

First Impressions

Team Report Form



Community Visited: Holyrood

Date Visited: 10/5/2019 & 10/9/2019

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?

-It was easy getting city information. I did not see anything about businesses on the city website.

-Good websites were available. No difficulty, but you needed to go to all the sites.

-Website did reflect what I saw.

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

-I thought they had a very nice park and splash pad. The yards seemed to be mostly clean and mowed. Most of the city streets seemed to be well kept.

-Mowed – curbs and gutters. Park with splash pad, restrooms closed for the winter. Flowers on Main. Nice elementary school. Community sign, health clinic, police, fire.

-Good mix of newer (1950 – 1970) type housing along with older homes.

-Very clean community!

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

-There was a nice big sign when coming into Holyrood from the east. Not much signage coming from the west.

-Convenience store – plain on the outside, nice on the inside. A nice sign at the town entrance. New street signs.

-Bold sign upon entering town with motto.

-The sign on the highway was welcoming.

2. Downtown Business Area

Describe the buildings, infrastructure, etc.

-The infrastructure downtown looked nice. I didn't see any buildings falling in, there was one building that looked to be an old gas station that looked like it could be torn down. But for the most part they looked nice. Didn't seem to be a whole lot of open businesses downtown when we were there on a Saturday though.

- There were some empty buildings but the H&B Communication building looked nice. Medical building and city building appeared nice. There was a tire place, bar & grill and filling stations (one closed), bank and c-store.
- Building OK, signs difficult to read.
- Downtown looked appealing.

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

- The only business we went into was the quick shop/gas station on the north side of the highway.
- H& B, Country Corner (closed), CV Convenience, Bar & Grill, Tire Store, Coop.
- Communications (cable) and Bank.
- Appeared that most of the business was a cable/internet business and bank.

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

- They were extremely friendly and we very helpful. Very nice people that ran that place.
- Everyone was friendly, but a little bit reserved.
- We stopped at the quick shop/gas station. They were very friendly and helpful.

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

- They had a very nice looking park on the edge of town with a splash pad and a nice sports complex on the east edge of town.
- Restrooms at the park were closed for the winter, benches on main street, free wi-fi at the convenience store.
- Playground with water park.
- Did not observe any. They city park is nice with all of these available.

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

- They had middle of the road parking downtown, plenty of spaces. Landscaping looked nice and yards were well kept.
- Curb and guttering throughout town. Quite a few vacant lots and website said free city lots for new homes. Fountain – information sign.
- No trouble parking anywhere.
- Appealing and plenty of parking.

3. Other Retail Shopping Areas

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

- I didn't notice any retail shopping areas.
- Convenience store, Wenz Interiors, Tire repair.

- Convenience store and gas station on the hi-way.
- On the highway, the businesses were well kept. The home store was a nice looking building.

4. Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas

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

- Most of the town is on the south side of the highway. There looks to plenty of space on the north side to expand if possible.
- Did not see much of an area but there was ground around the town and a highway on the north side of town. Well and tank services.

5. Health Care Services

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

- They had a small health clinic downtown. They had a very nice looking fire/ems station.
- There was a medical clinic open 2 days a week. I saw an ambulance barn but not sure it was used.
- Noticed a clinic. Seems they are available once weekly.
- Clinic.

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

N/A

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

- The home near the city park looked very nice. I assumed it was a rest home.

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.)

- I really thought that Holyrood had a good amount of nice looking houses. They looked nice from the outside with good looking yards. On the other hand, there were also many houses that looked to be in a deteriorating state. I noticed many houses with realty signs in the yard so it looked as though there were available places for people to buy homes if interested.
- Houses are nice. West end of town a newer addition but older homes are well kept. Yards were mowed and well kept.
- Several for sale signs.
- There were numerous homes that would be desirable to purchase. The only challenge would be availability of homes for sale.

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

- I didn't notice any rental houses but they did have a very nice looking housing authority building on the east side of town. It was probably one of the nicest ones I have ever observed in a small community.
- There are two rental apartment complexes.
- None
- Didn't notice to many rental properties.

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?

- They had a nice grade school on the south side of town. It looked well maintained (grounds and structure).
- There was an elementary school. Not sure where the Jr & Sr High Schools are.
- School looked great – K-8.
- School looked very nice, well maintained.

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

- Yes, there was information on enrollment and other necessary information.

8. Childcare

What childcare service are available? Is it affordable?

- I did not notice any childcare facilities.
- Did not see active day care.
- Did not see any.
- Didn't see any.

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?

- I saw the following churches. St Paul's United Church of Christ, St Mary's Catholic Parish House, St Peter Lutheran Church.
- There were 3 churches.
- Seen 2 churches.

10. Civic

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

Did you observe any evidence of civic organization activity?

- I picked up a flyer at the gas station for a community chili cook-off.
- There is a group of people restoring the depot. We visited with Mrs. Wenz and she told us about the depot project.
- Public playground.

11. Public Infrastructure

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

- Most of the roads were good roads. Most seemed to be concrete and not asphalt or rock overlay. Sidewalks seemed to be in good condition. We were there in the daytime so I'm not sure about street lights. They had various signs around town telling you where certain things were located.
- Curb and guttering around town. Ample parking downtown. Had an information sign (electric), flowers and benches on main street. Very wide downtown main street. Parking on both sides and in the center.
- Streets in good shape. Plenty of parking.
- Everything was very impressive. The streets are definitely in good condition.

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

- Stopped by the city office and they were very helpful. There is a police department and they had a book exchange box in front of the city office. They had information on housing, etc.
- Saturday, not open.

Police/fire protection:

- Nice building facilities.
- There was a police vehicle in front of city hall. Fire department was several blocks away, possibly both rural and city.

Library:

- Had a book exchange box.

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

- Good sports complex on the east side of town and a nice little park with a splash pad.
- Beautiful little playground with a splash park. Restrooms were closed for the winter. There was a baseball diamond east of town. The tennis court needed maintenance.
- Nice sports complex – ball field and tennis courts.

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?

-Slogan: *A little city with a lot of pride.*

-The depot had a picnic with live entertainment. Sounds like they want to make it an annual event. Their slogan was on their entrance sign, "A little city with lots of pride."

-They have a nice slogan.

-Sign – Little city with lots of pride – catchy!

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

-I mentioned the flyer for the chili cook off but I didn't see anything else.

-The depot picnic sounded interesting.

-No

-A Halloween event – Boo Bash & Chili Cook-off

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).

-Not that I was aware of.

-Their railroad history. The trains turned around at Holyrood. The restored train depot.

-Ball park, tennis court and children's playground.

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.

-I didn't see any.

-We stopped at the city office.

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

-The only place of business was the gas station quick shop but I did find it interesting they had a fried bologna sandwich on the menu. That is pretty unique.

-The convenience store served meals & is located on the highway. The bar & grill was closed when we were there.

-No

13. Wrap-up

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

-Nice looking houses and very nice well-kept streets.

-It was clean and well-kept. The school looked pretty new and Plum Creek Apartments looked new. They had a fire department and I saw an ambulance barn but not sure if it was used.

-Streets were in good shape and repair.

What are the biggest obstacles/challenges facing this community?

-Lack of downtown business or business as a whole and job opportunities.

-Probably the same things all small towns face. No grocery store & keeping businesses in town.
No overnight facilities (hotel/motel).

-Close to larger town which provides better shopping and eateries.

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

-Nice streets and their park and splash pad.

-The children's playground and splash park.

-Well maintained streets and nicely maintained houses for the most part.



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