

First Impressions

Compiled Report Form



Community Visited: Buhler

Date(s) Visited: a) 6-27-18 (Wed.)

b) 6-27-18 (Wed.)

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?

- a. It was very easy to get information on Buhler. They have a website that is very informative and easy to navigate with links to various businesses and schools. I was highly impressed with their website and my pre-visit web search.
- b. The website was nicely laid out. They have presence on Facebook and Twitter. I like that they have all the businesses and contact information as well. They have recycle pick up.

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.)

- a. This is a very neat, clean, and tidy town, and very easy to navigate. All the facilities and lawns were nicely landscaped, and the signage was very informative and pleasing to look at. All of the entrances into town had informative welcoming signs with directions.
- b. The community is very clean and well taken care of. It’s a very cute community! Ball Park and surrounding area was nice. They had a few nice murals and a nice stage area at one end of downtown. They have signs at all of the entrances directing people to common attractions. There was also a nice city sign in one of the parks.

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?)

- a. There were several businesses downtown. All of them were very nicely decorated and very appealing. They all had informative, nice looking signs on the outside. The whole downtown had a very homey and welcoming feel. We visited 3 boutiques, the grocery store, and 2 restaurants. We were greeted very warmly at every business we entered. All the businesses were very helpful and offered unique and fun merchandise.
- b. Love the décor of the downtown. The storefronts were very nice. Everything appeared well taken care of. They had a community board and a board at the senior center. They had several shopping boutique stores as well as a nice variety of eateries. They had stores for home construction and remodeling as well as a few others. They offer a surprising number of businesses for a small community. We went into several stores (even made purchases at a few) and 2 restaurants and ate lunch at one. Everyone greeted us as we entered and was very friendly, often being addressed by more than one person.

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?

- a. I didn't notice any public restrooms, but there were restrooms available in the businesses that we visited. Although the downtown was bustling, we were easily able to find parking. The landscaping and streetscaping was very appealing. It is obvious that the city and citizens take much pride in maintaining the grass, trees, plants, and storefronts.
- b. We saw benches and trash receptacles around the downtown area. Fountains and restrooms were also seen in a park. There was also doggie waste receptacle in a park with a nice reminder about dog owner responsibilities. I did not see signs for Wi-Fi. Parking was good. Streets were clean. Landscaping everywhere was nice.

3. Other Retail Shopping Areas

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

- a. We didn't notice any other retail shopping besides the stores that were downtown. All the businesses were within a few blocks of each other, so they were very easy to access.
- b. There wasn't really any other retail area that we saw of, other than a restaurant off another street. It was very unique and had real character. They had a bank and a credit union.

4. Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas

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

- a. There was a clear industrial area in town. It looked like a couple of the warehouses/plants employ quite a number of people. There was definitely room for expansion in the industrial park.
- b. They had several businesses and it appeared that there was room for some expansion. The land next to the industrial park was farmland and there was a house or two nearby.

5. Health Care Services

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

- a. We were amazed that a town this size has a doctor, dentist, eye doctor, and chiropractor. The people of Buhler are very fortunate to have so many medical services available!
- b. There was a doctor, chiropractor, dentist, and eye doctor. Very nice for such a small town.

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

- a. We didn't enter the facilities, but they were all clearly marked and appealing on the outside.
- b. They looked very clean and easy to access.

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

- a. There was an assisted living center that appeared to be fairly good sized and appeared to have expanded in recent years.
- b. They had a large complex with a nursing home, independent living apartments, and residential care apartments and a health care facility as well as retirement complex. There was even a restaurant available to the public. Very nice area that was well landscaped.

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.)

- a. There was a variety of housing available. The houses ranged from larger, brand new homes, to smaller, older homes that would appeal to many different income groups. We also noted that there was not a trailer park in town.
- b. They had a variety of housing available for any price range. All neighborhoods appeared to be well taken care of and clean. There didn't seem to be much housing available for sale. We only saw about a half dozen for sale signs.

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

- a. Besides the retirement community, it appeared that there were some duplexes in town that might be rentals, but we didn't notice any apartments.
- b. They have a page with phone numbers for rental properties.

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?

- a. The schools were amazing! There was a high school, middle school, and elementary. Everything was pristine, and the athletic facilities appeared to be brand new. All of the schools were very appealing to look at. Everything was extremely well maintained.
- b. They had schools for all levels except the middle school was located elsewhere. They were very large buildings that were clean and well taken care of.

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

- a. Yes-Buhler has an excellent city website that has a link to the schools' websites, which were very informative.
- b. Yes the school had information online. It is obvious that they have a very nice school system that offers a variety of opportunities for students. The sports facilities are very nice.

8. Childcare

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

- a. We didn't notice any childcare services.
- b. I don't recall seeing any signs or evidence on the website for child care.

9. 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?

- a. We observed several churches in town. Since we were there on a Wednesday afternoon, we didn't witness any church sponsored services.
- b. There were 4 churches on the city website: 2 are Mennonite, Methodist, & a non-denomination.

10. Civic

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

- a. I didn't really notice any nonprofit organization signs around town, but I did see something about the Kiwanis group on the city website. We did not observe any evidence of activity while we were there.
- b. Kiwanis were having a pancake feed.

11. Public Infrastructure

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

- a. All of the streets were very well maintained. There was also a wellness center, swimming pool, and park that had trashcans and restrooms available.
- b. NA (No Answer)

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

- a. We did not visit the inside of city hall, but it was very well marked and was right downtown.
- b. N/A (*This was the answer given.)

Police/fire protection:

- a. We did observe a police officer driving around town, and the police and fire department buildings were also very well marked and downtown.
- b. Police dept. was located in the city hall. Fire dept. was across the street.

Library:

- a. The library was closed, but we peeked in the windows, and it was VERY APPEALING. It looked very neat, clean, and warmly decorated.
- b. Very cute library! Nicely arranged with a good variety.

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

- a. The sports complex was pristine, and appeared to be brand new. The walking trail was also very well maintained and convenient to get to. Playgrounds were well kept and neat as well.
- b. They had all of the amenities as well as a pool.

12. Recreation/Tourism

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

- a. I didn't notice any slogan, but it was apparent that the schools and downtown businesses are the anchor and pride of the community.
- b. They do have a very nice wellness facility and several parks. Slogan: Traditional Values, Progressive Ideas. Other than that I am not aware of anything to make them well-known.

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

- a. I didn't notice any indication of significant events.
- b. Didn't seem to be much other than the Mustard seed and a few murals around town.

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

- a. There was a small art museum as well as antique store and a wide variety of shops.
- b. N/A (*This was the answer given.)

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.

- a. I didn't notice a visitor's center, but everyone we spoke to in town was very friendly and informative.
- b. N/A (*This was the answer given.)

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

- a. Yes, I loved all of the shops and businesses that we visited.
- b. The restaurants and shops were definitely worth coming back for. They offered unique shopping, boutique style stores with lots to offer.

13. Wrap-up

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

- a. The whole layout of the town makes it very easy to navigate, and the overall cleanliness and landscaping made it a very pleasant experience. The friendliness of the citizens was the icing on the cake!
- b. *They offered a good variety of businesses.* Very clean and well cared for community.* Very welcoming and friendly people.

What are the biggest obstacles/challenges facing this community?

- a. It is hard for me to name any obstacles as I had a great experience.
- b. With it being in the middle of nowhere, they need to have something to draw people there.

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

- a. The people, shops, and overall layout and cleanliness of the town.
- b. I would definitely move to the community. Its proximity to Hutchinson and Wichita allow people access to more shopping and businesses as well as recreation and activities.

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