First Impressions

Compiled Report Form

Community Visited: Plainville Date(s) Visited: 7/14/2016

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?

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.)

Not many street signs that tell you how to get where you want to go. There are a lot of mechanic shops. The city park looks new with a new swimming pool. The houses are well kept. Only noticed one yard with high grass, and only a couple with clutter outside the house. There were a few lots that looked like houses had been torn down. The town looked very clean and kept.

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?) 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?

The sidewalks were all even and clear of clutter. There are several empty buildings.

I stopped in the Alta Convenience store when I got to town and made a purchase and used the restroom. The ladies working were very friendly and chatted. The store was clean.

The Do-It-Best hardware store has everything you could want for a house, including TVs and appliances, kitchenware, etc. It did not have furniture, but there is a furniture store next door. I browsed. The employee asked me if he could help me.

The drug store is small and tidy. It has a few gift items and a small selection of home health care items and over the counter medicines. It also had a section of essential oils and natural items. (I noticed this because it is my form of medication.) The employee did ask if she could help us.

The grocery store was very nice inside. They stock a very nice selection of items in the freezers and shelves. The prices are very comparable to what we pay in Oberlin. The store had an overall clean appearance and staff were stocking and cleaning.

As the community is small, it is quite feasible (for someone of middle age and in good health) to park somewhere on the main street or the grocery store and walk to the other businesses.

1. Other Retail Shopping Areas

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

There are several stores in the community. All appeared well kept and easy access. There was one business on the main business street that had no name as to what it was or any indication as to what type of business it was. It left us with all kinds of questions, as we saw three people in the place, and one had a big suitcase.

4. Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas

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

The industrial park/commercial area stands out. It could use some tidying up or fences to obstruct the views.

5. Health Care Services

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

The hospital has a well-kept and nice looking campus. They are expanding the facility and have several different types of specialists that visit from larger hospitals. My grandma has seen an ortho there with her broken ankle. The staff are very friendly and the hospital is easy to navigate. There was no sign of where the Emergency Medical Service was located. I left Plainville wondering where the ambulance(s) and staff were housed.

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

There are both dentist and an optometrist office. Neither office looked very busy, so it had me wondering if the doctors came from Hays or another community with set days they are open in Plainville. There is also a chiropractor available. The health department is located on the hospital campus.

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

There is a nursing home and assisted living facility in the community.

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

There was one apartment complex, which appeared to be a housing authority complex. The website to Plainville lists a few people that have rental houses. There were some for sale signs in yards, but not an abundance. According to information on the internet, the average for a rental there is $350-$400. There might be the challenge of finding a rental with the necessary number of rooms and needs available. An abundance of housing with necessary accommodations may be a challenge.

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

There is a Catholic elementary school in Plainville. There is also a public elementary and high school. The junior high is also located with the high school. The campuses were very clean and well maintained in appearance. We thought they were attractive campuses. We did not see anything in print that assessed the quality of education at the schools.

1. Childcare

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

I noticed one house that appeared to be a home daycare by the amount of the same toys lined up outside it. We did not see anything that was a public daycare center. Nor did we see any signs that said there was a daycare in a residence.

1. 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?

We noticed three different churches…a Catholic church, a Methodist church, and a Baptist church. We did not see a church presence in the community.

1. Civic

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

There was an area sponsored by the Lions Club in the park. That is the only area we noticed that was sponsored by an organization.

1. Public Infrastructure

Comment in general on the streets, street signage, sidewalks, parking, lighting, restrooms, landscaping, and streetscapes in areas other than downtown. Did you observe land-use planning?

The streets were well kept. No debris in them and there had been a bad storm come through the morning before. The sidewalks appeared to be in good shape. There was ample parking for businesses. Street signage is adequate. Directional signage was lacking. There was a business in the process of being constructed on the highway. It appeared to agricultural, but there was no signage as to what was being constructed.

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

Police/fire protection:

The police department and fire department are located on the main business street in Plainville. There was a picture on the city’s website showing all the fire department members. They seem to have quite a few volunteers. The sheriff’s department is located in Stockton. We were unable to locate where the EMS (ambulance) barn might be located.

Library:

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

There is a very nice looking park in Plainville. It looks like the park received new playground equipment in recent years. The pool looks relatively new also. There are unique benches for sitting in the park.

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? Did you see any indication of significant events taking place in the community that would be of interest to both visitors and residents? Elaborate on any significant natural or manmade features that have the potential of drawing people to the community.

I did not notice that there was any particular attraction or event held in Plainville. There is Plainville Township Lake in Rooks County that may give visitors something to do in the summer months. That knowledge came from googling on the internet the closest lake to Plainville.

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 do not recall seeing a sign for the Chamber of Commerce as to know which building it would have been in.

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

We did have lunch at the local bar and grill. It was very well priced. The staff was courteous and attentive to service. I think I would visit again and take my son to the pool, make a day trip for mommy & son time.

13. Wrap-up

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

Most all the people were friendly. The shops were clean and welcoming. It was a community that I could seriously consider moving to.

What are the biggest obstacles/challenges facing this community?

I could foresee that affordable and adequate housing could be a possible problem in the future. Hays is just twenty or so miles away and I could see people moving to Plainville and commuting to Hays for work just to live in a quieter community and not pay the higher property taxes they are in Hays.

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

In six months I will remember that school campus was well kept and the sidewalks are even and not broken up. I will remember if I want a good burger, to go to the bar and grill. I can get some essential oils at the drug store. And that there is a local Lions Club.

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