

# First Impressions

## Team Report Form



Community Visited: **El Dorado**

Date Visited: Thursday 9-7-23 (2)

Wednesday, 9-20-23 (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?**

- The city page popped up first in my search. The chamber was #5, and I did not see a CVB or tourism page tied to the city. I found the CVB page on the city website.
- I liked the city webpage and found it useful.
- EDC, Chamber, and Main Street need to bump their presence to ensure their pages are readily available and higher on the search list.
- It was really easy to find all the information I wanted about El Dorado. I really loved your city page and the video about your community. Everything I saw on the page was up to date.
- I looked at Facebook and their website. They had many resources if you were a new resident and gave not only things to do but contact information for many services and resources.
- Visited the City webpage. The visitor guide link is broken on this page - <https://www.eldoks.com/226/Must-See-Spots>.
- No addresses on the website under Must See Listings – makes it hard to go explore the stores.
- EXPERIENCE EL DORADO site was NOT easy to find in the city site – it should be themed together or at least “the place to go” for visitors. Make it easy for a visitor to Experience. You should have links to that page ALL OVER – it’s not even under your Experience El Do page on the city site.
- The Main Street site needs LOTS of work.
- Your trails should connect to your parks page – entice people to explore your parks because of your trails.

**2. 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.)**

- I liked the nice entrance signs from the west and saw all the businesses and fast-food restaurants as you came into town. I drove by the hospital, downtown area, and courthouse. All looked welcoming and nice.
- All of the neighborhoods I drove through were well-kept and maintained. There were just a few spots around town that had some weeds/overgrown. The downtown area was full of life and had different shops to meet anyone’s needs. There are several parks with playgrounds for kids; I saw a lot of people out walking and enjoying the day. Up-to-date sporting facilities and schools. There is a college that was welcoming to visitors. Overall, my impression of El Dorado is that it would be a great town to raise a family.

- When I did find wayfinding signs, I thought the signs could use refreshing.
- The other entrances were not as welcoming as the west; they didn't have the welcome monument.
- I love the main entrance sign coming into town off of 254. The flowers you all have down your main street and around the courthouse were so beautiful; I'm jealous we don't have them in Great Bend. There were a few places that were overgrown around town, but for the most part, it was a very well-kept town.
- I thought the "main drag" was set up very well and really showed off for El Dorado. You could tell where the city had expanded in the past along the highway, and once you got into town, you could see the roots of the town.
- Coming in from the west, there was a hotel with a detention pond in front of it. It was overgrown, and the water was mossy. Cleaning that up would really dress it up. The other entrances were good as well. It seemed like everything was kept tidy and mowed at these entrances.
- The first thing I noticed was the weeds at all the intersections as you come in. Easily fixed to clean that up, but they were everywhere.
- In my five-minute drive, I decided to go through the college, too, but turned west at that intersection and ended up going in the back entrance first. I felt very lost driving around the back end of the college. I think wayfinding signs for where to "enter" the college would be a wonderful improvement. Once I turned around and FOUND the big front entrance, I noticed how welcoming it was, but seeing the back side first made me feel confused.
- I noticed on the East entrance sign your theme, "Well Refined Living" but didn't really see that anywhere else. (I like Experience El Dorado better)
- Some turning lane paint was very faded, I almost missed my turning lane more than once.
- The majority of your residential yards are well kept, and even the more "run down" houses seemed to have maintained yards.
- Your city hall is difficult to find.
- LOVED YOUR HANGING PLANTS AND BRIDGES
- Loved your Butler Welcome banners.
- It was impossible to find your high school without Googling – it seemed like we were going out of town.

**3. 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?)**

- At first glance, the downtown area is clean and inviting. The blend from the courthouse to the downtown area and then to the City/Chamber intersection is a great part of your town, ending with the Oil Museum and the park areas.
- I didn't see very many wayfinding signs, but there were a few.
- There were several vacant buildings downtown, but all the buildings looked to be in good shape. Your courthouse is beautiful and the grounds around it.
- We stumbled upon the Art Museum, the lady was very knowledgeable about all the exhibits and the building's history. The only thing is from outside you don't know that it is a museum.

- We walked your whole main street and shopped in a lot of businesses, everyone was very friendly, greeted us, asked why we were in town, and made suggestions on other places to go and visit.
- We saw Law Offices, Realtors, professional, and a few retail shops in the area we stopped. We also ate downtown.
- You have a very wide range of stores. Numerous eating establishments to clothing stores. I loved that your thrift store is all volunteers, and some of the proceeds go to helping young mothers and babies. Walter's Flower Shop was so beautiful, I noticed that you don't have any major retailers downtown.
- Trunk2Treasures had a wide range of clothing. I loved how they bring a line of clothing from another country and that money goes back to help that community.
- We ate at Willie's sports bar and visited the staff about the community. They were positive about it but did not go into much detail.
- Customer service was excellent! Everyone greeted us and asked if we needed assistance and gave us suggestions on places to eat or "must stops" as far as shopping.
- We were able to park downtown and walk around, we started at the courthouse, which I thought was really cool. I think they could fix a lot of sidewalks around this area as they had been ground down previously, which would greatly reduce liability, but they could use some work. There was a lot of vegetation and plants that were grown up around the district court building and you could not read the signage.
- It was mainly attorneys, insurance, vacant buildings, with a few clothing shops. A more diverse shopping experience would go a long way in helping the downtown area and get people walking downtown.
- The customer service was very good in the businesses, we asked questions about the area and were given good answers on what to do while we were in town.
- Cute downtown but lots of empty space.
- Some broken windows and inappropriate markings in the dirt on windows of abandoned buildings (see window downtown next to the "Next to Nowhere" window – I didn't include pic of the inappropriate window).
- I felt very safe in your downtown.
- It was easy to cross your streets.
- I noticed your benches and trash cans, they look very nice.
- The museum downtown NEEDS a sign naming what it is – we would have never noticed it if we didn't walk right by and see the little signs under the horses. It was unique and a very wonderful facility – the staff person was FANTASTIC!
- No major retail stores downtown – it would be great to get a Maurices or Browns Shoe or something downtown to pull a new draw to the area however I do like that its small town retail (mom and pop stores) it was unique and different.
- Was instantly interested in the flower shop, the coffee shop and noticed you have several service stores (like investment businesses), that makes it hard to create a retail/hang-out hub if lots of businesses like that go in.
- NO nightlife locations – I wondered where the college kids go or where a bachelorette party goes for drinks.
- Not a lot of eating establishments – enjoyed the coffee shop and the Mexican restaurant though!
- My first stop in town was a gas station and the man was friendly as I bought lottery tickets, but when I asked what was there fun to do. He smiled and said, "Well our Gold Fest is this weekend

but I'm not sure if there are any pre-events." (At least he didn't smile and say there is NOTHING to do.)

- I was greeted in the coffee shop downtown, but I did have to ask to "find out what there was to do." The staff there smiled at each other also (we know all about this in our town), but NOT ONE person said, "There's nothing to do." They suggested some other shops down the way to explore.
- The retail worker in a clothing store was very friendly but followed us to the back as we "shopped," almost like she was watching us.
- The retail worker in Robins was SOOOOO nice. She not only recommended items but also chatted with us about what we were doing and what we were up to and made suggestions. She does a WONDERFUL job. She was not the owner because she mentioned that the owner had just left when we said we liked the unique and fun items and shoes they had.
- The ladies in the used clothing store were very proud of the building, the mission, and their products. It was a charming store with charming volunteers – a great experience!
- The man in the Cigar shop was very engaging and helpful and explained things – what a great specialty store
- Retailer sold EL DORADO STUFF! Loved that!

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

- Downtown had several benches, and I saw public restrooms in the parks. There are numerous trash cans throughout the town. I didn't see any drinking fountains or wi-fi.
- I did not notice many public amenities unless they were specifically located in a park area.
- Downtown benches and trashcans were visible.
- I only saw one public restroom; that was in a park as I drove north on the "main street"
- No water fountains and no public Wi-Fi posted.

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

- There was no problem finding parking at the five areas we stopped. The sidewalks and public areas were clean and inviting. The Chamber area seemed isolated from the rest of the downtown area.
- There was plenty of parking downtown, and I saw a sign with an arrow to more public parking. From where we parked by Walters, several services were available within walking distance, including clothing, food, coffee, insurance, and hair/nail salons.
- The landscaping was good in some areas and overgrown in other areas. Specifically related to the district court building, it was overgrown. In front of the courthouse was looking good where the flowers were planted.
- Parking was very easy, it made me want to walk a little to shop around.
- LOVE LOVE LOVE the hanging plants and bridges.

#### **4. Other Retail Shopping Areas**

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

- We noticed a mix of strip stores and retail mixed in with the fast-food areas when entering from the West. Very similar retail to our town. We do not have a Smoothie King.
- When you first came into town, there were areas where you would be able to shop, such as Sutherlands. Once you started going north on Main Street, shopping seemed to die down.
- Very easy to access. I really enjoyed explaining the retailers downtown. I felt like it was really easy to shop at Bomgard's, loved your used bookstore (was kind of strange there was no staff up front and no signage that said "our volunteers/workers are in the back, please ring bell"), Walmart was easy to access.
- You have great dining options, and I'm jealous of your Jimmy's Egg, Smoothie King, and Hog Wild Pit BBQ!

#### **5. Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas Is there a defined area where manufacturing industries could easily locate/expand? If so, describe.**

- The large refinery area was impressive, and I am sure is a major positive for the community. My research showed that the largest industries in El Dorado are Educational Services, Health Care & Social Assistance, and Accommodations and Food Service. I am sure there is more industry and room to grow if needed.
- YES!! Your Industrial Park is amazing. There is so much room to grow other businesses and it was very well-kept and maintained. I loved the signs as you entered the area.
- There was Magellan on the southwest corner of town; it seemed to have an area to expand to the west.
- Loved the industrial park entrance signs.
- It was easy to drive through and observe the area, and it clearly had room for growth.
- You could also see this area from the Turnpike, and it looked as if El Dorado was proud to have the industry!
- I didn't go look at the "gas plant" or industry south of town past Butler. I meant to go out and explore since I could see it from town, but I forgot to return and make it out that way.

#### **6. Health Care Services**

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

- The hospital complex looked nice and updated, and the adjoining buildings seemed busy as well. It did look like there was room to expand and grow.
- We have actually spent time in your hospital; our son had an injury while playing in a sporting tournament there. The quality of care that we received was amazing, the technology was up to date, and the staff went above and beyond our expectations.
- I thought the healthcare facilities on Central Avenue looked very nice. Having everything in one place is convenient. The Fire Station, hooked up to City Hall, also looked nice. I assume they provide EMS services as well.
- Noticed your hospital and urgent care and kidney care right away.
- Easily found your county emergency services location.
- Could not find your Health Department or any kind of pregnancy services.
- I only saw one assisted living facility – I didn't see a nursing home – if I were looking to relocate and to be able to place my mother and live in town – that wouldn't have been easy.

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

- Did not see this firsthand and readily on our drive-through and visit.
- I noticed a few dentist offices around town but not very many physician offices. I noticed online that many are located in the hospital.
- I do not remember seeing any of these services on our trip and after researching where they were, I do not remember seeing them.
- The hospital wasn't brand new, but it was very well kept, in the center of town, and had nice facilities. I also noticed the Cancer Center. I didn't see a dentist's office or eye doctor.

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

- A web search showed El Dorado to be well-served in both areas.
- I noticed a few senior living centers that looked new/built in within the last 15 years. I also noticed a resource center on Main Street for assisted living.
- I saw a few of the assisted living facilities, specifically as you were headed out to the state park, and they looked nice.
- There was a storefront location downtown that might have been connected to an assisted living facility, but I couldn't quite tell. I noticed no nursing homes and could only find one assisted 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 regard to finding acceptable housing? (Neighborhoods, size, properties for sale, etc.)**

- We noticed some new construction around the Golf Course and new infill construction south of the swimming pool area. There was a mix of properties and homes available. It seemed like there were more rentals, and I am sure this is because of the college. Housing is a common problem, but they did seem to have areas to develop.
- There was a wide variety of housing options available. It didn't seem like many houses were for sale in town.
- You have a lot of apartment complexes. As a mom with a kid getting ready to leave for college in a couple of years, that was nice to see so they didn't have to stay in dorms or have to deal with everything that comes along with renting a house.
- For the most part, all your neighborhoods looked well-kept. Even in lower-income neighborhoods, your citizens seem to take pride in their properties.
- When driving through the neighborhoods, it seemed like a good mix of different housing for income wages. It seemed the nice houses were on the north side of town by the schools as that was the newer side, but also down south, where there seemed to be a few new houses. Some of the houses look like they had been neglected for a while once you got off the beaten path. This seems to be true in every town though.
- El Dorado has a great amount of apartments I seemed to see them everywhere and all through town!
- It's hard to find a house for sale. I actually only saw two, and they were within two blocks of each other.
- A city staff person recommended a realtor, but it wasn't easy to find companies tied to the town. Buying a house wasn't easy to just start (it could be the market right now, too), but I would say it was a downfall not knowing where to go.

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

- Probably thin in this area as most rentals seemed to be older from my view, again just like housing, this is a common problem for all.
- I didn't observe any homes for rent, but I noticed a few apartments for rent. All the apartment complexes looked to be well-kept and up-to-date.
- When we visited city hall and the chamber of commerce, I didn't see many rental properties, and we couldn't get much information.
- LOTS of apartments!
- Realtors were a little hard to find unless you really looked. I noticed a realtor downtown much later in the day, I'm not sure why I didn't notice as I was exploring the first time through.
- It might be hard to find a house for a family with kids in school in El Dorado

**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?**

- We noticed at least four newer campuses, but they all seemed to be located at the North end of town. Research said there were seven campuses in total. The schools we saw looked newer and nice, but I was surprised with their location within the community.
- I saw a Head Start downtown and two elementary schools that looked recently built. It took a while for me to find the High School, I had to look it up. It was funny because I didn't even know that was a part of town. All the schools were well-kept and maintained; they had room on their grounds to expand if they needed to without having to move and rebuild again.
- I noticed that one of the old schools was turned into a local church. Was glad to see the building being used instead of left to rot away.
- The schools were located on the north side of town and seemed to be newer and very nice. I don't know that it was convenient to be so far located north but that could have been the only area to relocate. The area around the schools seemed to be maintained nice as well.
- Noticed a Head Start.
- I easily found the south side Elementary School. It's a big school with a beautiful design and a well-kept yard! It looks safe, healthy, and huge!
- The private school looked only like a church at first, but I figured it out once I drove closer, it didn't have a big "welcome" or anything, so I wouldn't have known which door to go in if I wanted to inquire about the school system.
- VERY VERY VERY hard to find the High School.
- Entrances at the college or wayfinding the block prior would be helpful (college and for other schools from the main streets).
- There were families biking around the schools – charming addition.

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

- Unfortunately, the online information I found gave less than flattering reviews of the school system. They ranked low statewide.
- I looked up the School District's website and looked around. It appears that you have a great quality of education in town, and their Facebook page was up to date as well.

- After an online review, the school system seemed to be ranked lower in the state than where I thought it would be. From rankings, the mathematics, reading, and science scores seemed below average compared to the rest of the state, with an 88% graduation rate.
- When searching online for the school system, the El Dorado did have a fairly reputable system because of the positive feedback from students and parents regarding the school, however the “locations” of each school, were really hard to find online.

## 9. Childcare

### **What childcare services are available? Is it affordable?**

- I didn’t notice any childcare services around town, except for the Head Start downtown. I searched online and called a couple, and it seemed very affordable for families with little ones.
- From an online search, it looked to have around 23 daycares and averaging just over \$100/week. They seemed to be more home daycares rather than a daycare center.
- Only saw the Head Start program but looked up and found El Do Childcare Center and Kindercare learning center. Wasn’t easy to find in person.

## 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?**

- I counted at least seven different denominations; I saw a few flyers downtown for services available. All of the places of worship were well-kept and maintained.
- There were a number of churches and they looked very nice. Many were along Central Avenue. We also saw several when making our way through neighborhoods that gave several choices.
- A really great variety of religious services and activities!
- I noticed a refurbished school that was turned into a church of some type. Looked like it needed to have yard maintenance didn’t seem very welcoming.
- I wondered what the downtown banners were “I AM, WE ARE LOVED,” which we saw all over but couldn’t tell what religious organization or group they belonged to. Very consistent message but had no idea what it meant – asked several people downtown and nobody knew.

## 11. Civic

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

- Web search listed 17: United Way, El Dorado Charities Auxiliary, and Heartstrings Animal Advocates were the first three that came up individually when searching non-profits.
- I noticed a VFW, Flint Hills Services, there was a table topper for Big Brothers Big Sisters at the coffee shop on main.
- We noticed a sign posted in many vacant and occupied storefronts, but there was no further explanation or identifying agency claiming them.
- Just the thrift store downtown.
- I did not notice any organizations when we were going through town other than a banner that was in several businesses that said “I am/you are loved.” I did not understand the banner being from the outside and it did not point out who it was from or more information about it.
- Only noticed Big Brothers Big Sisters because of a Table tent and the VFW downtown.



- The VFW downtown looked active from outside – cars and people going in and out for some type of set up.
- Boutique downtown that supported women in need was very active and proud – citizens bragged about that in other stores too.

## **12. Public Infrastructure**

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

- For the most part, the city infrastructure seemed up to par with other cities. We were there in the daytime, so we were not aware of lighting. The downtown area and City amenities seemed neat and well-kept. As stated earlier, I am sure you would all want an upgraded pool if the budget allowed, as well as new and better wayfinding signs.
- In general, El Dorado is a very well-kept, clean community. I didn't notice any major street problems; with the exception of the dirt road I took to get to your swimming pool. Street signs were all there, and sidewalks were well-kept. A lot of parking.
- I thought the sidewalks could use some work downtown as they had been ground down before and could cause liability issues. The streets did not seem in too bad of shape until you got off the main streets; then there were noticeable potholes around town. Landscaping, I think, could be controlled a little better, but for the most part, it was well-kept. The cemetery seemed to be well-kept around the graves, but the worst-looking was around the office/shop, which is where it should never have happened.
- I found it difficult to find things in town.
- Several turning lanes and lines really need to be painted in the streets.
- Would be nice to see where Butler's main entrance was, because we turned early.
- City Hall wasn't easy to find.
- Love your water tower.

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

- We stopped by City Hall and asked about rentals and realtors and were given good advice. The information on display was timely and helpful. The City Map needs to be bigger and include all the schools and the college.
- I went into city hall pretending to be looking for housing for my child who was attending the college. The lady at the front desk was very knowledgeable about who I needed talk to about housing. She suggested I go to the civic center and talk to the Chamber. She also told me about local people to talk to. I also asked her what she thought about the town; she stated that it was a very quiet, nice town to live in and that she would feel comfortable sending her daughter to live in El Dorado. She also gave me information about the town.
- I thought City Hall was a very nice facility when you walked in. The lady at the administration front desk was nice, and we asked about some rental information. She directed us to the Chamber of Commerce, but overall, she was very nice and helpful.
- I noticed that the City Hall sign needs paint to pop. City Hall and the west entrance yard of city hall really need some work – the west entrance, by the drive up, has a wonderful plant area and is very beautiful, but on the other side, the trees needed to be trimmed and yard work done.
- I would paint "CITY HALL" on the front sign BLACK so it can be seen.
- Beautiful Courthouse and yard.

**Police/fire protection:**

- The City Services compounds were impressive, while not brand new they were well kept and all departments seemed well equipped. The public works area was very nice compared to most I have seen.
- We spent a good 8 hours in town and it wasn't until about the 7th hour that I saw a police car.
- The Police and Fire buildings were also nice and seemed to very well-kept. I liked how City Hall/Police/Fire/Public Works were all in the same vicinity of each other. The public works offices seemed well kept and had very nice trucks and equipment and nicely laid out shop.
- Was looking for police and fire presence and did not see one Police or Fire vehicle until 2:15 for Fire and 3:15pm for Police. I thought that was kind of strange.
- Really beautiful fire station in the northwest part of town.

**Library:**

- They have a lot of children's programs. They bring in a lot of book signings, and I saw flyers around town for the book and bake sale.
- I did not notice the library on our trip around town, but seemed to have nice reviews according to Google.
- I'm very impressed with the library website because it shows how active and involved with the community they are. However, the pictures online are very, very small and hard to see. I did not go into the library, but it was very well maintained and taken care of.

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

- The parks and public areas I viewed seemed updated and have the necessary amenities. I was a little surprised at the age and condition of the area around the public pool.
- We did not get out in any of them, but the parks seemed upgraded and nice. The ballparks we saw were the really nice stadium by City Hall and the sports complex out by the lake, which were very dry during this hot summer.
- Your walking trail that goes into the trees with the iron bridge that goes over the river was so neat! I was surprised to see that there wasn't a sign about the trail when we turned off 54 into that little park. I wish we had a walking trail like that in Great Bend. Your football complex was state-of-the-art and beautiful! You have a variety of playgrounds located throughout the community, and they are all well-kept and maintained. I was a little surprised by the city pool, there wasn't any other water feature besides the slide, but I did like that you have a splash pad at your park.
- There were several parks around town that had updated equipment which is a plus. Their state park had a walking/bike path and the ballpark by City Hall had just gotten new turf which is a plus.
- LOVE LOVE LOVE your walking track! You need signage by that bridge to indicate the start and explanation of that trail around the river! WHAT A COOL feature! I want to go back just to walk the full thing!
- RiverView Park was nice.
- Your park with the bandshell and pool needs a little work for eye appeal – the color of the seating at the bandshell is very strange and dated, and there were a few piles of clothing on the side of it that made me go “hmmm.”
- Very nice baseball field.
- Extremely nice football complex.

### **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?**

- Stapleton #1 and the Oil Museum seem to be their claims to fame, I am sure they promote it in certain ways, but I did not notice anything extra. The Baseball Hall of Fame in proximity to the Ballpark is great. The WW2 Museum has very limited hours.
- The Gold Fest was getting ready to happen the weekend we were there.
- You have a pretty good-size lake.
- There is an Experience El Dorado Facebook page that is up-to-date with things happening in town.
- From a Facebook page, I saw that Gold Fest was happening soon. They had Aaron Watson, a big-time country artist, and I think it is huge to have a concert like that.
- I am biased to the Experience El Dorado, because it's catchy and really makes me want to look into it.
- I noticed your Well Refined Living slogan on a sign and didn't see it anywhere else.
- I think of your lake when I think of El Dorado and the Damn Music Fest and the big marching band concert you had at your football field, but I'm not sure if either of those still take place.
- Shooting range was very cool!

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

- Gold-Fest seems to be promoted online as their biggest event, but I did not see any signs of it while there. Usual events (Trick or Treat, Christmas Parade, 4<sup>th</sup> of July)
- The Gold Fest looks like a lot of fun! Your Facebook does an amazing job of promoting that event. The Farmers Market also looks like a hit.
- The Chamber of Commerce had a TV inside the office with a list of events that were happening that month. I thought that was a very nice feature.
- Gold Fest was coming up. Some flyers for it were in strange places on the downtown windows. The flyer did NOT indicate what the event was and didn't tie together, in my opinion, and they were hard to read.
- I hoped to see Butler Events around town but didn't.
- I liked the kiosk downtown with the map; adding events or a QR code to drive to the events listings or page would be an easy enhancement.

**Elaborate on any significant natural or built features that have the potential of drawing people to the community. (Public art, museums, lakes, campgrounds, regional heritage locations).**

- The lake should be a big draw in the summers, scenic Flint Hills could surely be promoted.
- I would think the main draw would be your lake, I thought that it was really neat that there was an archery and shooting range out there.
- I thought a very sad part to this community is the pool. The parking lot was in horrible shape along with the bandshell and the benches in front of it. The pool just looked very sad, and they need to invest some money into it before it deteriorates away and they spend more money.
- The Lake of course will draw people to town!
- Your public art is fun – I liked that you had the little alleys but that should be fixed up and added to! Cool concept but not a lot to show

- YOUR COTTS MUSEUM needs to say its name on it and what it is bigger on the outside of the building – I drove by and noticed the horses but couldn't tell what it was until I walked by and saw the small signs. It was a very enjoyable place and with it being downtown that is a gem!

**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.**

- The lady at City Hall was amazing!! The Civic Center has a big open wall that would look really cool with a big mural on it, drawing people in. All the buildings' signage was great, and I knew exactly what they were.
- Where was the Main Street Office? I found them easy online (they do need work on their website), but I had NO IDEA where to find them, whether downtown or even in town.
- Do you have an Eco Devo office? I saw a sign recruiting in "lots of water usage businesses" but had no idea where to go if I was to inquire about it.
- I noticed the chamber and Civic Center—is that a convention center, or what exactly is your civic center?
- Without windows on your City Hall, Police and Civic Center – you have some great spaces to do murals on walls and spruce up a nice Welcome or artistic feature.

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

- I would definitely eat at Willie's again.
- YES!! I am already planning a trip back with my mom and sister! The Mexican place on main street had amazing margaritas, and the food didn't disappoint. I bought a few cigars for my husband; he made the comment the next time we are that way he would like to stop in there and get a few more.
- I don't know about the near future, but I thought Willie's Bar & Grill was very good food and a good atmosphere. The sale barn north of town was also a huge hit as there was a sale in town that day. Small towns don't know how valuable sale barns are to a community because they come to town and spend money. Great Bend used to have one about 15 years ago and I wish it would come back.
- I thought your cigar shop was very unique and special – I personally don't use the products but purchased a few gifts there.
- I will come back to try that walking path – I found that very special and I seriously wished I had more time to walk it and explore!

## 14. Wrap-up

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

- Busy strip with fast food and stores that fit the needs of today's residents.
- The pride that the community has! From the flowers downtown, to the local businesses' hospitality, to how well kept the community was. The people of El Dorado do love their town.
- The main drag I thought was very impressive and I hope their downtown can gain some more activity in getting businesses in the vacant buildings and it could be very nice. There was a lot of shopping and eating available on the west side of town. The refinery to the south and the detention center are huge employment drivers. The state park is also great to have that close. I thought it was a very nice town, with many attributes similar to Great Bend that I love. The number of little pocket parks was a huge plus, and it gives families several opportunities to get out and play.
- People were VERY friendly! I really enjoyed the staff person at the Art Museum! Dilly Delli staff was great, the retail staff really was wonderful. There were two ladies that were part of a writer group at the used book store and they were very friendly and asked why we were in town when we couldn't figure out that we needed to ring the bell for staff to come out.
- I am jealous of your Smoothie King, Spangles, Hog Wild and Jimmy Egg. I'm even jealous of your KFC, and Long John Silvers because we lost both of ours.
- The Dillions area is very nice in town.

### **What are the biggest obstacles/challenges facing this community?**

- Finding and keeping an identity to your downtown area, and also continuing to find money to invest in an ever-demanding public for quality-of-life projects. (Pool/Splash Pad).
- Keeping your local businesses. With Wichita being so close and the residents spending their money out of town, will it start to affect the local economy?
- I thought the biggest obstacles for El Dorado are the pool and the golf course. The pool is something that will never make you money, but is a quality of life tool. The city needs to invest more in the pool. The golf course is also in very sad shape and is a huge economic development tool that could create more opportunities for the town.
- One area that could be improved is more recreational facilities for all ages to enjoy. Also more local businesses and restaurants to shop and eat at. This could help create a vibrant and diverse community.
- I was confused at your brewery – can you go in and taste? Can you eat there? The arrow was directing us there, but the outside of the building wasn't very welcoming, and it confused me. It didn't look like a place to "hang out."
- I think you should create a "Spend the day & Experience El Dorado Itinerary" to help tell people the options in El Do and walk them through the options step by step that might get them out and about exploring the options.
  - o My suggestions include – Walking path, grabbing a coffee and muffin, shop the stores, buy a book, have lunch, catch a movie and beyond.... Some people need it spelled out for them to see there really are things to experience.
  - o I would also create incentives for the college students to shop locally. (We are working on that too).
- The El Dorado Lake sign at the north entrance is VERY FADED – needs replaced.

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

- We noticed lots of livestock trailers in town and went and watched the cattle sale at the Sale barn. El Dorado is blessed to have a livestock auction as it has impact on the community.
- The flowers!! I've told everyone since coming back just how beautiful the flowers made your downtown.
- I thought the biggest obstacles for El Dorado are the pool and the golf course. The pool is something that will never make you money, but is a quality of life tool and it needs investment. The golf course is also in very sad shape and is a huge economic development tool that could create more opportunities for the town.
- How much I really enjoyed that I got out and experienced the town! I will admit I've come to town many different times for meetings but haven't gotten out to really go explore because I wasn't sure where to go or what to do. This forced me to go really look and it was great! You should promote that walking path along Walnut River.

**How much money did you spend while you were in the city you visited? \$465.00**

*(Please include total purchases: Gas, soft drinks, food, purchases. No detail necessary.)*



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