First Impressions 

**Team Report Form**

Community Visited: Clifton-Vining Dates Visited: 3-12, 17, & 31-18

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

-*The web search did not assist me in getting information about the community. The school website is nice and there appears to be a facebook page, but the social media page was not updated.*

*-There wasn’t really much info on the web that I could find. I looked on Facebook and found that there was a page with a really nice logo for the town, but really no information available.*

1. The “Five-Minute” Impression: After taking a five-minute drive through the community without stopping, the following reactions were noted.

*-The town was quiet with very little traffic. It was noon on a Saturday. The main street is well kept but it appeared that many buildings were vacant. The co-operative is a major business in town. There are a wide variety of homes, really nice to really run-down in each block.*

 *-It’s a really nice community with some blighted houses, but not that many. There were many large beautiful houses and many homes of medium size with yards well kept. We came in from the east and the houses coming in were in pretty rough condition, but once in town, it was very neat. Not a lot of signs with info like school, fire station, etc. but those were actually very visible. Going into Vining was the same, a few rough properties and then neat and well kempt ones.*

 *-Mixture of houses. Some great, some need work. North entrance & schools look great. Side streets could use some maintenance.*

The following observations were noted when entering the community from major entrances (signs, streetscapes, buildings, etc.)

*-No “Welcome” signs were seen when entering town. The street lights were in good repair. The side streets could use some improvement with potholes. The buildings were well kept even when vacant. The main street was somewhat bare. The street signs are hard to read, the lettering has faded.*

*-I did not notice signs going into Vining, of course they share many things with Clifton. There were signs for the restaurant in Vining and other establishments in town. We did notice the light poles in Clifton had been painted recently and in general their downtown looked very tidy.*

*-New road gutters on highway. Vining sign could be bigger. Noticed one Clifton sign coming from the north. Buildings look in good condition. Some empty!*

2. Downtown Business Area

Describe the buildings, signs, infrastructure, etc.

*-Some older buildings in downtown Clifton were vacant, but the ones with occupants looked mostly good. The city building and bank stood out. The sidewalks were nice in some areas and broken up in others.*

*-Well maintained buildings. Most are used. People friendly. Used buildings had good signage.*

Explain what type of businesses you observed and give a description of the variety and quality of merchandise displayed.

*-In Clifton there was a grocery store, funeral home, gas station, storage facility, bank, diner (open for breakfast and lunch only). In Vining there was a CVA building, a restaurant and automotive shop.*

*-Bakery, 2 gas stations, CVA, storage, insurance, bank, grocery store, Toy Museum*

Describe the customer service received when you entered those retail businesses. (Were you greeted? Did you have to ask for assistance?)

*-Grocery store was nice with staple items plus balloons, cards, wrapping paper. Friendly service. The café advertised hours well and was inviting. The bar & grill did not have hours listed, did not appear open but the sign said open.*

*-We were greeted and people were very friendly and open to all our questions!*

*-Gas station attendant said hello.*

What public amenities (drinking fountains, benches, public restrooms, trash receptacles and wi-fi, etc.) were available?

*-Public restrooms at the park were not open. Trash cans were available at the park.*

*-They had a very nice park area between the two communities with a swimming pool, shelter house and ball grounds. Very well kempt (even though it is winter and not much going on).*

*-Benches, fountains, updated ball fields, trash cans.*

Comment on landscaping and streetscaping. Did you have difficulty finding parking? Could you access multiple services from where you parked?

*-The streetscaping needs improvement. May be more inviting in the spring, but not at this time.*

*-There wasn’t a lot of landscaping, but what there was looked nice. Again, it is still winter so planters etc. were empty. But as I mentioned the street light poles has been painted and there was access to several businesses from one parking area.*

*-No difficulty parking.*

1. Other Retail Shopping Areas

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

*-Retail shopping needed better signage for hours. They were easy to access.*

*Fuel available at more than one location for 24 hours a day is convenient.*

*-Really only the downtown area had retail in it.*

*-Most were closed on Saturday.*

4. Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas

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

*-The co-operative seems to be a major business in town. There were not many other locations for industry to expand, except the northwest are of Vining.*

*-There was an industrial area and it looked like it could accommodate some new business.*

*-Small lots looked open near AG CVA lots.*

5. Health Care Services

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

*-No medical services, all doctors are located in the neighboring communities.*

*-No health care available in the town, but they do have their own ambulance because it is too far from the other cities to respond in a reasonable time in an emergency.*

*-Didn’t see any.*

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

*-Several buildings downtown, I would suggest getting a doctor to come once a week for a clinic, that would be a nice addition to the community.*

*-None that we could see.*

*-Didn’t see any.*

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

*-No long term care facility.*

*-No long term care facilities located in Clifton.*

*-Assisted Living units by the church on HWY.*

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.)

*-There was housing available for all income levels. The challenge would be a nice home situated next to a run down house. The neighborhood of the home is a large deciding factor when purchasing a house. The price point fluctuates with the need, therefore, I would be hesitant to pay too much for housing because you may not get your investment back easily. The apartments appeared to offer a rental option. However, there was a sign listing vacancy with no contact information. Not many homes for sale.*

*-There were all kinds of houses, representing all income levels. We did not see any “for sale” or “for rent” signs anywhere and when we asked, we were told you just have to know someone. People that have property don’t want to advertise its availability. That’s kind of something that might deter someone wanting to move into the community.*

*-Seemed to be little or no moderate income housing. Either blighted or really nice.*

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

*-Apartment complex on the edge of town offered a rental option.*

*-None*

*-A few apartments were noticed. Saw a few lots for sale.*

7. Schools

What schools are present? (Head Start, Preschool, K-8, High School, Post-Secondary, etc.) Do the schools appear to be adequate in size? Are the buildings and grounds well-maintained?

*-It appeared that K-8 was available in town. The elementary school was inviting with very well maintained grounds and adequate size. The middle school looked older but in good repair. The yard behind the middle school could be improved.*

*-We observed an elementary school and a Jr. High School. Both looked very well kempt and in good condition.*

*-Preschool, elementary and junior high. Nice schools with good signage.*

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

*-Actually yes!*

*-yes*

1. Childcare

What childcare service are available? Is it affordable?

*-The childcare services are inadequate. It appears that families transport their young children out of town for daycare wherever the parents work.*

*-There are 4 area day care facilities. We didn’t check to see if they were affordable, but assume they are since it is a small community and all are doing well.*

*-Preschool. Didn’t see any group daycares.*

1. Faith/Religion

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

*-There was a Catholic church and a Presbyterian church. They are older buildings but well maintained. No evident church sponsored services.*

*-There were two churches that we saw. A Presbyterian and a Catholic one. Both were well kempt and fairly good size. The Catholic Church has a website with the mass times as well as contacts in the church.*

*-2 churches, good condition.*

1. Civic

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

*-Senior Citizen Club—nice addition to a community*

*-There are several organizations that were noted. The Art Club, Beautification Committee and KVSB Heritage Club (Kaw Valley State Bank).*

*-Not sure if they had Pride or Lion’s Club.*

Did you observe any evidence of civic organization activity?

-*No*

*-Sons of the American Legion and Senior Center (with meals!)*

*-The parks were well maintained*

1. Public Infrastructure

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

*-Streets needed potholes repaired. No streetscape. Sidewalks were in good repair. Street signs were difficult to read.*

*-The town consisted mainly of the downtown area and houses surrounding the downtown. We did notice that many street signs were spray painted over the name so they were not readable. Was this just vandalism or something else? Also, the streets were in pretty bad shape in the neighborhoods.*

*-Some streets need to be fixed. Many lots didn’t have sidewalks. Some trash in ditches. Downtown sidewalks are good.*

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

-*My favorite part of coming here was going into the city hall/library! They had a big bulletin board with all kinds of announcements and a bulletin available with all the news for the month. The bank generously puts this together and it contains birthdays, anniversaries, events that are going on that month, a listing of all the meetings for the month, the complete listing of meals for the Senior Center for the month, classifieds, some history and the minutes of the city council meeting. Because there is no newspaper for Clifton/Vining, this is a nice way to get the information out. It is also available online.*

*-Saturday, not open.*

Police/fire protection:

*-Police protection is limited because they are 30 miles from either station, however, I don’t think anyone feels that it is not safe to live here. There is also a volunteer Fire Dept. and ambulance.*

*-Yes*

Library:

*-Nice library*

*-There is a very nice library and librarian! They are open every day except Sunday and Thursday for at least several hours.*

*-No*

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

*-City park and ball field are very nice facility. Swimming pool is small and needs improvements but is a nice amenity for a small town.*

*-There was a really nice and well maintained city park with a ballpark, pool and play areas. I didn’t notice a walking trail.*

*-Ball parks, pool, playground.*

1. Recreation/Tourism

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

*-No*

*-They have a big 4th of July celebration. I didn’t notice any community slogan.*

*-Not really*

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

*-The buffalo ranch and museum north of town was interesting.*

*-They were having an Easter Egg Hunt at the park on Saturday, March 31st. No other events taking place at this time. They did have a big Christmas Lighting ceremony this past December with horse and carriage rides, singing, food and fun. Also, the bank shows movies (not sure how often) and serves popcorn and drinks.*

*Old Clifton/Vining concert sign on some windows. But that was on a side street.*

Elaborate on any significant natural or manmade features that have the potential of drawing people to the community. (Public art, museums, lakes, campgrounds, regional heritage locations).

*-None*

*-There is a buffalo ranch and museum just on the outskirts of Clifton that looked interesting. Looking on the website they offer tours of an original homestead, antique farm equipment and buffalo. There is also a new Toy museum that opened this year. We didn’t go but saw the ad on the bulletin board. The price is $10 for anyone 5 and older. Seemed a bit high, but again, we didn’t actually see it.*

*-Baseball fields, Toy Museum, some street art in a yard.*

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.

*-No*

*-The City Building on the main street was very obviously the place to go for information. There was a nice bench out front, bathrooms available through the library and the friendly staff was open to answering questions.*

-*City Office looks interesting.*

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

*-Nice community to live in, but nothing to attract visitors.*

*-The restaurant “Tailgaters” has a great reputation and I would love to go sometime!*

*Tailgaters, Bakery*

14. Wrap-up: What are the most positive things you observed about the community?

-*Small town, grocery store, bank, and good school system, location to Concordia, Clyde and Clay Center. Overall appeared to be a great place to raise a family.*

-*Very friendly people and a bank and other businesses that are really into community support! Also some dedicated people that want to make the community better through beautification and other positive actions.*

*-Quite a few nice updated homes. Nice schools. Clean downtown, buildings seemed active. Great park/ballfield. Nice road and church leading into town.*

What are the biggest obstacles/challenges facing this community?

-*Lack of jobs and housing available.*

 -*Maybe signage and street repair? Convincing residents that have properties to sell or rent to list it or put up signs. Fixing up some of the properties on Main Street that weren’t occupied.*

 *-Could use signage. Town clean-up days/help load trash out of people’s yards. Some talking about an upcoming event.*

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

-*The friendly people and their community newsletter!*

*-Nice place to live but very little to do or bring me to town*

*-A good restaurant, ball field and youth support. Some houses could use a lot of trash clean-up.*



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