

First Impressions

Compiled Report Form



Community Visited: Wellington **Date(s) Visited:** a.) Wed. 1/9/19
b.) Sat. 1/5/19 c.) Thurs 1/10/19 d.) Sat. 1/5/19 e.) Wed. 1/9/19

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. No problem. I checked on the web for city of Wellington, Ks and found plenty of info.
- b. N/A
- c. Had to view multiple websites to obtain information
- d. Very easy. Lots of websites about Wellington.
- e. The website is nice, but the mobile site is a little difficult to read because of the photos in the background. It would be nice to have the headshots of employees on the website. There is not very much information about the senior center online. Many seniors are now using electronic devices to get info, for themselves and for their aging parents.

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.)

- a. On the main highway, the houses were large and well kept- some older. Off the main streets many houses and buildings were time worn and in need of paint and repair. The landscaping on the main entrances was good as was the signage.
- b. A variety of businesses. Clean surroundings. Buildings were in generally good repair.
- c. Main thoroughfares were clean and kept up. Driving off the beaten path, homes needed paint, there was yard clutter, streets needing repair, and no sidewalks or curbs. Saw signage for museums. New community college. Many retail services.
- d. Looks like a farm town. From the east you see a car dealership, the high school, Dollar General. Next you come to the round-a-bout. We actually had a resident honk at us to go through.
- e. Lots of cotton fields! They were beautiful and well maintained. I don't know if Wellington is well known for cotton fields, but the city seemed to be surrounded by them. This stood out to me as one of the most beautiful things about Wellington.

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?)

- a. The buildings were one- and two-story business. The two-story building for the most part needed renovation. I visited a toy/quilting shop and was impressed on how well kept the store was. The hardware store needed paint and remodeling. I saw several banks and office buildings that were recent buildings (in the last 30 years.) Several antique stores were open only on weekends and needed paint. The businesses I was in had good customer service and greeted me and offered assistance.
- b. Clean buildings, some were updated, not many vacant. Clothing, appliances, furniture, shoe shop, restaurant and bar, and antiques. We ate at the restaurant and food was good with good service. Nice acceptance and service.
- c. Some older buildings were closed. There old buildings were repurposed into small boutique shops. Donut shop, coffee shop, bar, quilt shop, bank institutions, visitors center, and churches. Did not enter any. Only entered visitors center. Kelly Ford was so gracious. Told us everything happening in Wellington and where to find them. So friendly.
- d. The area looked busy, lots of cars parked downtown. We were there around noon time. The store fronts were old. But decent looking. We actually ate at a bar that had lots of customers who were watching the ball game. Families, singles. Dress shops, thrift shops, toys, yarn shop. There was a Home Town Store. We entered a bar to get something to eat. We were greeted promptly. It did take a while to get our food.
- e. What I would consider your “typical” small Kansas town. Older but well preserved. Like many Kansas towns many spaces are vacant in the downtown area, but it did not have a “deserted” feel to it. Banks, glass museum, Regent Theatre, hardware stores, salons, etc. Merchandise seemed a little outdated at most places. Highlight to me was Bee Creative Toys and Beehive Quilt Shop. Very nice updated store seemed consistently busy and had great merchandise. Greeted every time. Very friendly.

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. I saw benches and trash receptacles in the downtown area but no water fountains or public restrooms. I found parking very easy downtown.
- b. Not very many. No problem parking and within walking distance of several businesses.
- c. Benches downtown and in parks. Parking downtown was very adequate.
- d. Saw benches in front of the courthouse. At the parks.
- e. Trash cans were available downtown in sufficient supply. No drinking fountains noted and very few benches. Easy parking and easy access to the entire downtown area.

3. Other Retail Shopping Areas

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

- a. The other shopping areas were mainly east on Highway 160 and had easy access. The areas could use more landscaping.
- b. Most were on Highway 160 such as Walmart, Dillon's, etc. Several fast food places.
- c. Walmart at east edge of town. Easy access. Branded business structure replaced by other small business.
- d. Walmart on the way into town from the east. It was clean looking.
- e. N/A

4. Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas

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

- a. The areas east of town on 160 and north on 81 have most of the industrial areas. There are several large grain elevators south of the downtown area.
- b. Plenty of areas to locate or expand to.
- c. Highway 81 north of town was industrial area. Number of businesses closed down, heavy presence of TECT Aerospace.
- d. Seemed to be an area to the north by an elevator and to the southeast also by an elevator.
- e. It seemed the big industrial park was on A Street. TECT was a big presence. All areas well maintained. It looked as though there was some new construction which is always a good sign.

5. **Health Care Services**

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

- a. There is a county medical center with emergency services. There are doctor and optometrist services available.
- b. Did not go in, acceptable outside.
- c. Hospital and urgent care available. Was told that hospital was in danger of closing but was bought out and put in private ownership. Dentistry, optometry, and chiropractic are available.
- d. From the website it appears that the hospital will close in the next 2 years.
- e. There seemed to be a wide variety of health care facilities, mostly through Sumner County (Regional Medical, Mental Health Center, Family Health Complex, etc.)

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

- a. There are approximately 25 medical and chiropractic doctors. There are 5 dentist and 4 optometrists.
- b. Observed from outside.
- c. Physician office available as well as dentists, optometrists, chiropractic care.
- d. I saw one dental office in the downtown area.
- e. Wellington felt like a hub for Sumner County health care. Facilities seemed nice but aging. Did not notice an abundance of private dentists, optometrists, etc.

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

- a. There are two long term nursing facilities.
- b. Several
- c. Two nursing homes
- d. N/A
- e. Brookdale Wellington. The building looked recently renovated and sufficient for the community. I was very impressed with the Wellington Senior Center. The director was not there, but board member Mary Lou gave me a tour and was very informative and welcoming. The senior center was very spacious and clean and did not have a very "old" look about it. Just like other senior centers, I believe it is underutilized. It seems to have many things to offer.

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.)

- a. I saw many houses for sale in all parts of the town. The houses for sale ranged from large family homes to the smaller 2-bedroom starter homes.
- b. Housing for all incomes. Not many for sale signs.
- c. South of Highway 160, older homes, attractive neighborhood. North of Highway 160, older, small homes, some in need of repair. Housing around the lake upwards of \$300,000.
- d. The houses in downtown were old but huge. In the downtown area, the houses were older, smaller houses. To the northwest, the houses were newer and larger.
- e. There were a wide variety of housing options. The majority seemed to be older neighborhoods with single family homes. There were also some very nice newer additions I noticed on the west side of the town (Coyote Ridge, etc.) I did not see many homes for sale, so this could be the biggest barrier to finding housing. I was told about the Housing Authority that is really close to the Wellington Senior Center. This seems to be a nice partnership where many seniors walk to the senior center for lunch.

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

- a. The rental properties I observed ranged from 1-bedroom apartments for around \$500 to 2-3-bedroom houses for \$400-\$600
- b. A few, for lower income.
- c. I understand rentals are available in many price ranges; apparently have low income senior housing rentals.
- d. N/A
- e. I saw some apartment complexes, but not many homes for rent.

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?

- a. Four elementary schools, at least one Christian school, one middle and one high school. Seems adequate for the size of the city.
- b. Nice new high school. Size is fine for small town.
- c. High school, four grade schools, two middle schools, community college, and one transition school. One private school and one facility for children with disabilities.
- d. Saw a new high school on the highway coming into town. Saw a grade school near the downtown area. The football field is next to the OLD high school. They like their football. ☺
- e. I observed almost all levels of schools. It seems to be comprehensive schooling system in Wellington including a private school (Wellington Christian Academy) and a presence from Cowley College.

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

- a. Yes, off the city web site.
- b. Just what was offered education wise.
- c. N/A
- d. N/A
- e. USD 353 has a very detailed website.

8. Childcare

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

- a. I saw 2 childcare buildings, but I didn't inquire on prices.
- b. Don't know
- c. I saw one daycare facility.
- d. N/A
- e. Not noted

9. 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?

- a. There are approximately 30 churches. They all for the most part were well kept in appearance.
- b. A large variety and in generally good repair.
- c. Many religious denominations represented.
- d. I did see a Catholic church
- e. Only Christian denominations seen. If I were of a more minority faith I would feel a little out of place.

10. Civic

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

- a. Saw the Senior Center, the Masonic building, and the VFW Hall. Only saw one sign for a Chamber of Commerce meeting.
- b. Senior center. I did not observe any
- c. Saw signage representing VFW, Knights of Columbus, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, and Masonic Lodge
- d. N/A
- e. Only noticed the Wellington Community Food Bank which was not open when I was there but appeared to be well operated and used.

11. Public Infrastructure

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

- a. In general, away from downtown there needs to be some landscaping and streetscaping work done.
- b. Average for small town.
- c. Streets need repair
- d. Some neighborhoods look neat and tidy. Some were not so tidy.
- e. Sidewalks were minimal on main roads. Many streets on the outskirts of town were not paved, including what I would call a well-used road that leads to Worden Park. Landscaping was unremarkable but the town was very clean.

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

- a. I was greeted and asked if I needed assistance. There was info on the town available.
- b. Didn't go in. It was Saturday and they were closed.
- c. Visitors Center was marvelous. Learned much about the town. It's a shame it's only opened weekdays.
- d. We went on a Saturday so there was nothing open.
- e. City Hall was nicely maintained and easy to identify. I was received kindly, but upon asking some questions about the city I was referred to the Chamber building at the other end of downtown (they ended up being closed for training so I was then unable to get the information I needed). They seemed a little preoccupied with business there and unable to answer questions about the city. The woman I spoke with was very nice, but noted they were understaffed and were busy covering for people and that she does not have time to get out and see the city and get to know details about it.

Police/fire protection:

- a. Modern fire station and trucks, new police station.
- b. N/A
- c. Fire, EMS, and police had newer building
- d. I did see a fire station in the downtown area.
- e. Police/fire station looked relatively new. The first policeman I passed driving on the road was nice enough to wave hello which is a great first impression.

Library:

- a. Good looking library
- b. N/A
- c. No stop
- d. The library was in the downtown area.
- e. Did not have time to explore the library.

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

- a. There are 8 or 9 parks with soccer, softball, football fields. There are also tennis courts, a Railway Museum, disc golf, and an aquatics center.
- b. Nice sports complex
- c. Sports complexes were nice. Walking park was very nice. Well lighted with seating. Dog park was nice except no area for small dog separation.
- d. I saw one city park, and the football field.

- e. Worden Park was a VERY nice sports complex. Very clean, had restroom facilities, and well-maintained sports fields (including a model airplane field). It was a little difficult to find because the only sign I saw for it was off a main road but it was further outside the town. The water tower and lights helped guide us there. Also, it seemed a little strange that this nice newer sports complex only had access off of a dirt road.

12. 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. There is a Kansas Wheat Festival in July. A Fall Festival is held in September with a parade.
- b. Wheat Festival
- c. Wheat Festival
- d. Chisholm Trail Museum, Wellington Lake, Panhandle Railroad Museum
- e. Saw light signs for the Wheat Festival. The Glass Museum is also well known through the community.

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

- a. I didn't see any events going on now.
- b. No
- c. N/A
- d. No
- e. None noted

Elaborate on any significant natural or manmade features that have the potential of drawing people to the community.

- a. There is a railway museum, boating, and fishing in some of the parks.
- b. Museum, Wellington Lake
- c. 2 lakes, glass museum, RR museum, (curator was very knowledgeable), Chisholm Trail Museum
- d. They actually have two lakes. Chisholm Trail and Panhandle Railroad Museum.
- e. None noted. Maybe Worden Park

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. The event center had numerous brochures and info for visitors.
- b. We visited on Saturday. Did not see a visitor's center or Chamber of Commerce office.
- c. These services were available but were housed in a facility with signage of "Memorial Hall." Small window signage.
- d. N/A
- e. Yes, there is an obvious Visitor's Center and Chamber of Commerce Building. Unfortunately, they were closed for training the day I visited. The downtown area did have what they called a Welcome Center kiosk outside that had brochures and pamphlets about the city. This was a nice touch and was well stocked with information visitors might want if the Chamber building is closed.

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

- a. The downtown had shops and restaurants that were interesting. The Glass Museum is open on weekends and the Chisholm Trail Museum is open in the summer.
- b. No
- c. Maybe the lakes
- d. I know there is a great Mexican restaurant somewhere. The quilting shop looked interesting.
- e. Maybe the Bee Creative Toy Store and Beehive Quilt Shop

13. Wrap-up

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

- a. I was impressed in the lack of trash around town and several clean-up crews walking the downtown area.
- b. Friendly and active for a small town
- c. Small signs. Friendliness. Everything you need in a town.
- d. The people at the bar were a mix of old and young. I met an older gentleman who was from another town who came to the bar specifically to eat. Families and young people were walking down main street.
- e. The cotton fields, the Bee Creative store, the senior center, and a very clean community.

What are the biggest obstacles/challenges facing this community?

- a. It is typical older downtown with buildings needing restoration and occupancy.
- b. N/A
- c. Maintaining downtown area. Large business moves in and “mom and pop” stores close down.
- d. Looks like the downtown area is being redone. It’s a shame. The old buildings are beautiful.
- e. “Aging well” (some things seemed outdated... roads, stores, etc.)

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

- a. I had been in this town last in 1977 and was amazed by the growth to the north and west.
- b. Very friendly
- c. How nice it is to live in a small town with all the amenities you really need. I had the opportunity to visit with a resident and learned many things about the town such as a free recycling and compost pile and that volunteers maintain these programs which cuts down on city costs. My personal tour guide did not leave much time for stopping and talking, but we explored all areas of town and got to see the new humane center. It was enjoyable for me as well as my guide because it reminded him of things about town he had forgotten about.
- d. I would like to go back in the spring. The winter makes too many things look ugly. I like the wide-open spaces to the west of the town that I saw on the way to the lake. It was peaceful and pretty.
- e. The cotton fields, the Bee Creative Store, the senior center, and Mary Lou who showed me around the senior center.

PowerPoint Presentation is posted at:

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

First Impressions was developed by the University of Wisconsin-Extension and adapted for use by K-State Research and Extension. Restructuring made possible through a partnership with the Dane G. Hansen Foundation.

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Stations and Cooperative Extension Service

K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension Works, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914 as amended. Kansas State University, County Extension Councils, Extension Districts, and the United State Department of Agriculture Cooperating, J. Ernest Minton, Interim Director.