

First Impressions

Compiled Report Form



Community Visited: Kinsley

Date(s) Visited: a) 5/6/18 (Sun.)
b) 6/9/18 (Sat.)
c) 8/24/18 (Fri.)

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. Found eating places easily. Also checked out the <https://www.kinsleyks.com/visitors/what-to-see-do>
- b. Spent relatively little pre-visit research time on web. Nothing very notable one way or another.
- c. Website had information easily accessible. But I question how up to date the website is. The News and News Updates on the right side were from 2015 and 2016.

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 smaller community similar to ours. Lots of nicer houses, next to not so nicer properties. Lots of historic properties that could use work as well. Downtown wasn't what I was expecting... one way. Very rural on one end, Industrial on the other, Lots of downed trees from an old storm perhaps?
- b. Interesting town, residential neighborhoods looked really pleasant. Medical facilities looked new, school looked tired. Appears that major employers are government-related. Liked brick streets. Main downtown street (6th?) looked depressed.
- c. Midway USA huge on the water tower.

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. Theatre, Newspaper, Antiques, College offices-NICE! Quilt shop, drug store, Auto parts, Thrift, HVAC, Attorney, Salon, Photography, Distillery-Pretty cool!! Youth center-AWESOME! Lots of offices, some did look vacant though. Weren't able to shop, our fault, went on Sunday. Grocery store for a snack and drink, very hometown feeling. Good!

- b. Entrance from 50 had nothing to motivate me to explore the town further, unremarkable buildings, and businesses. Did go into grocery store. Small but seemed to be well stocked with daily needs. Meat and produce looked fresh and good. Did not check out the only dining facility I saw (deli).
- c. Great infrastructure, lots of empty buildings, cute pocket parks, lots of possibilities. Quilt shop, thrift store, antiques, photography, handyman, parts store, KSRE, Farm Bureau, movie theater, Furniture store. Went into the thrift store, very polite volunteer. She talked about how PRIDE ran the thrift store and about “Actions for Alex.” She said Actions for Alex volunteers painted houses.

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. Did not notice a Wi-Fi spot, or benches right on main. But could have overlooked them? Parking appeared to be no problem.
- b. In my opinion the downtown was a disappointment. Nice infrastructure of old buildings but appeared to have an extraordinary high vacancy rate, yes, saw a few small businesses (parts store, etc.) and a theater (which was not inviting if even open). But downtown seemed a drag to the rest of town. Did not notice any. Generally nice infrastructure throughout – residential, medical, downtown buildings, etc. No issue parking anywhere – few people or cars there.
- c. Did not notice any downtown amenities. Easy to find parking barely any cars around at all.

3. Other Retail Shopping Areas

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

- a. Grocery Store, cute small store. Parking was limited or... It is well shopped!)
- b. Maybe I missed it. Saw grocery store, deli, parts store, and not much else. Even the car dealership (Ford) looks long closed.
- c. Didn't notice any.

4. Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas

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

- a. The west side of town looks pretty industrial and room to grow.
- b. Did not see/find. Maybe missed it.
- c. I never really saw an industrial park area.

5. Health Care Services

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

- a. Modernized Hospital, Family Care practice
- b. From outside looked very impressive. Newer hospital and clinic (and I think long term care). Noticed the hospital listed 2 doctors and 2-3 NPs/ RNs. Do not know hospital's reputation or success. But liked what I saw.
- c. Facilities looked new. Based on appearance alone I would say they are doing well.

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

- a. Condition of the Health center looked good. Not sure what all providers there were. Optometrists closer to downtown, building looked well maintained.
- b. Appeared very good.
- c. Appeared to have health care covered.

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

- a. MedicalLodges looked really nice as far as long term options, we did not go inside.
- b. Long term care facility looked new and good. No idea of reputation and occupancy rate.
- c. Noticed one looked fairly new.

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 seem to be a lot of older, possibly abandoned homes in close proximity to very nice, maintained homes. This for me detracts from the neighborhood value.
- b. A major strong point on my impressions appeared to have wide variety of homes. Housing – Had greater than normal “stately” homes, as well as a wide selection at different levels. A notable percent of the larger homes seemed to need significant maintenance. Pleasant tree lined streets. Overall pretty appealing (would be inviting to people wanting to restore).
- c. Seemed like there were more nice or average homes than there were homes in poor condition. Lots of homes with well-manicured yards or landscaping.

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

- a. I saw two signs in yards, one for rent and one for sale.
- b. Rental – Only saw 1 apartment building (I think low income). From outside looked rather old and tired. Did not know reputation or interior.
- c. I didn't notice any rentals.

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. JR/SR High right in Kinsley, no grade school. The old grade school appeared to have been converted to a living space; that was pretty neat.
- b. From outside looked rather old and tired. Did not know reputation or interior.
- c. Old school building with nice landscaping.

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

- a. NA
- b. NA
- c. I was not able to find any.

8. Childcare

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

- a. I searched for childcare online and found three daycares via childcarecenter.us/Kansas_homecare/kinsley_ks_city
I did not inquire about rates.
- b. Do not know.
- c. Unsure.

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. I feel like we saw a bunch of churches, they all seemed to be well maintained. I am sure they have lots of community sponsored activities but I did not see that physically (signs etc.)
- b. Saw a few churches, not as many as expected.
- c. Multiple Churches, did not notice any direct ties from the churches to community service.

10. Civic

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

- a. According to Yelp, they have 10 different Nonprofits. Sorry, I did not encounter or search out any on our visit.
- b. Do not know.
- c. Pride and Actions for Alex probably a Rotary club too I might have missed their sign. I saw the PRIDE committee at work in the Thrift Store.

11. Public Infrastructure

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

- a. Some of the sidewalks looked very nice in some areas.
- b. What I noticed was basically okay. Did not see much that would direct or invite or interest many to leave the highway and come into town.
- c. Streets seemed fine, a good amount of trees lining the streets in residential areas, and most houses had some sort of landscaping.

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

- a. NA
- b. Not observed
- c. Did not stop in the city hall. I honestly don't even remember seeing it.

Police/fire protection:

- a. They have a firehouse, I am assuming its volunteer like ours. Police station right next to post office and city hall.
- b. Not observed. Drove around town for two hours and did not see a police car.
- c. Didn't even see police car while in town for a couple hours.

Library:

- a. I didn't see it, but I googled to see if they had one, and found the address. Love that, every community needs a library.
- b. Did not see.
- c. Did not see.

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

- a. Saw several playgrounds.
- b. Did not observe
- c. Two typical parks, two pocket parks downtown and a rest area.

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. Halfway between San Francisco and NYC.
- b. Did not see.
- c. Not Sure. I believe the community slogan is "Midway USA"

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

- a. No, in fact we were followed (it seemed) by two sheriff deputies towards the end of our cruising around town. We were close to leaving at that point, haha.
- b. No.
- c. I did not.

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

- a. Saw signs for camping, museum, etc.
- b. No, unfortunately didn't see.
- c. They have a couple museums one is about carnivals but I couldn't tell if it was still open. The other looked like your typical Kansas Heritage type museum.

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. NA
- b. No.
- c. Does a rest area count as a visitor's center?

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

- a. Heard good things about the restaurant near the east edge of town, would eat there in the future.
- b. No, other than maybe the healthcare.
- c. Not really, I didn't see even a café to eat at just a deli. I am a sucker for small town cafes and typical hole in the wall restaurants, but I didn't notice one.

13. Wrap-up

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

- a. Small town feel, kids playing. People out working in yards.
- b. Nice residential neighborhoods – appealing. Wide variety of housing – sizes, styles, etc. Impressive looking healthcare facilities. Downtown building infrastructure is appealing and has possibilities, but nobody's home! Acceptable grocery store.
- c. Willing volunteers, there is a great sense of community here.

What are the biggest obstacles/challenges facing this community?

- a. Growth, Neighborhoods needing fixer uppers fixed up or demolished.
- b. The downtown is discouraging for first impressions. Likely would be the possible deal breaker for me, no reason to go there. Having only one public restaurant (that I saw). Seems pretty inadequate for residents.
- c. Empty buildings trying to fill some of the buildings and keeping the business you do have going.

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

- a. The Midway Point! Pretty Neat.
- b. Positive: Nice neighborhoods, appears to have good healthcare facilities. Negative: The Downtown, what happened?! Appears to have once had vitality but has none now. Even understanding that this community is relatively near to other major, larger towns, even a “bedroom community” can/should do a little better in my opinion. My impressions were certainly mixed. Overall, if I had to summarize in one word, that word would be “potential.” A lot of the basics are (and, I think were in the past) there. The infrastructure is there — both in neighborhoods and downtown. The pleasant residential neighborhood and housing opportunities are there. The town is well-located within driving distance of larger towns — both good and not-so-good implications in that. The healthcare facilities are there. I just did not pick up a first impression of much vitality. What seems to be missing (in my VERY subjective opinion) is: Investment money or interest or enthusiasm to re-invigorate the community. But, obviously I do not know the history of what they’ve tried or details of what they are doing now — or even whether anyone there would agree with my first impressions. I certainly like the town and enjoyed seeing it. I very much wish them well.
- c. Empty buildings: trying to fill some of the buildings and keeping the business you do have going.

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