

First Impressions

Team Report Form



Community Visited: **Grainfield, KS** Date Visited: **11/04/2023 (2)**
11/06/2023

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?

- Grainfield, KS search doesn't lead to much, mostly Facebook, no community website, so someone who doesn't have Facebook wouldn't be able to access information.
- The Gove County website was found and that has the city listed. Going to that page takes you right back to the Facebook page.
- Unable to find a city website. I did find a Facebook page, but it was not helpful. Google provided some information, but not a lot and not all accurate.

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

- Quiet town. Most houses and properties were well maintained. About 50% of the streets were paved and the rest were gravel.
- Main road was the downtown with a nice selection of businesses for a town this size.
- Surprised to see an active school in a community this size.
- Very well maintained and very clean. Not a lot of businesses, thought I had found a restaurant online, but it appeared closed when driving down main street.

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

- Small sign at the community entrance. Maybe there could be a sign on Hwy 23 as there was no signage until getting into town (main turn into town).
- No signage seen in drive through the residential area.
- The entrances to Grainfield were well marked.

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

- Very well maintained downtown with a nice variety of businesses.

- Wide sidewalks, good business signage, good/appealing window décor.
- The area was very nice, the buildings were marked appropriately, and it was easy to tell what each business was. The American Legion appeared to not be run down, like some are in small towns, it appeared to be utilized, it had an old trunk/treat sign on the window.

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

- Meraki Market/Coffee shop (breakfast, lunch on Mondays)
- Harvest Market (grocery store)
- The Feedlot, former bar/grill was vacant.
- Bank, KSU extension, locker plant
- City office, post office, community building
- Parts store.
- Insurance
- A lot for a small town!

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

- Visitors were welcomed and questions were answered everywhere. Friendly service and resourceful.
- Grocery Store was busy with another customer when I arrived, overall nice when checking out and was helpful when I asked if there was a place to get some coffee in town, he directed me across the street to a building that appeared recently renovated, but no signage.
- The coffee shop was very pleasant. The owner noticed that I wasn't from Grainfield and explained that they had just recently opened in October, so they were in the process of setting things up. She explained that her parents were the owners of the Feedlot Restaurant and that they were downsizing, so they had closed the restaurant and set up in the smaller space for the coffee shop and so that her parents could focus on catering.
- Post office, busy little place but everyone looked up and said hi as they were coming/going.

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

- Benches were throughout downtown. They were very nice and labeled with donation recognition.

- Trash bins with lids were also noted throughout downtown.
- Public restrooms were locked, the coffee shop owner let some use the facilities while there. There were trash receptacles.
- Some visitors were not able to locate any public Wi-Fi, another saw some available at the restaurant.

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

- No trouble parking, the downtown area was very accessible, and you could easily get from one end of the block to the other by walking.
- Wide sidewalks downtown.
- Planters in front of some businesses were noted for greenery.

4. Other Retail Shopping Areas

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

- Found a cute little shop, Calamity Jane in a residential area, had to google to see what it was, it was a salon, so I did not stop.
- Convenience store seemed a bit run down, not sure if this is in the city limits.
- Napa Store and Farm Supply Store were well stocked and appeared that they were busy with customers.
- Seems like all services needed were available.
- Surprised by the small grocery/convenience store to get basic items. The seasoning selection was impressive!

5. Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas

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

- The south and east parts of town seemed to be industrial/commercial, and it did appear that there would be space to locate or expand, mostly owned by agricultural industries which sometimes doesn't want to let go of property when they have it.
- Obvious area for railroad, granary, and expansion.

6. Health Care Services

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

- Satellite Healthcare Service (Bluestem) appeared to be a clinic that saw patients once or twice per week, not for sure as the sign on the door had October dates when they would be there and it wasn't open when I was there.

- Fitness Center in the community center – it was impressive!

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

- Newer signage, welcoming.
- Availability for the above is within a reasonable driving distance.

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

- Did not see any of these types of services.

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.)

- Some opportunities for building on lots looked to be available, but nothing for sale during the visit.
- The housing seemed to be mid to upper class, not a lot of lower income households. Did not see one for sale or for rent sign and was not able to find anything online. The neighborhoods looked friendly to raise a family or to retire.

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

- One rental property was listed on Facebook.
- The community triplex housing that was recently built appeared to be very nice. There was also an apartment complex very near this triplex, it appeared to be older but kept up. I could not tell if there was availability for either of these.
- There were lots on the northwest side of town, that would provide for additional building of housing. There were also some vacant lots scattered throughout town.

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?

- Wheatland Grade School – older building but looked big enough for the size of town. Large space for activities.

- There were smaller children playing at the school playground later, so not sure if they were day care children or school children. The buildings/grounds of the school were well maintained, but there didn't appear to be many vehicles, so not sure what the grades are.

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

- Some were able to access the information, but results returned were getting confused as to USD 291 and USD 292 and where the grades went to school.
- Others could not find any information online.

9. Childcare

What childcare service are available? Is it affordable?

- Found the Little Hawks daycare, but it did not seem like anyone was there, so not sure if it was open.
- Conveniently located on the same block as the school. It was a well maintained facility and playground.
- Didn't see anything online about availability 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?

- There were 2 churches, and both were well maintained. When I first found the Catholic community building, I thought it was a school, but realized later that it must be part of the church across the street.
- The United Methodist Church had a nice building, large lot and was handicap accessible.
- Well maintained cemetery – a lot of flag poles that probably look really nice when the flags are up.

11. Civic

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

- Found a sign for a hunter's breakfast on November 11th. Also found a sign for an event at the Opera House, that I had just missed from November 4th, if I had found that online I would have tried to plan my trip around that, it sounded like a fun time and I would have loved to go inside the Opera House.
- There was a large, nice American Legion building observed.

Did you observe any evidence of civic organization activity?

- Found an 8-door red station wagon with the license plate, LASTCALL or something like that, it was cool, wondered if it was a business or organization or if it was just someone that liked to have fun.
- Hops at the House Brew Fest.
- Signs were seen for a fundraiser for Gove County Match.

12. Public Infrastructure

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

- The residential areas were very kept up, not a lot of rundown yards and most even appeared to try to keep them up. The industrial areas were the same way.
- Most streets were not paved. The streets were very wide and appeared to have been recently sanded by the city crew. One thing that was interesting to me was that other than getting on to main street, there were no stop or yield signs at intersections, took some getting used to as I was driving through the streets. Even by the school there were no stop signs.
- Some of the sidewalks around the park were a little rough – crumbling and raised in spots. It might make it difficult to walk or use a wheelchair in that area.
- Limited street signage for names, so without Google, GPS, or a map app, might make it difficult to find things.

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

- The building wasn't open during visits.
- I did not go into city hall; I did peek in the window but didn't see anyone. As I was driving around town, the city employees that were working or when I met them were very friendly, their city shop at the north end of town was hidden at the end of the street but it was maintained well and was not an eyesore.

Police/fire protection:

- It appears that a state trooper lives on the northwest side of town, which is a great thing to have that presence in a community, even when off duty.
- The fire station on the main street was not open but appeared to be well taken care of and a nice facility.

Library:

- The library was closed, but the hours were posted and is open several evenings per week. There were pictures on the windows which indicated that they are active with the children.

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

- Nice large park on main street with picnic area, playground equipment, tennis court and sand volleyball (assuming there was a basketball court, but I must have missed it), public rest room which was locked.
- The ballfield on the north end of town had recent updates to the dugouts and concession/equipment building, the little park equipment was older but nice to have for the youngsters that are attending siblings ball games. Digital scoreboard observed.
- The fairgrounds were tucked away at the west end of town but appeared to be well maintained and a place for larger events.

13. Recreation/Tourism

Is the community well-known for any attraction or event? Do they have a community slogan that capitalizes on that asset?

- No slogan for the city was noted.
- One yard, I saw a sign that said, "Grow Gove County", I didn't see any others.
- From my web search, I think the grain/ag business is what they are known for??

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

- Hops at the House Brew Fest sounded impressive with food and entertainment.
- The other items listed previously in the Civic section.

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).

- Some didn't see any.
- Others indicated the Opera House potentially but were unable to go inside.

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 city office was on the main street.
- The community center.
- Good signage and visibility for both.

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

- The Feedlot – good food and waitstaff – very clean!
- Would stop back at the grocery store to buy seasonings.
- As explained earlier the coffee shop was a cute little place, and my specialty coffee was great. Other than this business, I think there were no other places to eat that I could find.

14. Wrap-up

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

- Small and quiet community.
- Law enforcement was present.
- Very impressed with the auto shop in town.
- Lots of amenities in a town this size offering work options. Businesses are also helping to bring tax dollars to the community.
- I keep coming back to how very clean and well maintained this community is. They do have a grocery store, which is uncommon in small towns these days and hopefully they appreciate and support that business.

What are the biggest obstacles/challenges facing this community?

- It really depends on what Grainfield's goals are. If looking to bring in people, signage and maybe information about what there is in town will bring them there. If it's to maintain, they are doing a great job from what could be seen.
- Being a bedroom community that does not offer a lot of business industry, the support from the community for businesses to make a living. Also, having something to keep the younger families wanting to raise their kids and live in the community.

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

- The parts store.
- No stop signs by the school.
- I will remember how clean the city was, as well as anyone that I encountered was friendly, whether speaking or waving at me.
- Also, what a nice cemetery. The memorial to the babies conceived but never born was a neat little area, as was the covered grave directory and the service members directory.

How much money did you spend while you were in the city you visited?

- \$90-100
- \$15.00

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



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