First Impressions

Compiled Report Form

**Community Visited: Marysville Date(s) Visited:** a.) Thurs 6/21/2018

b.) Fri 8/3/2018

c.) Thurs 6/21/2018

**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. Pre-visit web search was good. Made me curious about my visit.
2. Good, very informative. City halls landing page is good and easy to navigate.
3. Web and google searches were good information.
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.)**
   1. Improving the school, train history, pretty park, nice pool, black squirrels, pretty residential area, but where is Main Street? Our initial entrance was pretty and quaint. The highway entrance made the town feel bigger and more industrial. Mix of really new buildings and old/empty ones.
   2. Very clean, very colorful, very welcoming. The flags were nice on the bridge as you came into town.
   3. We came in from Highway 77 and I thought the bridge and the flags were such a patriotic, wholesome sight. I loved it. The entry into town was very clean, park, updates at school, museum, and train. It was welcoming. Good to see improvements made to the schools, I always think that is a powerful sign to visitors. Aquatic center is very nice, all well-kept, mowed, etc.

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. Loved the library! Mix of improved buildings, historical feel buildings, and empty store fronts. Seemed like a lot of professional businesses with a few shops and restaurants. Not a lot of variety/specific merchandise. Everyone we encountered was very friendly and helpful.
2. Seems to be two main downtowns. The road you drive in on and the one block over. Both are well kept, there are signs, and ample parking. I saw a medical business, research library, local bar-Wagon Wheel, and a coffee/tea shop. At the coffee shop, I was greeted. I asked for recommendations and she was very helpful. Used the Wi-Fi and sat to observe for about an hour. Very busy place.
3. Downtown buildings- several for sale and vacant. Mostly commercial and service industry, not a lot of retail, or shops that would draw you downtown for an afternoon. Restaurant signage was not easy to spot. Hallmark store was nice, and good variety of merchandise. I noticed that there was not much variety, several “Hallmark” type stores and several antique stores. Everyone was very friendly and they offered suggestions for lunch. Customer service was great everywhere we went.

**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 did not notice any drinking fountains. Restrooms and trash cans were available. I could only find information at attractions in the library. Parking was easily found. It felt like 2 main streets with the highway running next to downtown business district. Brighter, bigger signs would be helpful. (Highway 36)
2. Yes, they were available and they were nice and welcoming. Would have loved these options when my children were younger. Flowers everywhere!! Angle parking and was able to walk up and down main street easily.
3. No trouble parking. A bit of a walk for multiple services, downtown area was several blocks long. No flower pots outside of buildings, not a lot of color. Didn’t think it had much “character,” just brick storefronts. It makes it harder with so many vacant store fronts.

1. **Other Retail Shopping Areas**

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

1. There was not as much retail shopping as I expected.
2. I was mainly in the two main streets and then drove through residential areas.
3. Walmart, Dollar General, etc. were accessible and easy to find. Is there a grocery store?? We couldn’t find one.

4. **Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas**

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

1. Either end of town seemed to have empty buildings to take over or room to expand.
2. I only saw one “industrial” area on the west/north side of town. It was well organized and not an eyesore.
3. Would be great for someone to purchase the old Walmart building and get it updated. I would say expansion would be easy to do on the east side of Highway 36. It is always a good thing when you can get people to invest in buildings that are already in existence instead of building something new.

5. **Health Care Services**

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

1. Seemed good.
2. Just saw the local doctor building, did not go in.
3. Very impressed with the hospital, ER, physician buildings. Seems to be newer, several practitioners, good options right in town. Also noted chiropractors, dentists, and optometrists. That is a nice selection for the size of the town. We didn’t think the signage was very prominent, especially for the hospital.

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

1. I was surprised at the number of healthcare services available. That’s great!
2. N/A
3. See above.

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

1. Seemed adequate.
2. N/A
3. Nursing home area looked well-kept, fairly new, nice.

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. I saw a nice variety of types of homes as far as size, quality, etc.
2. Very few houses were listed/posted for sale. There is obvious pride in their homes. Both large older houses and more “track” houses were well maintained. No cars on blocks or junk piles.
3. Nice selection and something in every area of town, and price range. I imagine you need more “middle income” housing. Most of what we saw was at the higher end, or lower. Not a lot in between.

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

1. Seemed to be more than 1 set of apartments.
2. Did not see a for rent sign in residential area but did observe 3 for rent signs on the main street for commercial businesses.
3. We didn’t see any building lots, “free land” options like you see in some communities that are trying to grow, or an area that was all new development going in. Only rentals we saw were downtown. (Didn’t look very nice)

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. Wow! More school options than I expected. Happy to see improvements being made to the high school. Exciting!
2. USD364 has the usual K-12. They playground looked updated and children were out enjoying the day. Lots of church school opportunities.
3. Good to see the community investing in school improvements on the south edge of town. That is always a positive for any community. I was surprised to note the private/parochial schooling options. That is impressive for a community of this size.

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

1. Yes.
2. Yes-both public and private options were available with a quick internet search.
3. Yes, fairly decent web site and information.
4. **Childcare**

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

1. Found a couple sources online.
2. There are more than 8 daycare opportunities. Affordable is subjective to income but 3 do take government assistance vouchers.
3. I googled this information, and it was not easy to access or get details that way. I didn’t notice a community daycare of any sort? (We went by the CVB twice to see if they could provide any information. There was a sign up saying that they were closed for lunch. We went back after that lunch hour, and the door was still locked, so we didn’t get any info.)
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. Beautiful churches. There was a wide variety.
2. 12 churches covering lots of denominations which is great to give everyone a place to belong. I saw a VBS sign at the Calvary church.
3. Physical appearances of each church building were impressive, well taken care of. Good mix of faith options (and schools as well).
4. **Civic**

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

1. I saw info in the library. Yes, I did observe evidence of civic organization activity.
2. N/A. The Marysville Main Street Business Group was passing out calendars when I was visiting.
3. We attempted the CVB office twice, didn’t ever get in, door locked and no information available outside of the building. We did not notice any civic organization activity.
4. **Public Infrastructure**

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

1. Streets were great. Signage highlighting downtown and uniqueness needed. A pretty town that needs focus.
2. Again- very clean. Lots of brick streets and steep hills-bet that is fun in ice/snow.
3. Highway 36 needs some help, especially going through town. When you go through, you see the backs of those buildings that house the downtown businesses. Wires, trash, windows that are cracked/broken. It isn’t inviting and doesn’t make you want to stop and visit. It is too bad that the highway doesn’t go through the downtown, and goes through the backside of it instead. For some, this may be their only impression of Marysville.

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

1. I went to the Chamber of commerce but they were closed. I found information about housing, rental, and childcare at the library.
2. The city hall was older but welcoming. Displays of information as well as a young man there to answer questions.
3. Very helpful and friendly. These buildings really add a lot to the community. You are fortunate to be the county seat.

**Police/fire protection:**

1. N/A
2. Paid police. Volunteer Fire- nice equipment for a small department.
3. N/A

**Library:**

1. Excellent
2. Research library. Very nice- clearly marked to enter and what is available.
3. This was my favorite stop by far. VERY impressed with this facility, sections, computers, classes, etc. This is where we picked up literature about Marysville since the CVB was closed. One thing to think about- if you have out of town visitors after hours or on the weekends… where are they going to get their information? Library, CVB, and City Hall are all closed. What options are there?

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

1. Beautiful park at our entrance into town.
2. Appears to have a walking trail on the west side of main street.
3. Aquatic center was very nice, and walking track as well.
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. Seemed like focus was on black squirrels, more than their other historic assets.
2. The squirrels are fun- similar to a Dala Horse.
3. Pony Express was a disappointment. I expected more to see, do, and experience. If this is the pride of Marysville, probably need to work on that. I did think that the Marshall County “things to do” brochure was good. It highlighted activities and events in all towns.

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

1. An upcoming Pony Express run and events at the library.
2. Did not notice anything.
3. No.

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

1. The Pony Express, Koester House Museum, Courthouse, fine Arts Center, how did I miss it?
2. N/A
3. N/A

**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. Not well marked, the Chamber of Commerce was closed. Library had good info available.
2. There is a gathering spot on main street- would be a super place for a concert or pep rally.
3. You need a kiosk that has 24 hour availability, brochures, information. Easy access. Need more signage directing you as well.

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

1. I loved the theatre/restaurant combo. I would come for it if I lived closer.
2. The empty cup coffee/tea was so much fun! The ladies were funny and helpful and lots of town people gather here.
3. No. I think that was one thing that bothered me a bit. I made the trip hoping that I would want to go back. But, there really wasn’t anything there that would draw me back for a second visit.
4. **Wrap-up**

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

1. Lots of industry. Plenty of health care. Library, Theatre.
2. Very clean and very bright.
3. The library, bowling alley, movie theater, industry, medical facilities, churches, and schools.

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

1. Empty store fronts downtown. Disjointed business districts. Lack of variety in merchandise.
2. The big bridge coming into town, you are not sure where you are- maybe a large sign on the west side of the bridge.
3. Highway 36, backs of buildings, what happens if the industry leaves? What else does Marysville have going for it?

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

1. The small town feel before I drove the highway that runs through town. Pretty homes, beautiful buildings, sparse shopping, the library, and the theatre. It is a town I would be happy to live in but probably won’t visit.
2. The warm feeling of “home” as I drove around the neighborhoods on the north side of town.
3. Everyone was very friendly and welcoming. I am sorry that I do not have the desire to return. I was excited to see the Pony Express station, and was disappointed not to find more.

**Photo report is online at**

<http://www.ksre.k-state.edu/community/civic-engagement/first-impressions/index.html>

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