg from I-35 to the west. We immediately noticed the Cider Mill, a nice local amenity. The commercial area at the west end of town was fairly busy considering the time of our arrival (around 10:00 am). Based on the infrastructure and available tenant space, the community seems to anticipate growth, although both the east side and west side commercial areas seemed to have gotten ahead of the market for such property. A very strong sense of “community,” and it was obvious that we had arrived in Louisburg based on the feel of the city and appropriate signage.
There was a definite sense of entering the community. The main thoroughfare, Amity, looked nice and was well-maintained, although there are some challenges in the older part of town due to aging infrastructure. That said, changes to signage or other minor “flourishes” could go a long way in sprucing up the visuals. Wayfaring or directional signage might help guide visitors and create a visual that helps link different neighborhoods throughout the community.

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?)**

1. Downtown was aged, but City Hall was beautiful, and a real credit to the community. The Downtown Louisburg Revitalization Plan is exciting! I observed nothing out of the ordinary mix of small town government, health care, banking/finance and small “mom and pop” businesses. I did not visit any downtown businesses other than City Hall. As noted above, City Hall is an excellent reflection on the vision of the governing body and staff, and the community in general. The hospitality shown by City staff was outstanding.
2. Building and street conditions varied. Some of the buildings (banks, etc.) were nicely manicured, while the (former?) Chinese restaurant building was surrounded by weeds. A sign pointed from Amity to the library, but additional signage could be beneficial. (Prevented from visiting businesses by time constraints)
3. Downtown was pleasant yet inconsistent. The center strip on the west side of Broadway and Amity and the repurposed gas station on the east side of the intersection are not consistent with the central business district to the south. The intersection of Broadway and Amity could be a great opportunity for downtown growth. The infrastructure is inconsistent in design and condition, yet you could clearly tell that you were “downtown.” Lots of great potential. The streetscape is a mixture of architecture from Amity to South 3rd Street that is not always in harmony. City Hall is attractive and is in a great location, and Broadway has strong potential.
When we visited City Hall we were warmly greeted and given a tour of the building. The facility was gorgeous and was a great representation of the city and its professionalism. The reuse of the old building maintains the continuity of downtown both visually and historically.
We got gas when we first entered the community and employee was indifferent. We were able to have lunch during our stay at a local restaurant and both the food and service was excellent.

**What public amenities were available (drinking fountains, benches, public restrooms, etc.) Comment on appealing landscaping and streetscaping. Did you have difficulty finding parking? Could you access multiple services from where you parked?**

1. I spent my time downtown at City Hall. The public facilities there were outstanding. Louisburg should be very proud of City Hall, and their plans for updating downtown.
2. Some of the businesses offered benches as part of their individual landscaping/streetscaping designs. Otherwise, most public amenities would be available inside City Hall or the library.
The downtown area offered a wide street with plenty of parking, and was very walkable, although there was significant variation in sidewalk conditions between businesses. However, the area would be less-accessible for other types of navigation – such as wheelchairs and strollers. Many core community services are located in the area, with helpful signage, great accessibility, etc.
3. City Hall has very nice amenities. We did not have time to visit other businesses on Main Street. I did not notice too many benches or signage for public restrooms. Downtown is walkable and had sufficient parking, although the quality and accessibility of the sidewalks varies. The Downtown Master Plan will do much to improve the infrastructure, walkability/accessibility, and the visual environment. Maintenance of buildings and grounds in the central business district was inconsistent. Some locations are very nice, while others are somewhat neglected. Signage/pole banners could add a sense of place and can be eye-catching.
4. **Other Retail Shopping Areas**

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

1. We visited a C-mart on the east end of Highway 68/Amity Street. Merchandise was typical C-mart merchandise. C-mart service was indifferent. This shopping area is on the east side of town, and aside from four free standing businesses, the strip center appeared to have a high vacancy. Access was very easy, but the area looked so-so. The retail development at the west end of Amity, near Highway 69 was much busier, development was occurring, and it was generally more attractive. Both areas are typical automobile-oriented developments that could be found in almost any urban area in the country. Neither area seems very pedestrian friendly. Dined with City staff at Miss B’s Café on Metcalf Street. Restaurant was nice; food and service were terrific.
2. It took a little while to get a sense of the main business routes through town (other than Amity). However the community was easy to navigate after finding these types of places once.
The retail areas just off U.S. 69 look very nice, giving Louisburg a modern, developed feel, and along Amity the way the retail/commercial blends with the surrounding landscape gives the community a very natural feel. The S. Metcalf strip mall is less-nice, but home to some great businesses.
I also noticed a lot of school pride throughout town, making it clear that the schools are a unifying factor!
3. The commercial area at US-69 and Amity appears to serve a region much larger than Louisburg. It has a nice variety of services, and is designed and sited in a modern automobile-oriented manner. Pedestrian access exists, but the development is located in a way that practically requires automobile use, something quite common in Kansas. The shopping center on the east end of Amity appeared to have high vacancy, and the grounds were not well kept. This may be a function both of location and overbuilding of commercial space.

4. **Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas**

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

1. Very little industrial activity was observed. This is not in itself a negative, but value-added services and manufacturing are very often export activities which can increase the amount of new wealth/money flowing into the local economy. The areas zoned for industrial activities seemed limited, but may be appropriate for the community at this time. Proximity to US-69 is an asset. MARC may have a regional study or two that may help inform community leaders as to the nature and viability of industrial activities near this highway.
2. Unsure – I didn’t spot one during my driving.
3. We did not notice much industrial activity. A review of the zoning map and aerials photography showed little industrial activity.

5. **Health Care Services**

**Comment on the availability and apparent quality of hospitals and emergency medical services.**

1. Olathe Medical Center (<40 mins.), Miami County Medical Center (<20 mins.), and Belton Regional Medical Center (<40 mins.) are nearby. Miami County Med Center is nearest Louisburg, and is a part of the much larger Olathe Health system. As such, it provides fewer services, but does extend Olathe Medical Center’s reach south into Miami County. Olathe Medical Center and Belton Regional Medical Center are much larger facilities providing a wide variety of services.
2. The presence of a medical facility at the highway entrance is a big plus. The community also boasts smaller dental and other medical-type offices along the business corridors.
Conversations revealed that an urgent care facility opened within the past few years, and major medical situations require transport. A hospital is present in Paola (nearby county seat), but most choose to go north to Overland Park and the KC-area medical systems.
3. Louisburg has a variety of health care and minor emergency services. The nearest hospital is in Paola, and larger medical centers are in Olathe and Belton, MO.

**Comment on the availability and condition of facilities for physicians, dentists, optometrists, public health and other healthcare providers.**

1. The community seems to have a nice variety of healthcare providers (Family Doctors, Dentists, minor emergency care, chiropractic, vision care, pharmacy, and physical therapy).
2. Freestanding practices were present along the main corridors, making it apparent that some providers and facilities are available locally. However, I’m not sure how many vacant commercial spaces would be available for new practices or expansions.
3. Healthcare providers are located throughout the community, and given the vacancy of commercial properties, there likely could be more if there is a market for their services. The quality of facilities was not examined, but the location and age of many of the current and possible locations for such services indicate their quality could be adequate.

**What long-term care services, assisted living or nursing facilities exist in the community?**

1. Vintage Park provides both long-term and hospice care. Louisburg Healthcare and Rehabilitation Center does not have an active website (that I could find), but does have a Facebook page that does not appear to represent the facility or the community in the best possible manner.
2. Maintenance-free 55+ living housing, a Vintage Park and one other nursing home are available, however anecdotal evidence points to many senior citizens choosing to move to the metro area once their families have grown up and moved on.
3. Vintage Park and Louisburg Healthcare are located in Louisburg. Our tour of the community did not reveal whether or not there was sufficient living or nursing facilities.

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.)**

1. Louisburg appears to have a wide variety of housing at multiple price points. Rental housing appears to comprise a significant percent of housing stock. Much of this rental housing is relatively new, but some of it appears to be somewhat lacking in maintenance.
2. While a drive around the community reveals lots of new housing stock all around, the community also offers plenty of older, settled neighborhoods and housing. Much of the newer housing stock likely caters to middle- and upper-income homebuyers. Lower-cost properties mostly are clustered around the community’s core.
Conversation with a local realty broker (whose firm represents most of the properties for sale) indicated at that moment 25 properties were on the market. Louisburg is a tough market to get into, with very limited available housing stock.
3. The community seems to provide an abundant amount of mixed housing options ranging from single-family homes to apartments to townhomes. The housing seems to cater to both affluent residents as well as working class families. Driving through town, one was able to differentiate between newer and older housing, as well as distinguishing between the older neighborhoods located in the center of the community and newer developments elsewhere. Certain neighborhoods were better maintained than others, with the more affluent or newer areas showing better lawn and home maintenance.

**What kind of rental properties did you observe for persons interested in building or simply living in the community prior to buying housing?**

1. There does appear to be a good inventory of various types of rental housing both for renters and those moving to the community in search of a property to purchase. This is an advantage for a community in a metropolitan area. Per City-Data.com, Louisburg’s percentage of renters (35%) is roughly equivalent to the State of Kansas average (34%).
2. Minimal. In my driving I spotted one non-senior apartment-style complex. Conversation with a Realtor indicated a rental development could be in the works, but with monthly rents similar to mid-range housing prices.
3. The obvious rental properties seemed minimal. There appeared to be one non-senior apartment-style complex, but otherwise it was difficult to tell which housing options were for purchase or rent.

**7. Schools**

**Do the following schools appear to be adequate in size or do you see the use of temporary classrooms? Are the buildings and grounds well-maintained?**

1. Louisburg’s schools are award-winning and appeared to be in fine condition. I was especially impressed with grounds maintenance since that is not a priority for schools in the area in which I reside. The school district is an asset both for the community’s residents, and as a driver of development in Louisburg. The nearest Head Start program appears to be in Paola. I could find no indication of the presence of colleges or universities in Louisburg, but the community’s location in the greater Kansas City area provides a variety of public and private post-secondary education opportunities.
2. The community has numerous education buildings, and has continued to add and upgrade as growth has occurred within the past decades. Time constraints meant I was not able to tour the schools, but the buildings I saw were nicely updated and maintained.
Conversations around the city reveal that a very intentional effort has been made to not have factions within the district. Rather than building more elementary schools, each building accommodates a smaller number of grade levels (k-2, 3-5). This helps prevent different educational experiences by neighborhood or the challenge of drawing district lines.
3. We saw many schools, and they seemed to be in very good condition. The community appears to take great pride in its school system. The nearest Head Start is in Paola, and there was no evidence of post-secondary education opportunities in town, although there are many in the region.

**Were you able to find print or online information in the community that helped assess the quality of the educational system?**

1. Louisburg USD 416 has a good internet presence.
2. I did not see print materials at any in the locations I visited (city, chamber, real estate office, restaurants). Those I spoke with said the schools are the big draw for life in Louisburg, but print information was not readily/widely available.
3. I did not see any print information, but the USD website is informative.
4. **Childcare**

**Were you able to determine if childcare was affordable and available?**

1. Some two dozen freelance childcare (babysitters/nannies) are easily located through Care.com. Prices start at $10/hour and run as high as $24/hour. There are at least two child development centers in Louisburg (Granny’s Schoolhouse and Learning with a Smile Education Center). Both were easily found on the internet, and their prices seem affordable based on my experience.
2. Unsure. One daycare center was cited, and home daycare services may be available, but most information would need to be obtained by word-of-mouth and community relationships.
3. It was difficult to determine which childcare services were available during our drive through the city. I would imagine that such services exist in the community and that they are available to residents or nearby customers. A quick Google search turned up 2-3 options for childcare, but I would assume most childcare is handled by immediate family or businesses through word-of-mouth.
4. **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?**

1. There appeared to be only Christian mainline and non-denominational churches in Louisburg. A web search confirms that assessment. Those churches we drove by appeared healthy and active. I did not notice any church-sponsored community services, but a web search indicated most churches are active in the community.
2. Several churches representing a variety of denominations were visible during my drive, and most had very nice facilities, in keeping with the community standards. A community bulletin board at the library also had fliers for a number of church-sponsored activities and events (including the upcoming Easter services).
3. We noticed several churches representing various denominations during our drive, with certain facilities showing age while others looking newly-built or modern. A community bulletin board at the library had fliers for church-sponsored activities and events.
4. **Civic**

**Tell about the variety of nonprofit organizations and clubs within the community. Did you observe any evidence of civic organization activity?**

1. There appears to be a limited number of community service clubs and fraternal organizations (AL/VFW, Lions, Masons, and Louisburg historical Society). I did not notice any signs of civic organization activity during my visit.
2. A community bulletin board at the library was surprisingly short on nonprofit notices. I did see a flier from the local Lions Club, but other civic group activity was not readily notable. A Lions Club brochure was the only activity I saw.
3. The community bulletin board did not contain very much information other than a Lions Club brochure. The only evidence of civic activity we noticed was a Lion’s Club brochure.
4. **Public Infrastructure**

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

1. The condition of public infrastructure is largely dependent on its age and design. There appears to be an effort on the part of the City to not only maintain, but systematically improved, upgrade, or replace outdated and failing infrastructure. The Downtown Louisburg Revitalization Plan is exciting!
2. Observations:

Navigation was simple once I had a general sense of the layout. Most of the streets were adequate and easy to drive.
As a general rule, signage was great, with adequate street signage throughout town. The only exception was a lack of signage designating the downtown area.
Parking was not a problem, even in the busy areas at busy times of day. Most parking lots felt plenty spacious.
With the exception of parks facilities, there weren’t a lot of non-business public restrooms, but businesses were gracious about restroom requests.
I really liked the feel of the town. The hills and natural landscape bring a uniqueness to the city, and I felt like the community and landscaping coexist well together.
Most individual community organizations (churches, USD, etc.) maintain their facilities in a neat, manicured fashion, and the businesses around town (local and franchise) are very tidy.

1. Street signage and navigation was rather simple and easy to follow. Signage was properly posted and clean. Older areas in the lesser-developed parts of the community on the edges of town required new street signs and posts.
The streets, sidewalks, and surrounding landscaping seemed clean and well-maintained. It was easy to differentiate between neighborhoods with each neighborhood maintaining its character and feel. Private facilities appeared maintained and manicured, with larger chains and franchises coexisting nicely with smaller local businesses.
The overall landscape of the community was quite nice. The natural hills gave the community a distinct feel, making the drive more pleasant as we drove through town. Parking seemed adequate as most businesses had nearby parking lots and street parking was available.

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

1. We were warmly welcomed by City staff and given all the time we wanted to ask questions. Staff gave us a tour of City Hall, described and detailed many aspects of the community, and took us to lunch at Miss B’s. Nathan Law and Jean Carder are wonderful and enthusiastic representatives of the City and the community. The experience was delightful. City Hall is beautiful and a real credit to the governing body, staff, and community.
2. City Hall is beautiful, and the staff members were rightfully proud of the thought and work that has gone into their city office. The work and renovation is part of a plan preparing for the city’s 150th celebration, and I loved the décor featuring historic photos of the community. Staff also were very friendly and receptive, and I appreciated their openness and willingness to share some of the work they are engaged in. One of the big improvements with the facility is the ability for the general public to remain in the meeting room, with an adjacent conference room for executive sessions.
3. The City Hall was clean, inviting, and contained flourishes alluding to the architectural and commercial history of the community. Visitors are greeted warmly and the City Hall is very easy to navigate, containing clean bathrooms, a modern council chamber, and attentive staff.
The recent renovation of City Hall seems like a solid investment as I was thoroughly impressed with the layout, space, and council chambers in the building. The historic photos of the city were a wonderful touch, and the larger banners containing written history of the community were informative and well-placed within the building. Staff was very friendly and receptive to questions, and I really enjoyed speaking with them about their roles within the organization and their willingness to share their thoughts on the community.

**Police/fire protection:**

1. Police protection is provided by the City of Louisburg.
EMS services a provided by Miami County and there is a station located in Louisburg.
Fire protection is provided by Miami County Fire District #1. The District is staffed by volunteer firefighters.
All three services are centrally located within the City.
2. Fire department facilities were clearly visible on the town’s main streets, and I saw several officers involved in patrols during my time in town.
3. Fire department facilities were visible on the city’s main streets, and several police officers were seen driving through town in various parts of the city during our visit.

**Library:**

1. I did not visit the library. However, the website is okay. I am particularly impressed with the Library Loan Calculator, and the Strategic Plan. In my experience, libraries of late have been struggling with funding, purpose, and relevance in their communities. I’ve often heard people comment that libraries have little purpose now that so much information is available on the internet. I am impressed with the Louisburg Library’s work to be relevant and useful to the entire community, and to adapt to the changing needs of people in the 21st century.
2. The library appears to be one of the town’s central hubs, with programs for residents of all age levels. The building was cheery and inviting and a community bulletin board just inside the door provided a helpful sense of what is going on in the surrounding area. It sounds as though, during the summer, the library is the prime spot for kids – especially those not involved in sports.
3. The library appears to be one of the town’s central gathering places with a very nice location, and seemed to have strong, diverse programming for residents of all age levels.

**City parks (walking tracks, ballparks, playgrounds, sportsplex)**

1. Louisburg has a nice selection of parks with a variety of amenities. The aquatic facility is wonderful. Lewis/Young Park is nice, and has a wide variety of amenities. The Powell Observatory is an especially nice asset. Lake Park with its trails, and City Park in the center of town help convey a sense of community.
2. At the south end of town, the reservoir that previously supplied the community with water has been converted into a beautiful recreational facility. Some of the community’s most iconic sites are there, including a bridge, walking path and other structures. I didn’t notice playgrounds, swimming pools or ballparks during my drive-through, nor on the city’s website. Additional signage or web listings might be helpful.
3. We didn’t have the opportunity to drive or walk deep into the city parks, so amenities such as baseball fields or swimming pools were not immediately visible. Additional signage or web listings describing amenities and locations might be helpful.
4. **Recreation/Tourism**

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

1. Aside from the Chamber slogan, “Investing in the Success of Louisburg,” I found no community slogan. The Louisburg Cider Mill seemed the most high-profile attraction, although the area wineries/brewery may have potential to be packaged as Louisburg attractions, as well. The biggest draws for me (and my wife) are the local wineries and Red Crow Brewing.
2. The nearby Louisburg Cider Mill is the community’s biggest attraction, and community leaders are working to merge events with that attraction’s prime season. Formerly, the city’s big event was “Blazin’ the Burg” but that name caused confusion in the KC Metro, where Louisburg is one of several “Burg”s. The renamed Louisburg Cider Run, in early October, is bringing marketing efforts together and should aid in this goal.
3. I was very impressed with the city’s ability to host multiple events and community gatherings throughout the year. The City Manager indicated that the community hosts roughly four well-attended events each year, with the major draw being an annual festival occurring in the fall if my memory serves me correctly. The events have been serviced by several local food trucks, which provides a unique dining option and allows residents to sample cuisine from areas outside of the community. The Louisburg Cider Mill seems to be the community’s biggest attraction. Again, very impressed that the community has had sustained success and strong attendance with multiple events throughout the year.

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

1. We visited during business hours on a Friday, and saw no indication of events that day. If there were community events that are attractive to visitors, we did not notice them during our visit. Web research as to events of local interest seemed somewhat spotty. The Chamber website and Dr. John Cleek’s community website are nice, but may not always send the message or contribute to the community’s brand as much as they might.
2. The community bulletin board sported a pretty good list of small-scale local events, but I did not see much evidence of larger-scale events with the exception of the Louisburg Cider Run.
3. Not too much. The community bulletin board had a list of smaller-scale events, but outside of the Louisburg Cider Run, the events didn’t seem like they would reach neighboring communities outside of Louisburg.

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

1. Rather than individual features, I’d say the aggregate of the community’s attitude, initiative, amenities, and area attractions, combined with the fine public school system are the draw, whether it is for visitors or for people looking for a small community that provides full services that is located within a short drive of large-city amenities.
2. No Answer
3. The downtown area and Cider Mill were both very nice.

**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.**

1. No visitor’s center, but the Chamber of Commerce has a tourism page with a link to a visitor’s guide that is not live. No other local source for tourism information (aside from Miami County’s website) could be found. There is a Community Calendar and Community Website ([www.louisburgks.net](http://www.louisburgks.net)), but it serves more as a resource for area residents than visitors.
The Chamber of Commerce website is nice and easily navigated, but some of the information is dated. In addition to the missing tourism link referenced above, the City Council membership information is not current.
2. The Chamber of Commerce building in the downtown area was easy to find (once I found downtown). However, the office is being moved to a space at City Hall that will allow for better collaboration between the entities. This has great perks, particularly because the Chamber has part-time staffing and is not able to be open all the time, but it also means the chamber office will have less visibility. This could potentially be overcome by intentional collaboration with other high-profile places (real estate office, library, city front office, etc.)
3. The downtown is clearly defined and has strong potential. It appears that there are several vacancies in the downtown buildings that are ripe for restaurants, shopping, and/or public gathering spaces. There are currently enough tenants in the area for the downtown to appear somewhat healthy. It would be great if the city had a more visible anchor in the downtown center, whether that be a coffee or sandwich shop where residents and/or visitors can congregate after work or during the weekends. The Chamber of Commerce building was easy to find. We were told that the chamber office is being moved to a space at City Hall that will allow for better communication and collaboration between the two parties, which should be a nice fit for all involved.

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

1. Would love to visit the Louisburg Cider Mill. Cedar Cove Feline Conservatory & Education Center is interesting, but would be an add-on to a visit, not a reason to return. Would eat at Miss B’s again. Lucille’s Diner looks good, too. Perhaps the biggest draws for me (and my wife) are the local wineries and Red Crow Brewing. We’re discussing a visit to the area sometime this summer.
2. My family has attended the Cider Mill’s fall activities a few times – the challenge is enticing people to go the extra few miles into the community. The Cider Run and related events would potentially entice me, and having experienced the community’s charm and hospitality I’d be glad to return. I also think Louisburg has a number of tourist opportunities, including a network of antique shops and wineries that potentially could offer a foundation for future tourism activity.
3. The community is very charming and I would perhaps visit the Cider Mill fall activities if I was in the area. I run on a regular basis, so the Cider Run and related events would potentially encourage me to return for a weekend to enjoy a quick getaway.
4. **Wrap-up**

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

1. Louisburg is for the most part a “Pretty” community. I sensed that residents are engaged in their town. There seems to be a vision and commitment on the part of community leaders, elected and appointed officials to help the community become an even better place to live, work, and play; to leave it better than they received it, and to ensure its long-term sustainability. The 5X5 Vision for the community is exciting and appears to be actively acted upon. There seems to be a recognition that the urban area to the north will eventually make its way south, and that Louisburg can either exert some control over its destiny or have it controlled by outside forces.
2. Louisburg is a hospitable community that offers a great place to raise a family with convenient proximity to Overland Park and the KC Metro. A variety of housing options, great schools and assortment of homegrown businesses make it an attractive place to visit. Throughout the community, people were very welcoming and friendly, making it a very pleasant place to spend a day!
3. The most positive thing about Louisburg is that the layout of the community and the infrastructure is currently built to see and sustain growth now. There does not seem to be a lack of space for new business opportunity, and the overall feel of the community is welcoming and seems ripe for success.
There is a strong variety of housing options and a strong education system, both strong indicators for potential growth. The community isn’t quite there, and could use some downtown business growth to ultimately anchor the community and naturally expand to the rest of the neighborhoods throughout the city. Overall, the city had a very unique feel and residents welcoming and friendly.

**What are the biggest obstacles/challenges facing this community?**

1. The age and design of much of Louisburg’s infrastructure is not up to current standards, and will require significant investment in the next few years. A tax base that appears to rely heavily on residential property, which can be taxed only so much. There always is ambivalence. I’m sure there are those in the community who resist change, distrust local leaders, and are reluctant or incapable of thinking long-term. Government’s ability to finance needed infrastructure maintenance and replacement is always a concern. Communication with and the participation of residents is crucial not only to improving but sustaining a community over generations. Too much cannot be said of the need to build and sustain trust, one person at a time. It is a process, not only an outcome.
2. The community is close enough to the metro that it struggles to offer some services, such as nicer restaurants, entertainment and advanced healthcare. Additionally, there is some challenge in drawing visitors off of the highway systems and on past the Cider Mill to really experience the community. The downtown has a great deal of potential, but feels less-than-unified, with multiple sidewalk surfaces and landscape plans, rather than a more cohesive look. Planters, bike racks, additional benches and other amenities could make a big difference!
3. The biggest obstacle seems to be bringing in long-term, anchoring business tenants throughout the city. While the neighborhoods have their distinct personalities, it would be nice if there was some kind of unifying feature that the city could pursue in order to visually unify the different neighborhoods, whether that be signage, planters, or bike paths. Again, a great deal of potential for downtown!

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

1. The community’s spirit (at least the spirit of those I met or heard about) is impressive. The vision that current and recent civic leaders have developed, and at least partially implemented is impressive. I’m optimistic about Louisburg’s future, but also am realistic about how difficult it can be to sustain momentum.
2. The hospitality. Everyone was very friendly, and the proactive spirit of the community really came through as those I spoke with answered my questions, showed me around and shared about the work they are trying to do.
3. I will remember the natural elevation changes (hills) and the sense of place. After driving to Louisburg from Goddard, it was obvious that we had arrived in Louisburg and that we were in a city. Several communities struggle with identity and place, but Louisburg seemed to have a strong identity rooted in hospitality and civic pride. The food was good, residents were kind, and staff was extremely helpful and friendly.



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