First Impressions 

**Team Report Form**

Community Visited: Glasco Dates Visited: March 13 & 20, 2019

1. 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?

-Web search was easy, a good website, most info on the website

-Very easy

-I thought the website was excellent. It was very thorough, accurate and I enjoyed the pictures. Excellent job! I really didn’t think of any questions I would have after looking at it.

1. The “Five-Minute” Impression: After taking a five-minute drive through the

community without stopping, the following reactions were noted.

-Paved streets, houses in mostly good condition, several vacant houses in disrepair, Main Street buildings mostly vacant.

- My five-minute overall impression was that it was a quiet and clean community. It would be a great place to raise a family.

-Paved streets

-The town seemed cleaner/tidier than I anticipated. There were lots of empty houses and storefronts, but most yards were tidy and all areas were well mowed.

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

-Large entrance sign (Welcome)

-The Glasco sign on the edge of town was nice and big. I believe it had the American flag by the sign with lights.

-The entrance to town was quite impressive, well landscaped and I liked the flag. Very appealing.

1. Downtown Business Area Describe the buildings, signs, infrastructure, etc.

-Most buildings were in good repair but lots of vacant buildings on main street.

-Large limestone buildings. Most buildings were empty. At one time Glasco had a great downtown.

-Driving down Main Street, my first impression was favorable. The new curbs and sidewalks were great. As we walked, I then realized how much of the downtown was vacant store fronts. Some have roofs falling in and should really be removed. But, it is hard to spend money on a building that is providing no income. Some of the vacant buildings had decorated or pleasant window appearances. The downtown was overall painted and attractive.

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

-A “drug” store which served microwave sandwiches, etc., some cards and gifts. No grocery store. The bar/restaurant was closed for new ownership. Post office. City Office/library/city shop – one building.

-There was a bank, post office, city building, library, and a soda fountain shop. The Soda Fountain is a great place to run if you need a gallon of milk or a card for a gift. Even a quick meal. They had pizzas and ice cream.

-Glasco library, Citizens State Bank, Hodge Podge Gifts, Groceries, Soda Fountain.

-It is great to have a bank. That is an essential element to a town. The morning hours are probably sufficient once the community gets used to them. The Hodge Podge is providing a much needed benefit to the community with groceries, medicines, cards and gifts. She was doing a great job in a small space. It was great to see coffee drinkers there as well. Post Office, Fire Station and Library are a big plus. We had hoped to eat at the Pub, although we didn’t realize it had limited hours. It was closed March 13th because it had just sold. We are glad you have a new owner and that it will continue operation.

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

-City Clerk was friendly and answered questions. The people we visited with on the sidewalks were friendly.

-It was friendly. We were greeted when we came in. Very helpful when I asked questions. There also was a man walking around outside on the street and told us about some of the buildings in the downtown area.

-Very helpful

-We were greeted warmly and promptly everywhere we went. All questions that we asked were answered. A gentleman carrying a white cane also gave us a mini tour and history of the downtown. He was telling us what businesses has been there in the past too.

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

-Trash receptacles on main street. A couple of benches. No public restrooms open except for the city office during business hours.

-There were restrooms in the park but they were locked. Also restrooms at the city building. But if it wasn’t during open hours there wouldn’t be anywhere to go. There were lots of trash cans through the town.

-Benches in a small park in downtown. Public restrooms in city park but were locked in the winter.

-We noticed on park bench and 4 trash receptacles on Main Street. It seems there would be no public restroom available during the nights and week-ends during the winter. ( In our travels from Gypsum I learned that one little boy in our town was causing a mess in our public restroom, but he was there because there was no water service in his home. You may have the same situation.)

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

-Streets were empty, no parking problems.

-The curbs and sidewalks look fairly new. I loved the idea that someone put up a painted mural fence on Main Street to cover some metal scraps. But it was almost an eye sore because it wasn’t maintained.

-Plenty of parking.

-Pocket park was delightful. I would love to see it in the spring and with the lights lit. The picnic table and bench wheels were fun. I like the painted white picket fence. Although it is showing some decay and paint peeling, it seems just right for your downtown and did a great job covering up a cluttered area. More flower pots, benches and pops of color (perhaps flags) would help beautify the downtown streets. No difficulty parking – ample spaces.

1. Other Retail Shopping Areas

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

-I was glad you have gas pumps available. On the day we were there your price was very similar to the price in Salina. From Facebook I thought you had 2 auto shops, but I didn’t locate them driving around town. The cemetery was very well kept. The black iron fence and stone pillars were really pretty. The directory on your website was great. I assume the funeral home is operated out of another location and is only open when needed. It is always good to see a Carrico type drop box in a town.

5. Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas

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

-There was an elevator, about the only large business.

-Glasco has vacant land in the city for manufacturing.

-I am sure Glasco would be very helpful to industries who wanted to locate or expand.

6. Health Care Services

Comment on the availability and apparent quality of hospitals and emergency medical services. Comment on the availability and condition of facilities for physicians, dentists, optometrists, public health and other healthcare providers.

-I saw the Glasco Medical Center but wasn’t for sure if it was still in business.

-None available. I am not sure if there are EMT services with your fire department. We saw the medical center building. We were unsure if it was used on any days or for any reasons. I saw the bill board advertisement for the Beloit Hospital.

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

-There was a nursing facility – did not visit.

-There is a nursing home facility. It is great to have right there in the community.

Especially for the people who have lived in the Glasco area a long time. They can stay close to home. The outside of the building was well-maintained.

-It was great to see a nursing home. It is a blessing to be able to keep elders in their home

community and easily accessible to family and friends. I am sure it is a major employer in

town too. I saw a flyer talking about a craft day at the nursing home. I also saw that the

first and second grade had visited to read. Nice community involvement. There was good

information about your nursing home on the website.

7. 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.)

-I didn’t see very many homes for sale. From viewing the homes in the community it looks like it would appeal to middle to lower level income families.

-Glasco has 10 to 12 homes for sale.

-Newer, bigger houses were less available. This is not a surprise in any town whose population is continually decreasing. In driving around it appeared there were a lot of empty houses. However, there was not realtor, for sale or for rent signs around. On the school website I believe I found 2 houses listed for sale. A lot of the older houses need to be taken down. Again, it is hard to spend money to remove a house when you can’t afford to keep or fix it up. Empty lots do provide the opportunity for a new house to be built there.

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

-Seemed to be several empty houses but didn’t see many realtor signs.

-I didn’t see any for rent signs driving around. There were some apartment properties ran by MGM properties. That might be low income housing which is so nice to have in the community.

-Not aware of any.

8. 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?

-There was a grade school & high school in separate buildings, older buildings.

-There is a preschool on the edge of town. Also a K-12 school. There wasn’t very much playground equipment. It looks like they haven’t added anything to the playground for a very long time.

-High school, grade school, preschool. It is part of the Miltonvale school.

-We toured Glasco during spring break. We found the elementary, high school and preschool. All buildings appear well-maintained. We did not tour any of the buildings inside. The elementary playground would benefit from new mulch and equipment. We were told that you share athletic teams with Miltonvale. I am sure that the daily travel for students for practices is a drain on study time, energy and school dollars. It is fortunate for your community that students and adults can attend Beloit Vo-Tech or Cloud County while residing at home.

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

-It was on the city website.

-Yes, the district had a website.

-Congratulations on your schools being rated above average. The student/teacher ratio of 6:1 is having a good impact. As a former school secretary, I enjoyed the student data breakdown on your school website. There was a lot of info there.

1. Childcare

What childcare service are available? Is it affordable?

-Did not see any childcare signs.

-Not sure

-We saw the daycare listed on the official website but did not go locate it.

1. Faith/Religion

Comment on the number of denominations and the physical appearances of the places of worship represented in the community. Did you observe any evidence of faith-based community services?

-Four churches in the city, some with meeting rooms.

-There are four active churches - Methodist, Catholic, Christian and Lutheran. This is surprising to me that a small town still has four open churches. That is great. The appearances of them were very well-kept.

-Three churches in Glasco – Catholic, Methodist, Christian.

-We found the 4 churches. I loved the stain glass windows. They would be fun to tour. A gentleman that I visited with said there is only about 15 members present most Sundays in his church so I am sure they are struggling to survive too. It is great the churches combine for the annual Christmas Cantata.

1. Civic

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

-Glasco Community Foundation has a building downtown that holds weekly events. The farmers market is a great idea.

-The Glasco Community Development group has a building downtown. I was told it is sometimes used for large meetings, etc.

-It was great to have groups, contact names and numbers on your website. It was good to see a VFW Hall. We did comment that the flag they were flying was frayed. On one site I saw that they host an annual craft show. I loved the stone sign by the fire station honoring your community veterans. The Corner Store is a great location for your Foundation. Your clothes line with flyers for current events was fun and friendly. All of the plants in the front windows made a pretty store front as well as serving a need for community members too. The senior center is important to a town. The flyer showing that After Prom is serving 9 Sunday dinners is awesome. What a great community service and gathering as well as a good fundraiser.

Did you observe any evidence of civic organization activity?

-No one around when we visited (looked lonely.)

-They had the weekly schedule posted on the glass window of the building.

-It looked like a nice amount of community activities.

1. Public Infrastructure

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

-Restrooms in the city park near the swimming pool (looked closed.) We were told they were only open when the pool was.

-They have nice paved streets. We toured the town on a rainy day. The ditches seemed to drain well.

-We were very envious of the paved streets!! Open public restrooms are always a plus. In March, it appears you only have them while the City Office is open. Before we arrived that morning, a not really needed rain had gone through. There was a lot of water running through town. Your town was handling that well. You have large dips at intersections to help carry that water away from the residential areas. Things were working well. All the drainage areas had been mowed up nicely for the winter.

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

-City Hall on Main Street, city clerk friendly.

-We were greeted by the city hall worker. She was able to answer our questions that we had about the town.

-The city employee was very friendly.

-City Hall was well marked. Your city clerk was very friendly and answered all questions we had. I think you were at a disadvantage. Glasco had not had the First Impressions training yet and I not sure anyone knew who we were or why we were snooping through their town. But all were very friendly to us strangers.

Police/fire protection:

-Fire Station, no city police

-Not sure

-Glasco has a well-equipped fire station

-Fire station was a nice newer facility. You obviously don’t have a police officer or he would have been following our crazy white van zig zagging all over town.

Library:

-In the city building

-Library was closed when we were there. It looked like a great place to be able to come and read books. They might want to try a “Little Free Library” for people that might not be able to make it to the library during the library hours.

-Very nice library

-As a library board member, it was fun to see the rocket tent that you are coloring in preparation for the space themed summer reading program. Your 16 hours a week is two more than Gypsum has. It was good to see story time for your preschoolers. Displaying collections of items sounds like a fun community activity. The library was closed when we toured. The various hours seem like a lot to remember.

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

-Park and swimming pool with restrooms only open during the warm season

-The park area looked well-maintained. I think it is great that this small town has a pool for the kids in the community. Also great tennis courts and basketball courts.

-Glasco has very nice city park with swimming pool.

-I liked that you have an entire square block in the center of town with a lot of things together. A swimming pool is a blessing. Your playground equipment, although old, looked inviting. Glad to see baby swings. The area was lit. I wish our tour was after things had greened up so we could see the flowers and bushes. Some newer playground equipment would be a nice addition. It looked like a nice gathering spot for a summer evening.

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?

-Didn’t see anything of that nature.

-Not sure

-The first thing I heard before any searching was that Glasco has a locker plant.

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

-None at the time of our visit. The town was very sparse.

-There was a sign on the corner of the downtown area that had the events going on that month. It looked like they had different events throughout the month for residents to attend.

-There was an events calendar in town. It has some nice community events listed but the letters are small. We were there March 13th and all events listed were in February. An electronic sign might be a nice addition to your town.

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).

-History Museum

-The stained glass in the churches were very neat. I could see people coming to Glasco for this reason.

-I did not read about this before I visited but I would have asked questions about what the “Preserve America” designation means. I would also have asked about the plan and progress on the US Highway 24 Museum. I like the old bridge south of town.

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.

-City Office on Main Street

-The city building was the place I saw to get information. I didn’t see anything else.

-City Office

-In most small towns you start with the City Office. The City Office and clerk did a nice job. The Foundation office was not open at the time of our visit.

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

-Only one restaurant/bar (not sure of the hours and the new owners.)

-Unfortunately no. There was no restaurant to eat at. I don’t think there would ever be a reason for me to go back to visit Glasco.

-The Cloud Bar & Grill

-The heart of a small town is its restaurant. That is always a good place to stop. Perhaps a menu with hours could be added to the city website. I would visit the pocket park and the bridge again.

1. Wrap-up

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

-There was a community development organization.

-Glasco seems to me like it would be a great place to live if you loved the small town life. The kids would have a safe place to run around and play.

-Glasco has very nice sidewalks in the downtown and it still has a school.

-It felt like a warm friendly town. You were very welcoming. Glasco has cleaner yards than most small towns. It would have been fun to see it in the spring instead of a cloudy day.

What are the biggest obstacles/challenges facing this community?

-Loss of businesses downtown.

-I think the biggest obstacle this community would face is if the school was to close. Not sure what would bring more people to live in this community if it closed.

-I think your biggest challenge will be keeping your school open. With your current student count and a declining population you have a big mountain to climb. I have no suggestions on how to grow population or bring new businesses to town.

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

-Hoped the restaurant/bar would be open – heard it had good food.

-A quiet little town on the way to Beloit!

-My thoughts will be positive. It looks like a friendly place with people working hard to make it a good community to live in.



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