

First Impressions

Team Report Form



Community Visited: **Minneola, KS**

Date Visited: **10/06/20 (x2)**
10/29/20

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?
 - Quite a bit of information online found about the community: found information about Kangaroo Daycare, Minneola Den, Minneola Recreation, Minneola Wellness Center
 - The city website did not pop up when I Googled "Minneola KS." Going to their Facebook page and clicking on their website did not open. www.minneolakansas.com is not a valid site listed on the city's Facebook page. It should be changed to .org. Once the website was found it was very easy to navigate and very attractive.
2. **The "Five-Minute" Impression:** After taking a five-minute drive through the community without stopping, the following reactions were noted.
 - There are a lot of mobile homes. Streets are well maintained. Main Street is busy, trash is picked up in alleys. A lot of vehicles parked on streets off Main. Steep dips between streets. Old style water tower.
 - The city is very clean. A lot of nice homes. Streets are well kept and downtown appears busy.
 - This is a beautiful community. Very well kept and clean yard for the most part (all communities have some undesirable yards).

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

- Four major entrances, all with Minneola sunflower signage. The town is surrounded by agricultural fields. Entering from the east or west you can immediately see the large Co-Op, motel, gas station, police presence. The town is also surrounded by wind turbines.
- Noticed the welcome signs at all entrances. Many buildings observed while entering town.
- Love their "Minneola" signs at all four entrances to town. The Curve Motel gave me a great first impression to the town as it was clean and visually attractive.

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

- Downtown is the busy part of town. There were some empty storefronts. Grassy areas well manicured. Digital sign on north end of Main Street provided information on things coming up in town. Good lighting in this part of town.
- Most buildings are occupied, though there are a few that are empty. The hospital seems to be new.
- Everything you need is conveniently located within 3 blocks. Really liked the “older” signs still in use. For a traveler, some of the signs on the businesses were a bit small and we didn’t notice them right away. Had to go through a few times to see what was available.

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

- Noticed a grocery store, city hall, community center, hospital, library, pharmacy, and a bank. Grocery store had a good variety of basics and specialty foods. Pharmacy had basics you’d need and homemade jelly. The food was good at the Mexican restaurant.
- Saw a bank, city hall, market, hospital, clinic, pharmacy, insurance building, church, funeral home, and apartments.
- The Home Town Market is amazing. Everything I would need without having to travel to a Walmart. The ladies in the meat department were very informative. We also went into the pharmacy. They had what we would need to survive. We had an amazing lunch at the Mexican restaurant.

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

- Only business we were not greeted in was the grocery store. Mexican restaurant had good service. City clerk was very friendly and even introduced herself. We were greeted right away at the Mexican restaurant and pharmacy.
- Every building we entered we were greeted. People were in good spirits.
- We were greeted by very friendly service and did not have to ask for assistance at both the market and pharmacy. The service at the Mexican restaurant was phenomenal.

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

- Trashcans available on the sidewalks. Noticed public benches.
- Plenty of public places to sit and trash cans for public use. No drinking fountains (COVID-19).

- We saw plenty of benches for people to rest. We noticed trash cans, but would suggest another one or two on each block. We didn't notice any trash around, but didn't want to have to walk the entire block to get to a trashcan if needed.
- Loved the little "park" area with the concrete tables and benches. Great gathering place.

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

- Noticed the planters on the sidewalks. Landscaping at all businesses was generally good. No difficulty finding parking. Parked on Main Street near city hall and was able to access many businesses from there.
- Lots of parking available and most everything is within walking distance of Main Street.
- Downtown was very welcoming. The person I visited town with both commented on the streetlights at the exact same time. This was the first thing we noticed when turning into the downtown area. Love the original buildings as they are very well kept and pleasing to the eye.
- Would like to see parking lines painted downtown as I was unsure whether I was supposed to park straight or at an angle. Sidewalks were very well kept, landscaping was lovely. Loved the light poles and flower pots.

4. Other Retail Shopping Areas

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

- Most retail is downtown and well kept.
- A few outside of downtown, but most is downtown.
- Did not see any other shopping areas outside of downtown.

5. Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas

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

- There appears to be an industrial area on the north side of highway 54.
- Yes, there is a defined area on the north end of town with plenty of room for expansion.
- Did not notice a specific industrial area.

6. Health Care Services

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

- There is a hospital with an emergency room and physical therapy on Main Street. Easy to access, well maintained from the outside. There is an EMS building north of the park.
- There is a clinic and a hospital with an emergency room.
- Appears to have everything someone would need with specialists coming in a couple times per week.

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

- Did not notice any outside of the hospital.
- There is a clinic.
- According to the city clerk, they are looking at adding additional medical office space on Main Street.

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

- Observed Minneola Long Term Care.
- They have what seems to be a very nice and large care home.
- There is a nursing home, but unsure about any assisted living facilities. There are very nice apartments for senior living.

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.)

- Very few houses for sale, which is a challenge – only 4 listed online for sale. Good variety of housing to meet appeal and low-moderate income levels.
- Not very many houses for sale, but there were neighborhoods for all walks of life.

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

- For living – rentals include apartment complex. Online search showed no rentals in Minneola, but nearby Dodge City has some. For building – there are unoccupied storefronts on Main Street that could be converted to residential rentals.
- Very few properties for rent. There are a couple commercial buildings for sale on the west end of town. Could those be made into rentals?
- There was nothing noticeable regarding homes for rent.

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?

- K-12 schools present. Adequate in size and all were well maintained from the outside.
- K-12 schools were observed.

- We read about the available K-12 schools. Their campuses are nice on the outside with adequate areas for parking, sports, etc.
Were you able to find online information in the community that helped assess the quality of the educational system?
 - We found information about the schools using Google. The high school offers a few college credit courses.
 - The school Facebook page was very helpful in providing information.
 - The school's website was easily located on Google. Their website is very informative, which would lead me to believe that there is great pride in the school. That would also lead me to believe there is great pride in the quality of education.

9. Childcare

What childcare service are available? Is it affordable?

- We saw one available childcare option, but the price was not listed online.
- Could not find any childcare services.
- We read that there is childcare available at the Methodist church, but unsure of others or affordability.

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?

- Noticed 4 churches. Did not see information online about AWANA programs, but did see vacation bible school information for 2019 online.
- Lots of churches present. Methodist, Presbyterian, community churches.
- We noticed four churches listed on the info sheet provided at the city office, and four on the website, however there appears to be five listed in the Clark County Gazette. We did notice The Den, but couldn't find any information on it.

11. Civic

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

- American Legion, Masons, Minneola Co-Op, Firemen's Relief Association.
- None noticed.

Did you observe any evidence of civic organization activity?

- Did not see any while visiting town.
- No.

12. Public Infrastructure

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

- Most streets are well maintained. Street signs are purple. Parking on the street or parking lots available and adequate. Very few street lights outside of Main Street. A mix of good/fair/bad landscaping across town with the west end seeming to be more run down.
- This is a town that takes pride in its appearance. Streets are well kept, gutters are dirty and a little overgrown, but lots of pretty landscaping.
- Some streets look like they could use some help – looks like they have been built up.
- Needs signage for the market and schools on the highway. Current Home Town Market sign is on a side street.
- Liked the purple street signs.

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

- City clerk gave me a “Welcome to Minneola” list of businesses and phone numbers.
- Town hall very nice and clerk was willing to offer any help needed.
- Just from our short visit, Minneola is blessed to have Brenda and Patrick. They shared so much with us about the town, plans in the works to improve housing, traffic, etc. They were so pleasant to visit with and very knowledgeable. Brenda had a great sheet that shared info about the town. Would like to have seen childcare listed, and also information about The Den if it’s still in business.

Police/fire protection:

- Police department next door to the city hall. Fire station is one block west, but no major signage for it.
- Police department was noticeable. We believe we found the fire station, but didn’t see any signage.

Library:

- The library was observed on the north end of Main Street.
- There is a library, but we did not have a chance to go in.
- We found the library, but it wasn’t easy as the signage was not immediately visible.

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

- The park had a covered shelter, trash cans, and tables available for use. Not much else to offer.
- One park on Main Street and also play equipment at the school yard found.
- Beautiful and simple city park with a nice walking path, but no signage on the highway or downtown directing people that we could find.

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?

- None noted.
- No.
- Nothing observed.

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

- There's a 5K run. A hunter safety class at the Civic Center. A city-wide cleanup. Donut Dash at the wellness center. Health Fair at Civic Connection.
- Fall Festival
- A new Fall Festival starting this year. Very well publicized.

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 noted.
- None seen.
- The original downtown buildings.

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 hall would fit this purpose best. Nice, polite staff, facility was only open to the public at front counter, signage was good and it's on Main Street.
- City office will provide all info needed.
- The city office had information for anything in the community.

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

- None noted really.
- The grocery store and Mexican restaurant.

14. Wrap-up

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

- Good amount of available resources and services.
- The police presence.
- Well utilized Main Street district.
- How busy the town was.
- The cleanliness of the town. Definitely shows pride in ownership of the community.

What are the biggest obstacles/challenges facing this community?

- Limited housing and day care options.
- Currently, COVID-19.
- Limited new housing and lack of room for growth.

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

- More to offer than our hometown.
- The hospital.
- Main Street.
- The city infrastructure and how they are trying to improve their community.



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