

First Impressions

Team Report Form



Community Visited: **Goodland**

Date Visited: 6/27/22

7/1/22 (2)

7/15/22

7/26/22

8/4/22 (2)

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?
 - Google search came up with official city website first (very attractive site!), the school district was also on the first page as was the National Weather Service's Goodland Facebook page. Thetopsideofkansas.org, and the activity center's website were on the second page of results. Had to search on Facebook for "City of Goodland" to locate social media, but once found the posts were current and informative.
 - Also found a Flatlanders Festival Facebook page while looking for city info online.
 - The website for the city was nice and it reflected things very well.
 - Found some online resources via QR codes in the park when actually in town.
 - From a general Google search it was difficult to find any websites about things to see/do in Goodland. Did find "The Top Side of Kansas" that had good information if you were moving to town but not so much for visiting. That site was computer friendly but not mobile device friendly.
 - Did see some negative press on Facebook about a SPARK funds issue. Could not find a Facebook page for the chamber or visitor's bureau.
 - City's website featured scrolling shots of interesting things and their descriptions.
 - One of the top returned results was the "Roxie on the Road" website that had 10 things to do while in Goodland.

- Difficult to find in a web search but once located it was a good page. The city's page didn't open on a phone, but another link was found that worked. Information about the fair was found online and it had good information.
- Easy to find information online/on phone about restaurants while in town.

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

- Nice industrial park with impressive sign.
- Easy to see street signs on the Loop; street signs in other areas of town were great also.
- Well-kept public housing.
- Amazing retirement community buildings.
- Overall neat and tidy throughout the community.
- Clean, well-marked buildings and streets.
- Neighborhoods are generally nice.
- Friendly feeling when entering town.
- Main Street was bustling with activity.
- The Loop was easy to follow and explained nicely, the signing in town is amazing.
- Beautiful sign for the community just beyond Wal-Mart (headed north); great sign, all the civic organizations are listed there.
- Noted the Tesla charging stations at the hotel by I-70.
- A few of the buildings around town were run down and appeared empty, but overall it was a nice impression.
- What appeared to be an abandoned RV park was on the west side of town. There was a nice welcome area on the west side of town.
- Some of the Loop roads were a little rough.
- A lot of agriculture businesses noticed while driving through.

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

- From South 27: the farmsteads were neat and well-kept; weedy lot observed; saw 2 nice hotels, a Steak N Shake and a gas station.
- Street signs and address numbers were large and easy to read.
- Buildings and industrial areas had ample signage and an overall clean look to town.
- Both I-70 approaches were decent, but typical. Nothing really says "Stop here."
- Signage was good on the Loop at the entrance and mostly throughout town, though some signs were a little small.
- Coming from the east and on the interstate, some of the signage was faded out and some were too small to read at 75 mph.
- There was a sign on the interstate that had some of the information scratched out, which was a little unsightly.
- Welcome sign on the west side of town looked very nice.

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

- Quite a few businesses on Main.
- A few empty shops, however the buildings that were empty/abandoned were kept nice and not full of junk.
- The movie theater was playing a current movie.
- Larger signs on Main Street were very helpful in getting around.
- Very pleasing and welcoming atmosphere.
- Some pink signs along Main (and at parks/museum) were hard to read with the sun on them.
- Historic buildings that were still utilized were very beautiful and interesting to look at. Loved that most of them had plaques and/or pictures showing what the building was originally and when it was built. There's a lot of great history in Goodland.
- Some felt that the building downtown were a mix of wonderfully restored and tragically run down; the run down buildings might not have been as noticeable were it not for the nicer buildings in close proximity.

- There was an antique store with a stunning entry way with outdoor walk around displays and a stunning storefront.
- The electronic sign on Main Street was good – all the ads displayed were very attractive and easy to read.
- Some empty buildings, but a good mix of retail and service businesses was noted.
- It would be nice to have the signs on the vacant buildings removed or at least “Closed” signs placed on the doors so visitors would know they aren’t in business. Tried to eat at a restaurant that appears to no longer be open, but couldn’t tell until they tried the door.

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

- Heirloom, which was a wonderful children’s clothing store.
- Lou Lou’s, a boutique, but was unfortunately closed during the visit.
- Different stores and restaurants were found with a good variety of items not found at Wal-Mart.
- A lot of antique and second-hand shops with a wide variety of items. One antique shop had great window displays.
- Very surprised at how many of the same type of stores seemed to be doing well in town.
- Multiple praises for the Hallmark store, which was beautiful with great displays and helpful staff.
- Coffee shops and cafes were observed, but couldn’t go in because none were open on a Friday afternoon.
- Also saw antique and thrift stores, gun smith (nice guy there), a nice looking movie theater, and some dental offices – you could certainly spend some time browsing downtown.
- Visitors tried to eat at Burgers and Cones during their visit, but it was closed. Hard to tell it was closed from the outside as there was no sign on the door indicating that.
- Lou Lou’s Boutique had a nice variety of clothing, jewelry and gift items. The furniture store had a lot of furniture and a few appliances.
- Some agriculture-related businesses were observed.

- One visitor noted that they visited the flower shop, along with other stores mentioned earlier.
- Good variety of merchandise seen in the stores visited, and it was quality merchandise.
- The furniture store had some appliances that appeared to be on the lower end of the market. This store was very crowded.

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

- Great customer service at Heirloom and Tequila's.
- Some visitors reported going to Wal-Mart, several independent stores and restaurants and found the customer service offered was friendly and helpful.
- Customer service was great every place one group of visitors went, though they were a little disappointed more couldn't answer questions about events or things to do in Goodland. A lot of people said to go on down the interstate to find more interesting things.
- Easy to strike up a conversation in every place they entered and always met with politeness, curiosity, and an invite to come back again.
- Every business entered had friendly, helpful staff. The Bricks by Maria had good service, though the tables were too close for comfort.
- Friendly everywhere that was visited.

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

- There were public restrooms at the park east of the courthouse. Some didn't see these and ended up going to the gas station for that purpose.
- Lacking trash bins was an observation one visitor had while others said there were a lot.
- A few drinking fountains were observed by some, but others couldn't find any.
- The park behind the courthouse had a neat plaque on the water fountain that was historically interesting.

- No public-access wi-fi observed downtown.
- Some visitors did find access to public internet but couldn't stay connected.
- Public seating outside of Lou Lou's, but none elsewhere that was noticed.

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

- Parking was never a problem. Overall, the city has nice landscaping.
- It was easy to access many stores and other areas by parking in just one spot.
- Visitor noted it was alumni weekend during their visit and everything was picked up and mowed.
- Multiple visitors commented that the pots of flowers on Main are beautiful.
- Parking was ample.
- Some sidewalks on Main were in disrepair and could be a problem for someone not steady on their feet.
- One visitor noted the business with older cars and flowers growing out of one.

4. Other Retail Shopping Areas

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

- Excellent customer service found at Tequila's and the Welcome Center.
- Visited the Ace Hardware east of Main.
- Easy access to all shopping areas in town.
- Shopping right off the interstate was nice.
- Wal-Mart was busy but easy to access with lots of parking.
- Turning off Commerce onto Old US 24 had some farm equipment and other stores.
- There were some junky lots here and there in these areas, but nothing out of the ordinary. There was a big pile of concrete rubble visible from the interstate that caught some attention.
- Most retail areas seemed to be associated with downtown or just off that area. There was a Wal-Mart on the west side of town – easy to access.

5. Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas

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

- A well-defined area with a nice arch sign and plenty of room to expand. Some didn't feel it was a well-defined industrial park, but areas where there was heavy commercial and industry happened to exist.
- Appeared to be a lot of big, empty lots adjacent to current industrial areas where expansion could take place.
- Industrial park area was away from the rest of the town; expansion likely possible without affecting other areas.
- West end of town has some room to expand and some industrial businesses currently.

6. Health Care Services

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

- Modern healthcare facilities. Signage directing people was excellent.
- Easy to see and follow signs to emergency room.
- Some found the hospital hard to find, but once they did they noted it was an older building, but well maintained.

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

- Hospital, several dentists, and an optometrist office observed by visitors.
- A lot of healthcare providers throughout town, many of which were easily accessible on Main Street.
- Some did not see healthcare services while driving or walking around town.
- Visitors that saw healthcare related businesses and services in town noted that the offices all appeared to be in good shape. There was some surprise that the pharmacy was so far away from Main Street, but realized it made sense to have it next to the hospital.
- Did not see any public health services.

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

- Assisted living apartments were found during the visit. Seems to be a good number.
- The assisted living apartments were beautifully landscaped and easily accessible.

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.)

- There were hardly any for sale signs in yards seen while exploring the city, a visitor observed. Another felt there was a lot of real estate for sale in the form of lots and houses. What was for sale seemed to be at different price points.
- Beautiful homes in the northeast part of town, none for sale.
- Southwest side of town shows signs of disrepair.
- Housing appeared to be mostly high end, though some neighborhoods existed that were pretty run down.
- Some didn't feel they encountered a part of town where the "nice" houses are, rather most of what they encountered seemed like fairly common stock, but indicated they did not get to the north part of town to see housing.
- There were some real estate offices downtown and some internet searching for housing indicated some for rent and sale. Homes listed seemed wildly expensive – maybe ok prices for other parts of the country, but seemed high for that part of the state.
- Not a lot of information online or in person on housing availability.
- Most neighborhoods were inviting whether they appealed to upper or lower incomes. Looks to be room for someone to build a home.

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

- Several felt there were not many rental possibilities.
- Others observed several apartment complexes but no indication on availability of units.
- Goodland Housing Authority was really the only thing and most prevalent result in internet searches.

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?

- North Elementary School has a great school garden area.
- Visitors loved looks of the two-story brick high school.
- As a whole, school facilities were well-kept and appeared to be positive assets/very nice.
- Northwest Kansas Technical College is an obvious asset to the community; very nice campus; lot of improvements happening there so it had a construction feel to it, but still very nice.
- Max Jones Fieldhouse is a nice facility with fantastic signage.
- The local Extension office and programs are active.
- Schools were a prominent part of the community and very involved. Facilities were large and well maintained.
- Preschool through high school and post-secondary that were observed seemed adequate in size for the population.
- Athletic facilities were nice, but the Goodland Cowboy banners around the gym were a bit small for how high up they are.
- One visitor noted that the school website made it easy to find information in English or Spanish and that they found an accountability report online that gave good information about the quality of the education system.
- There were some weeds on one of the playgrounds, but overall nice facilities.

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

- Multiple visitors indicated they could not find information on education quality online.
- Others noted that they found an accountability report online (2020-21) that gave good information about the quality of the education system.
- One visitor noted that the school website made it easy to find information in English or Spanish.

9. Childcare

What childcare services are available? Is it affordable?

- Could not find any information on this.
- Multiple people were asked and were told family members were watching their kids.
- Some visitors noticed a building being renovated as a new, large childcare facility.
- No information about childcare in town found online or while exploring the community.

10. 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?

- A small Jehovah's Witness church was seen.
- The First Christian Church was a large facility but could use better upkeep.
- Many different churches and denominations found.
- No evidence of faith-based community services.
- Church thrift shop was observed. Spent some time in there shopping – interesting. The ladies working there were very nice.
- Number of different churches and denominations observed, all with well-kept buildings and grounds.
- More than one visitor mentioned the Catholic Church and Methodist Church had food booths at the fair.

11. Civic

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

- Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks has a large facility that looks nice.
- Knights of Columbus also observed.
- Rotary Club.
- Lions Club sign was seen.
- Kiwanis Club.
- Signs easily noticed while entering town noting some of the organizations.

Did you observe any evidence of civic organization activity?

- Rotary Club is associated with the Van Gogh Easel site/project area – the seating, signage, walking path; beautiful park.
- Elks had a drug awareness program trailer at their building.
- Kiwanis Club had a food booth at the fair and noted they put out 900 flags 6 times throughout the year.
- Rotary also had a “protect our children” sign near one of the schools.

12. Public Infrastructure

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

- Lacking sidewalks in some areas of the community.
- Several intersections with no traffic control.
- The planters on Main Street were attractive.
- Liked the brick streets.
- In most neighborhoods, everything was clean, sidewalks were good, lots of parking, and things were well marked.
- Streets well maintained.
- Lighting didn't seem to be an issue, but the visits were during daylight hours.
- Lack of public restrooms. Even visitor center had a note about no public restrooms.
- Loop signage was great, but seems like the Loop runs backward. First area off the interstate takes you through residential/commercial area that made visitors wonder if they were going to find it. Felt logical first stop should be Van Gogh painting and visitor center, then museum, then downtown.

- Landscaping and streetscaping wasn't a "wow" or "eww" – above average, but could be better.
- Good signage outside of downtown. Not a lot of street parking, most were parked in driveways.
- Several areas around town that needed to be mowed, but not too overgrown and landscaping overall was good.
- Some big dips noticed in the streets while driving around, but overall road conditions were good.

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

- City hall was closed when some visitors came to town.
- City hall was observed and open, but didn't go in.

Police/fire protection:

- Police and fire protection seem well-funded. Several vehicles were noticed throughout town.
- Signs pointing to the police and fire stations were noticed, and a fire truck was seen. A few sirens heard throughout the day, but did not see any police cars during the visit.

Library:

- The library is up-to-date and the "Kansas Room" was very enjoyable.
- Great library!
- The library is beautiful and the staff is very helpful.
- The library was a highlight (and visitors were thankful it had a public restroom).
- Head librarian was very helpful with community information.
- Sections for all age groups with activity centers for kids and computers for public use.
- Good website for the library.
- Grounds were nicely landscaped.

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

- Did not notice any public restrooms near picnic areas of park west of swimming pool.
- There was a water hydrant at one picnic shelter.
- The dog park was observed, but didn't see much in the park for dogs.
- Walking areas by Northwest Kansas Technical College; trails in parks.
- City parks were popular with visitors.
- Beautiful landscaping throughout the many parks in town; parks are gorgeous!
- Those responsible for upkeep and litter control should be applauded for the great job they are doing.
- Great benches and seating available in the parks; covered picnic area was nice.
- Nice parks with walking tracks. Skateboard park and ball parks were also observed.
- Two dog parks are nice for visitors with pets. They were in good condition.

13. Recreation/Tourism

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

- Flatlanders Festival, but only saw information about it online.
- There is a great one block area with a swimming pool, park, skateboard park, and tennis courts; parking on the west and south side of that area is crumbling.
- Some did not see that there were any attractions or events the city was known for.
- Someone did an amazing job of putting out posters and flyers for the fair. Along the same lines there was a lot of window painting for the fair that was just initials and dates – should have listed fair time or “come to the fair.”
- Known for the giant easel with a replica of Van Gogh's sunflower painting. The other easels throughout town were noted – if there was a slogan that capitalizes on this, it wasn't found.

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

- Saw advertisement/sign for the Saturday farmers' market.
- Saw a lot of information about the school reunion, but not much else that visitors to the community would be interested in.
- The fair was taking place during the visit. The storefronts on Main Street were painted but they used an acronym that probably only made sense to the locals.
- Fair website had good information.
- The home-owned carnival was great. The main fair building was very hot even with fans.
- Visited the fair in late afternoon/evening but not a lot of activity going on until after 7 PM.
- The food at the fair was good and visitors appreciated the shaded areas to sit while they ate.

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).

- Van Gogh easel (could use a fresh coat of paint).
- High Plains Museum; the lady at the museum was not very friendly and didn't seem to like giving out the free postcards that the plaque at the easel promised.
- Museum was definitely a neat space. Think there would be benefit to advertising the helicopter more throughout the town as it was a hidden gem.
- The Van Gogh painting/easel. Kids had fun looking throughout town to find the other paintings – that's a great way to get people to get into town to find them all.
- The helicopter is cool and has an even better story. The temporary 4-H display at the museum was kind of interesting.
- The KOA campground looked like a nice one, though appeared almost empty. Also noticed a sign on the interstate for Camp-Inn.
- The swimming pool, skate park, ball fields, and other sporting areas will draw people to town.

- The airport might bring people to town if they hosted an air show or fly-in event. One visitor was a pilot and wanted to see the airport. The runways were being improved.

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.

- Welcome Center near the Van Gogh easel. Lady that came from back of the office had excellent customer service skills. Young person at the front desk not as skilled in customer service.
- Some visitors indicated the visitor's center was closed during their visit.
- Visitor center/grounds - not well-kept.
- Could use some landscaping.
- Some couldn't get to the visitor center. The signage took them to the Wal-Mart parking lot.
- Could not find the Chamber of Commerce office.
- Visitor center is in a good location. Person working did a good job answering questions. Also appreciated the bottled water given out there.
- Visitor center did give out rack cards and maps which were good. Tried to find the Chamber of Commerce based on Google Maps pointing to it being on Main Street, but it wasn't there. Found out later it was going to be moved to the visitor center.
- Going out to the west, some visitors went to the Kansas Travel and Information Center – surprised that the information picked up at the center didn't feature Goodland. Might pay to advertise more in the NW KS guide.
- Staff at visitor center was friendly. It would be nice if there was a public restroom there.

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

- Tequila's had great service, food, and a nice facility.
- The L&T Family Restaurant was friendly and had good service and food.
- Wil go back to L&T Family Restaurant – it was great! "I've already suggested this to many people and will go back to eat there."

- Sad that the coffee/snow cone place wasn't open in the afternoon as it would be great for adults to get iced coffee and kids to get a snow cone during the day.
- If in the area again, would go back to Lou Lou's Boutique and the children's store.
- If in the area again, yes, they would spend time in town, but it's a bit far to come from Ulysses just for a specific store or restaurant.

14. Wrap-up

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

- The Northwest Kansas Technical College campus.
- Downtown is in good shape.
- I-70 access.
- The Dane Hansen Foundation is a huge resource to the community.
- A very clean and friendly town.
- "It would be a place I would move to."
- Beautiful parks and outdoor spaces.
- Mostly friendly people.
- Goodland has a lot going for it. Impressed by the planning and execution of several projects for visitors. Seems to be good communication between the entities that serve the community and they have a plan.
- Very friendly people in town.
- Nice selection of businesses on Main Street
- The fair carnival is great!
- Friendly people and community pride.

What are the biggest obstacles/challenges facing this community?

- Getting people to venture off I-70; missed opportunity to encourage traffic to stop – it's a nice place and you've got to stop somewhere along the road, why not here?
- "Being in western Kansas like all of us!"

- Need more activities for people to do. There are hotels, but mostly likely they are used for getting off I-70 for an overnight stop and not major events, conventions, etc.
- Lack of workforce.
- Lack of positive presence on the internet/social media.
- People in town don't know what there is to do. When asked what to do or see while in town, the first local approached (young woman with 2 small children) said to go to Colby because there is a lot to do over there and that Goodland is pretty dead.
- Housing may be an obstacle due to the few realtor signs observed while in town.
- If the building at the fairgrounds could be air conditioned it could likely be used year-round for events and be more comfortable during the fair.
- Lacking some things to bring young people to town such as more restaurants and some night life activities. If things like that existed, they weren't noticed.
- Aging population and lack of amenities to bring younger people into the community.

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

- "I was pleasantly surprised and feel like it would be a nice place in western Kansas to live."
- The L&T Family Restaurant.
- The parks were great.
- Parks and great food at L&T.
- All the paintings/easels throughout town.
- Entrance to the antique store on Main.
- The Van Gogh painting and being asked to take a family's picture there.
- The great carnival and friendly people.
- That they were unable to see much at the fair because things were scheduled in the evening and not afternoon.
- The fair, the great carnival, and the Van Gogh painting.



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