First Impressions

Compiled Report Form

**Community Visited:** White City **Date(s) Visited:** a) 4-14-17 (Mon.)

b) 3-23-17 (Thurs)

c) 3-24-17 (Friday)

d) 4-14-17 (Mon)

**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. The website is very informative and well organized. We especially liked the events calendar and the new residents’ information. The photo slide show on the “Home” page needs attention as the rotation does not always work.
2. The website did show the things we saw however I would like to have more information on some of the activities and entertainment that are available in the town and surrounding area. Perhaps a list of activities would be helpful to draw people to town. I know that they have an annual 4th of July display and that could be advertised.
3. City was on FaceBook. Need to friend them to get more information.
4. Web page well-done – lots of good information
5. **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. Our first impression of White City is that it appeared to be a quiet, safe community to live in. The school, the fire and rescue department, and the parks indicate that there are many people still engaged to keep the community alive. Many of the residences appear to be well maintained, however, as in all communities, some of the residents could take a little more community pride in their properties. The sign coming in from the east is very attractive and welcoming, however, the entrance from the south is more obscure.
   2. The signs coming into town were attractive and informative. The Bank building was impressive. They had a medical building and a nice library. Very impressed with the fire department. They had several new homes on both sides of town. They had some problems enforcing their zoning laws as well as maintenance and upkeep on some of the properties in town. Impressed that they still had a school.
   3. Have a school K-12 and preschool in same block. Highway 4 runs through town with brick streets. Railroad runs through town. Generally a nice appearing town. Nice entrance, city sign & street signs.
   4. Entrance signs were very nice. Noticed street signs were somewhat faded, hard to read. No curb/guttering in residential area. Business block is a brick street. No café. Nice entrance signs at both ends of town, very welcoming.

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. The buildings that were in use were well maintained and inviting, however the fronts of the vacant buildings could use some attention. The buildings could use more color and creativity to welcome more shoppers and businesses into the community. The businesses that we visited were the city office, the bank, the post office, the beauty shop, and the hardware store. The senior center and the library were closed on the day we visited. The businesses that are most lacking in the town are a grocery store, restaurant, and bar. We were especially impressed with the hardware store and the merchandise available for purchase. We even purchased a couple of items that we needed. Everyone that we encountered (including other customers) in the businesses that we visited were extremely friendly and courteous. Their attitude did not appear to be related to the mission we were on but just genuinely nice people. We very much enjoyed visiting with everyone.
2. The mural at the top of one of the buildings was very good. The city building, bank, and library were attractive. We liked the fact that they had a beauty shop. The lumber store and hardware were a nice addition to the community. We visited the newspaper and received a warm welcome as well as a lot of useful information. They gave us 2 copies of the paper. It was very informative and a nice size paper for the area. We forgot to go to the gas station where they had some merchandise and food for sale. The Senior Center and City building were both very friendly and informative. They also had many cars on Main Street the day that we were there as the center had taken a bus to Holton. There was not a variety of merchandise to observe, as the opportunity to buy things in White City was limited. We are very fortunate in Marquette to have a restaurant/bar, grocery store and the drugstore in town. White City had recently lost their restaurant.   
   We never had to ask for assistance in any building that we entered. All of the people were very friendly and helpful.
3. Nice City hall and community building and senior center and safety center. Nice Am. Legion Park, memorial and gazebo. Some older buildings looked closed. Machine shop, gas pump, Hunts pizza sign altogether and 24 hr gas pump. Beauty Salon, Hardware store, bank. Grocery store closed. No café. Trading post closed and looked cluttered through the window. Housing Authority Apartments. City clerk very nice and willing to answer questions & give city information. Senior Center people playing cards.
4. Very impressive—hardware/lumberyard. Good signage on businesses. Several business buildings for business opportunities. (a) Loved the Hardware/lumberyard – so jealous! In business for 34 yrs. Adequate supplies – made purchase here! Very organized. (b) Barber / Beauty shop 42 yrs in business – Wow! Very clean & neat. (c) Laundromat facilities available – kudos! The facility could use some TLC. Several machines marked as not working. Customer service was second to none! Did not have to ask for assistance. Everyone we came into contact with was very friendly and helpful.

**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. The downtown area is lacking things that encourage socialization such as shade trees and benches. Public restrooms were available however we did not visit them so we cannot comment on how well maintained they were kept. We did not see any drinking fountains on the main street. There was ample parking and we could access all the businesses from one spot. The downtown could benefit from the addition of trees, flowers, benches, etc. to make it more inviting.
2. These were all available in the city building but would not be available after hours. They had some restrooms in the park but were not open for the summer yet. Parking was readily available wherever we went and yes we could get to the services as long as the city building was open. I believe you could have used the Senior Center during the hours that they are open.
3. Some benches. Restrooms in city building. Gazebo & benches in downtown Am. Legion Park. Nice City Park with shelter, restrooms, playground equipment. (2) Nice city baseball fields.
4. Nice covered bench to sit and relax on. Maybe could use a couple more. Did not see a drinking fountain. Public restrooms in City Hall – during City Hall hours. Restrooms in the park not open yet for summer season. Plenty of good parking. Able to walk the business district. Some planter boxes would help add beauty to the downtown.
5. **Other Retail Shopping Areas**

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

1. None available.
2. The Senior Center was very clean and welcoming.
3. Medical clinic and grocery store closed. Did not observe an eating area.
4. No answer (NA)

4. **Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas**

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

1. None available.
2. We did not see any evidence of this in the town or on the website.
3. None observed.
4. Didn’t observe any evidence of this possibility within the community.

5. **Health Care Services**

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

1. One of the buildings on main street indicated that health care services was available but was no longer in operation so the sign should be removed. This would also let other prospective business owners know that the building is available to rent or buy. The Fire and Rescue facility was very impressive but it did not indicate whether it also included EMS services. The availability of EMS services may be especially important in attracting retired citizens.
2. We were jealous at first when we saw a building that said medical services. After visiting with citizens we realized that it had not been used for several months. They do have access to volunteer fire department and ambulance, EMT services.
3. Nice Safety Center. Medical clinic building closed.
4. No medical services available. i.e. hospital/clinic. EMS and First Responder through local Fire Department.

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

1. None available.
2. The health care providers were located in Council Grove, Junction City and Herington. We did not observe any of those services.
3. Medical Services in Council Grove. Heard there was a mobile veterinary service that visited the town.
4. Medical Clinic building that appeared could be utilized as such again. (Nice Building) Services available in Council Grove, Herington and Junction City.

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

1. None available. This would be a great addition to the community for employment and growth potential. They had a nice apartment complex that was mostly for elderly. The only services that were available were Meals on Wheels and dinner served at the Senior center. The Senior Center did have a van to transport elderly.
2. They had a nice apartment complex that was mostly for elderly. The only services that were available were Meals on Wheels and dinner served at the Senior Center. The Senior Center did have a van to transport elderly.
3. Housing Authority Apartments.
4. Nursing home facility not available in community.

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. Driving around the community, we did not see a lot of potential housing or lots available for purchase. The city office lady did say there was not much available at the present time.
  2. There are only 4 houses listed in White City. The apartments are available for people other than elderly but I don't think they were large enough for families. There were several nice houses as well as many new houses.
  3. New and older housing. Sunset Acres- new housing area. 3 deteriorated houses. Observed (2) houses for sale.
  4. Some abandoned properties. Housing Authority apartments – not sure if big enough for families. Properties for sale seemed to be from modest to modern.

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

1. The town did have a small apartment complex but it did not appear to have any available vacancies.
2. We did not ask about rental housing.
3. Probably have rental houses, but not observed.
4. Did not observe any property (houses) for rent. City Clerk would have information if you were looking for a home to 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. We were delighted to see that White City has been able to maintain a Pre-K through 12 school. Since school was not in session the day of our visit, we were not able to see the inside of the building but the outside appearance, the grounds, and the playground all appear to be well maintained, updated, and adequate in size.
2. They have a pre-school building as well as K-12 located in town. There are also 3 childcare facilities in town. The school building looked well maintained.
3. K-12 School and preschool.
4. PK-12. So lucky to have! Size of building appeared to be adequate and property, grounds looked well-maintained.

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

1. The school’s website is extremely out of date with 2014-15 school info, menus from May 2015, etc. This needs immediate attention.
2. There is an entire web page that will answer most questions about the educational facilities.
3. The city brochure had information.
4. We found print information in the community.
5. **Childcare**

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

1. We were told by the city clerk that home daycare services are available.
2. There are 3 childcare facilities in town. I did not ask about the price but think they are affordable.
3. Pre-school building next to school building. Heard there were more child care services in town.
4. Two or three private childcare options. Did not ask about affordability.
5. **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. We noticed two churches/denominations driving around the community that were well-maintained and cared for. It appears that the churches are lacking their own websites which could be helpful for someone considering moving into the community.
2. There was a very nice cemetery located about 2 miles north of town. They had poles for the flags. The Methodist church on Main Street was very attractive and impressive. It was the most active church in town. There was also a very well maintained and smaller Christian church located in the city limits. The newspaper editor said that there was a number of Baptists that attend a church in a small town approximately 5 miles from White City. A Swedish Lutheran was also located about 3 miles in the country and all Catholics went to church in either Junction City or Council Grove
3. 2 nice well-maintained churches on Main Street.
4. United Methodist Church, Christian Church (loved the message in the information sign out front: “If your life stinks we have a pew for you.”) Both are very nice buildings.
5. **Civic**

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

1. We did not see any evidence of organizations and clubs in the town or on the website. We did not observe civic organization activity.
2. There was an active 4-H group as was advertised on the signs entering town. They also had an active Legion and Eastern Star. Girl Scouts were also active. The Legion had a park and a nice memorial for the Veterans. There was also an old school museum but I do not know who was responsible for it. We did not go in and forgot to ask the city clerk about checking it out.
3. American Legion. Monthly flea market is listed on brochure in City office.
4. 4-H, American Legion, Eastern Star, Fellowship of Christian Athletes (school). We saw the 4-H Banner in City building as well as signage at entrance. American Legion has a well-kept building, active. Nice Veterans Memorial in the park.
5. **Public Infrastructure**

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

1. The street signs are faded and very difficult to read from a distance. The side streets lack curb, gutter and sidewalks. We couldn’t help but think that Grand Street was originally intended to be a “grand” street and could use more elaborate landscaping to show off its beauty.
2. We were there during the day and did not observe lighting. That is something that we did not think to look for. I am sure the landscaping will be more apparent later on in the spring when things begin to grow. There was evidence of plants and fires from the previous year. We were not sure about the story with the black train engine but felt it could be better displayed in one of the parks
3. Street signs ok. Restrooms at City Park. Park could use a few more shade trees. Nice equipment in park. Gravel streets.
4. Because it was during the day we didn’t notice if there was lighting. Landscaping will certainly be more evident later on in the spring. Black train engine could be moved to the park.

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

1. Yes, the city clerk was very friendly and helpful.
2. The clerk was very friendly and helpful. It was one of the last places we went and should have probably started there. I was so interested in the nice Fire Department that most of my questions were about the grant that they had received to build it. Marquette really needs a new building. The clerk also emailed a lot of information about the grants. I know there are some pamphlets and information as I talked to another observer who went today and came back with a pamphlet as well as written information about the city, housing and bills and regulations.
3. Very well received. City information provided by city clerk.
4. Susan the city clerk was very happy to answer all questions. She keeps website current making all information about the community available. Nice large bulletin board listing important information including City Government and Mayor, Council Members. City Hall open 5 days a week.

**Police/fire protection:**

1. We were told that there was not any local law enforcement, however, police protection is available from the county and were told that three of the county deputies live in White City.
2. The police are supplied by Morris County. They have a volunteer fire district like Marquette. The building is new and quite impressive. The clerk gave me the card for the fire chief so that we could contact him.
3. Yes
4. Police protection through Morris County – several residents employed by the county reside in the community. Beautiful Fire building ☺ (jealous)

**Library:**

1. The library was not open on the day that we visited but one is available three days a week.
2. Nice, clean, well maintained as well as many books. Like Marquette it has free Internet services for its citizens although they have built a nice shelter for the residents to sit in while they use the Internet. I also liked the fact that they had a copy machine available for the citizens to copy material for 25 cents a sheet. The librarian was friendly and informative.
3. Yes
4. Library was closed this day but adequate library hours posted.

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

1. There is a football field adjacent to the school as well as baseball fields near the Centennial City Park. The school, as well as the park, had newer well maintained playground equipment. We did not see any evidence of a walking track.
2. The parks were nice and will look more attractive once they start growing grass and flowers again. I did not observe any walking tracks. The ballparks and sports complex was in two separate locations with the football field being separate with the school. The park that was located by the ballparks seemed a bit bare and I am not sure if more tables etc. would be available during the summer? I would suggest more trees and shade in both park areas as well as a possible shelter with a roof for picnics in the park with the majority of playground equipment. The playground equipment was great.
3. 2 ball parks, playground in City Park, football field next to school building.
4. Katy Park, Centennial Park – nice ballpark, Football field next to the school.Nice playground equipment.
5. **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. We did not see any evidence of this.
2. Did not observe a slogan. The only event that was mentioned was the 4th of July Celebration.
3. City brochure advertises recreational spots in the area.
4. Monthly Flea Market “Show and Sell” Great idea!

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

1. The annual White City Independence Day Celebration is well advertised in the city hall and on the website. We also were impressed with their monthly “Flee Market” but were unable to find information about the days on the website calendar. The twice a year City-Wide Cleanup is a great asset to the community. The Events Calendar on the website is extremely helpful for keeping up to date with what happening in the community.
2. The Senior Center sponsors a bus to Holton to gamble once a month.
3. Monthly flea market event. Annual Independence Day celebration.
4. 4th of July Celebration. Raffles underway for big screen TV as well as a beautiful quilt made & donated by a local resident. Proceeds from raffles and other donations will benefit fireworks display.

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

1. The only attraction that we see for someone wanting to move to the community is small town living and the ability to be able to send your children to a small school. We did not see any evidence of anything else that would draw people to visit the town.
2. No Answer (NA)
3. Not sure.
4. Council Grove Lake, Milford Lake

**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. The city office has a good sign and is open every weekday to welcome visitors and give information.
2. I have already covered the City Building.
3. City clerk’s office is the information center.
4. NA

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

1. We recognize that a restaurant, bar, and grocery store are businesses that pose a challenge for a small community, but we can’t help but wonder if White City would benefit from a cooperative effort to establish a business that encompassed all three. There appears to be the building space available.
2. I might come back for the 4th of July celebration.
3. NA
4. Monthly Flea Market “Show and Sell”$10 haircuts at Barber / Beauty Shop!
5. **Wrap-up**

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

1. The Pre-K through 12 school and sporting events available with it, the state highway that runs through the town, and the friendly people.
2. The Senior Center was quite active. The paper was much better than ours.
3. Understand that many residents drive north and work at Fort Riley.
4. Very nice visit with Postmaster who drives from Junction City. He pointed out where the first Post Office in White City is located. (A sign on that property stating such would be good.) Loved the sign on the window “All mail is out” or “Mail is not out” Plan to suggest this to our Post Office. Fire Department building. Nice community room attached to City Hall available for rent. Churches

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

1. The Pre-K through 12 school and sporting events available with it, the state highway that runs through the town, and the friendly people.
2. There is very little merchandise available in town. A restaurant, bar, grocery store would make life in this small town much easier and enjoyable. Marquette is included in this remark as both towns need to clean up some of the vacated homes, buildings and enforce some zoning laws about trash, cars, etc. in the city limits. Adding some trees in various parts of town would be an easy way to add scenery into the town. Expanding playground equipment in the park as well as a overhead shelter for picnics would also be a good expansion project. Add Community garden which you may already have but we did not see any evidence. A nice walking, biking trail would be beneficial.
3. Nice town that needs a grocery store.
4. As with all small communities, the struggle to compete with “big box stores” is real. Not having a grocery store, if that’s not possible, a Dollar General store would thrive in this community. Not always easy for the elderly to get to a larger city to shop.

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

1. Positive: That a town that size has been able to maintain a Pre-K through 12 school and the hardware store.   
   Negative: The vacant buildings and the homes in need of maintenance.
2. The Fire District and building, the newspaper and the Senior Center, and city building seemed to me to be the biggest assets. The people that we talked with were very informative and friendly.
3. NA
4. Friendliness of all we came in contact with!

First Impressions was developed by the University of Wisconsin-Extension and adapted for use by K-State Research and Extension. Restructuring made possible through a partnership with the Dane G. Hansen Foundation.

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