

First Impressions

Compiled Report Form



Community Visited: Pleasanton

Date(s) Visited: a, b) Mon 8/12/19

c.) Mon 8/19/19

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?

- a. N/A
- b. Website was very nice and attractive. Would like to see a list of businesses.
- c. <https://pleasantonks.com/> was the site I used to research before the trip. Their website was very informative and looks up to date, from what I could tell. The site did reflect what the city had to offer. There were no problems at all finding information about Pleasanton.

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.)

- a. Empty business buildings, a lot of weeds and brush not mowed or cut. School looked good and new community building looks great (under construction). Did have signs of business that were in town. Tall weeds in ditches blocked view of car dealer and convenience store as you entered town.
- b. Poor streets- not unusual in small towns. Quite a bit of traffic- lots of high grass and weeds- not just from recent rains, but from all summer. Loved the signage coming off the highway from the east, but unable to see the businesses to the south for the overgrown brush.
- c. I arrived early in the day and drove around for about 30 minutes. It seems to be a quiet little town. Streets signs were older and some of the poles were leaning. Downtown seemed to have plenty of signage and there were banners on the light poles. There were several empty buildings and several nice buildings with businesses in them.

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?)

- a. There were some empty buildings, but as a whole everything was pretty well kept. Convenience store, was the hub of the community, acting as restaurant and convenience store. Everything was clean and well kept. People were polite and helpful.
- b. Many empty buildings. Very poor signage on buildings. Old grocery store? Open? Convenience store? Couldn't tell what it was. Went to pharmacy (which was hard to find)- good variety of basic merchandise but only one of each item. Went to Casey's- very friendly, very busy with lots of emphasis on food items. Was greeted at both places and was offered assistance at pharmacy but when tried to make conversation was ignored.
- c. Some of the buildings were well kept up and a few looked vacant and in disrepair. They had plenty of signs, however, some of them were faded enough that they could not be read. Unfortunately, before I could visit a business, I was called back to Erie on work related matters.

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 any amenities. Main street was pretty bare, no trouble with parking.
- b. Found none. Streets and sidewalks all needed work- no problems finding parking- easy access to multiple businesses. Nice LED street lighting.
- c. N/A

4. Other Retail Shopping Areas

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

- a. N/A
- b. Very easy access to highway retail area although we had to ask where the clinic and pharmacy were located.
- c. The main retail shopping area looked like it had most of the amenities one would like to see in a shopping area.

5. Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas

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

- a. There was an industrial park, but it looked run down. There was a good cement business as you came in from the south, but there were some other vacant buildings.
- b. Area south of town appeared busy and looked as though there was area to expand.
- c. I see where they do have an Industrial Park. Commercial area might be considered their downtown.

6. Health Care Services

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

- a. Clinic is just outside of town, with a new drug store across the street, off the beaten path.
- b. Clinic was nice and easily accessible but difficult to find if not familiar with the area.
- c. I noticed that there were at least 2 health care centers in Pleasanton.

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

- a. Medical clinic was new and well maintained.
- b. Nice clinic for physicians, PA's, and/or NP's. Dentist one day a week? From sign on door.
- c. The Health Care Facilities looked like nice buildings.

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

- a. Noticed a nursing home and several senior service housing. Lady at City Hall said there was one nursing home and one assisted living.
- b. Nursing home available- not sure of assisted living.
- c. I noticed the one long-term health care facility in Pleasanton.

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.)

- a. N/A
- b. Seemed to be a good mix of housing tending toward the lower end. Better housing seemed to be on the edge of town. Some houses for sale- mostly older homes.
- c. I noticed that Pleasanton has quite a few run-down houses that need to be disposed of. All of these little towns face the same issue, people move out of them, they sit for a few years and become unlivable and the town usually has very small budgets for disposal of these structures.

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

- a. Saw some signs for rent for low to medium income.
- b. Several rentals available- list of landlords available at City Hall.
- c. I picked up a list of landlords that have rentals in Pleasanton, from City Hall. It is a rather long list of landlords, which is nice when looking for a house.

8. 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. School looked good; head start building was also part of the school district office.
- b. Very nice school for small town. K-12 in one building and pre-K with admin.
- c. I went by and looked at both the Elementary and High Schools and they both look to be newer facilities and well maintained. I did not see a Middle School address, so I assumed that maybe they had split that between the High School and Elementary?

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

- a. N/A
- b. Lots of information on the link to the schools from the city website.
- c. The Pleasanton website, www.pleasantonks.com has a link to the USD # 344 website, which looks to be up to date and useful. Items such as School Calendar, Announcements, Clubs and Organizations are always quite helpful. After looking at the www.usd344.org website, I can tell that Jr. High and High School are combined.

9. Childcare

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

- a. N/A
- b. Not pursued.
- c. I did not look for or find any childcare services.

10. Faith/Religion

Comment on the number of denominations and the physical appearances of the faith communities represented in the community. Did you observe any evidence of faith-based community services?

- a. Noticed several well-kept churches: Catholic, Baptist, Christian.
- b. Several active churches in town, but no other services noted.
- c. I noticed 4 or 5 churches in Pleasanton of different denominations.

11. Civic

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

- a. N/A
- b. No evidence of any. Beautiful community building being built with volunteer labor, taking a long time but progress being made.
- c. I did not notice any signs for different organizations in Pleasanton. I was in Pleasanton on a Monday morning around 9:00 am and did not notice any civic organizational activity at that time.

12. Public Infrastructure

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

- a. Looks like a struggling little town with few funds for street up-keep. Could probably mow weeds for small cost would help looks greatly.
- b. Liked the abundance of signage in different areas of town. Landscaping very poor with lack of areas being mowed and trimmed.
- c. I noticed that the streets need a lot of repairs. The streets look like a mixture of a small amount of asphalt and mostly chip and seal. Public infrastructure is my area of knowledge, so please do not take my comments here as an insult, but merely an experienced observation. Our city struggles with the same items, such as long winters, which destroy roads, small budgets, small crews, etc. Streetscapes, such as sidewalks and light poles are older and somewhat in disrepair. I noticed a couple of the poles were leaning, like maybe they had been run into with a vehicle. Street signage looked adequate, but the signs were old and not up to the newer reflective standards. Again, not a criticism, I know how much money and time it takes to replace these.

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

- a. Very well received, lady talked to us for quite a while and answered all our questions
- b. Very friendly clerk at City Hall who gave us a lot of info on location of places we were looking for and answered all our questions.
- c. City Hall was in a building with the Fire Department. City Hall is a large metal building, which is quite adequate and functional. The ladies there were very friendly and knowledgeable and I know they were quite busy; however, they took time to answer my questions. They have a nice brochure rack inside the door with the different information, such as landlords, events, and general info about the city.

Police/fire protection:

- a. Did not see any sign of police.
- b. Nice buildings- no appearance of any police patrol.
- c. I saw the Fire Department when I was in City Hall. I noticed they have a Police Department down the way a bit, however, I did not stop there.

Library:

- a. Very nice library with very nice lady running it. They had several programs for kids to keep them in off the street.
- b. Wonderful librarians who gave us a tour and explained all the programs and activities available. Very active!
- c. I might have missed it, but I did not see that library.

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

- a. Nice city lake and park had swimming pool which was closed at the time.
- b. Ball parks difficult to find until you find the lake. Never saw any playground equipment except at school. None around the pool which wasn't open when we were in that area of town.
- c. I did see a couple of small parks; a little dated, but again, they are extremely costly to update.

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?

- a. Big battle during Civil War was close to town.
- b. Site of historic battlefield from Civil War.
- c. They apparently have the only Civil War battlefield in Kansas. They have the General Pleasanton Days, Christmas in the Park, and something they call the Council/Community Work Day, which I find a very interesting idea.

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

- a. N/A
- b. Found out from librarians they are celebrating their sesquicentennial this year with year-long activities.
- c. I was there early Monday, so the town seemed a little "sleepy," which is completely understandable.

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).

- a. N/A
- b. Museum, lake, battlefield- museum was not open the day we were there- not enough time to explore the battlefield.
- c. Pleasanton has a pool, which is a plus. I noticed they have three lakes quite close to town, which is a plus. I did not visit the lakes; however, I would imagine they would have campgrounds at least at one of them.

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. No.
- b. City Hall seemed to be the hub, but not downtown where easily accessible to visitors.
- c. I saw the Chamber of Commerce but did not visit there.

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

- a. No restaurant at all, had a drive-in with no seating. Library would be a draw to bring people in.
- b. No, only a drive-in burger place and Casey's for food.
- c. Nothing really stood out to me to want to revisit this community. That is not a slight, there are quite a few communities that probably will not be revisited because of no real reason for me to.

14. Wrap-up

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

- a. Small community doing the best they can with what they have. Nice library, new community center coming, nice school, and working on streets as they can.
- b. Friendly people. Nice school with small class sizes (from a teacher we spoke to). Community center building construction with lots of community support.
- c. Positive things would be the things that intrigue me. Some of the streets run at 45 degrees. That is kind of a neat feature, probably out of necessity at one time. They have plenty of buildings for businesses to move in to. They have most of the necessities, such as health care, grocery store, gas stations, police, fire, utility departments. It looks to be a nice cozy town. It has that "Rural Feel," which most of us from a small town understand and love.

What are the biggest obstacles/challenges facing this community?

- a. Small community with small tax structure to help keep streets and parks going. Just like a lot of other small rural towns struggling to survive.
- b. Seemed to be a lack of pride in appearance of the homes and community. Lack of funds for street maintenance and repair.
- c. Biggest challenges I could see from the outside are infrastructure needs repairs or updated, such as streets, electric, and drainage. It looks like there are a lot of empty buildings where businesses once were. It is very difficult to attract and keep businesses in a small town.

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

- a. Talking with the ladies at City Hall and library and how nice they were. Also ran into an old friend at the realtor's office, hadn't seen for 25 years (small world).
- b. (1) Poor appearance of the town. (2) Lots of friendly people. (3) New community center. (4) Lack of places to eat. (5) Lodging?
- c. Again, I cannot stress this enough, these are not criticisms, merely observations that almost every small town faces. This is a small town that is a fair distance from most larger towns. For those that have grown up in these small towns, we see it as a blessing, however, our youth typically want to move to a larger town for the conveniences and available work. This is a domino effect that has plagued us for many years.

PowerPoint Presentation is posted at:

<http://www.ksre.k-state.edu/community/civic-engagement/first-impressions/index.html>

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