

WATERLOO

1. What was **my** perception before visiting the community: What did **I** expect, etc.

None, really. I knew about Trek. I was expecting a small, "typical" Wisconsin community.

Knowing it was much larger than Necedah, I expected it to reflect a difference. I did expect to find some areas that could be improved.

Typical small town with some "slum" areas.

Bedroom community of Madison

Industrial, quaint, rundown

2. Approaching the community, what do you notice first? (Evaluate **EACH entrance**)

Positive:

All the yards were kept up, the houses looked nice.

The first thing I remember is the "duck crossing" sign by a park-like area.

Impressive looking industry

Nice looking major industry from Marshall way. Farm land and older homes from the south.

Industry well-kept. Clean homes and lawns.

Attractive, well-kept park area.

Each entrance was attractive with good signage.

Impressive entrance from Marshall, "duck crossing" sign was a warm, homey bit of whimsy.

Negative:

From east side, little information, and the detour was difficult.

Detour made this unfair from the east. How about uniform community entrance "welcome" signs at all entrances?

Detour not a good set-up. Clear.

Didn't really see anything that looked bad.

There did not appear to be an entrance into the part from that entrance into town.

3. **As** you drive around town your comments on:

A. Appearance

1. Downtown

Great potential; however, the downtown is a surprising let-down after one sees the industry, the clean yards, the part, etc. Your downtown seems to be the weak link in an otherwise stellar community. You have great second stories (look up), but the downtown needs to be cleaned up, renovated (strip all the fiberglass, plastic false fronts off), and cleaned up. A sign ordinance would be very helpful. If you look up and down the streets, you see a riot of signage -- all shapes, colors, styles, materials. They work against each other, instead of promoting a coherent, coordinated downtown.

Was well-kept.

Looked good except for one or two building that looked like they needed work,

Quiet. Nice, fixable old structures.

Plenty of nice old structures. The facades could be improved by removing some vinyl. The wooden trim needs paint, perhaps in brighter colors, to alleviate a rather drab appearance.

Detour was difficult, had to ask to get over. Quiet for a Friday morning. Well-kept store fronts. Bars weren't open at 10:30 (good).

Many empty buildings -- not much effort to remodel fronts of stores to make them more attractive.

2. Residential

Very nice. No areas with junked cars and old appliances which most small towns have.

On whole, very nice, well-kept, curb and gutter, clean.

Older homes in OK shape. Well-kept lawns, trees and yards.

Kept very nice. There were only a few homes that could use cleaning up. Otherwise, the place looked great.

This area was extremely well-kept. In fact, we tried to find the "junky" side of town and couldn't.

Seemed like a nice place to live.

3. Industrial Park

The industry we saw on the outskirts of town was excellent as far as appearance. The industry downtown was also neat.

None. Very bad organization.

Asked several residents who said they did not know of an industrial park.

None as such, but so what? The industries are attractive, if scattered, and the industrial park "model" isn't written in stone.

4. Parks

Excellent. Well-kept. Negative: Paths and roads in park should be paved, were very muddy on a rainy day.

Wonderful! You are lucky to have such a fine park facility. Even the public rest room was well-maintained. Must be a big baseball/softball community.

I loved your park, especially the "amphitheater" effect. One possible thing to think about (note: it was raining very hard when I drove through, so I couldn't see very well) is that the park seemed to be "adult-oriented," or "team-sports" oriented; ground equipment and "unstructured" play areas (again, there may be; I couldn't see because of the rain). But, that is a park communities 10 times your size would love to have.

Fireman's Park was beautiful. The entrance signs and the buildings need to be repainted. Great job of groundskeeping.

Nice! Needs some paint.

Kept up nicely. Large. Had plenty of things for people to do.

Parks were great. Understand that the upkeep is done by retired firemen. They might consider some sidewalks to get to the rest rooms.

5. Schools

Looked to be modern -- located with much space around it -- a plus.

Were great. So much land around the buildings.

Nice sizes. The yards were very spacious. Looked like there was a lot to keep the kids occupied.

Above average.

Attractive, nice grounds.

From the outside it looked like an excellent facility for a town your size. Liked your track.

The appearance and grounds were impressive.

6. Infrastructure (sidewalks, streets, lighting, etc.)

Waste treatment plant grounds well-kept. No smells. Water tower was charming.

O.K.

In good shape

They were working on a sewer/water project.

Street/work in progress. Sidewalks in good condition

Downtown was, of course, disrupted from the bridge reconstruction but manageable.

The water tower was a definite plus -- a "marketing tool." Very clever idea! One suggestion: the old wooden bridge could be a real plus for you -- biking, hiking, tourists, etc. (I was just at one in the upper peninsula, very similar to yours. At least 100 people used it in the hour I was there).

B. Signage

1. Community entrance/exit signs

Well-kept entrance signs (No exit signs seen).

Not too many in evidence.

Hard to find.

Nice, good-sized sign.

Not every entrance appeared to be "covered."

Good from Marshall, not so good from the back entrances.

2. Streets

Gotta love those Presidents!

O.K.

These didn't seem to be any missing or defaced signs. I'd suggest a brand new "Duck Crossing" sign; it's getting a little weather beaten.

3. Directions to Hospital/Parks/etc.

We couldn't find any directional signs.

Plenty of signs to Fireman's Park -- a few could be painted.

Very few. Park was well-marked.

We specifically looked for hospital signs. There were none.

Park was a little "hidden." You should drum that park up at your entrances because it is a great facility.

4. Storefront **signs**

One thing to consider (and yes, there would be initial resistance) is a sign ordinance. Go to one end of your street and look down it; you'll see a wild assortment of shapes, sizes, placement, colors, etc. A sign ordinance would help give a uniform look to your downtown. Historic colors would enhance the wonderful old buildings you have. Right now, all your "rugged individualism" in signs detracts from the downtown as a unified whole. Uniformity of placement and type would help "sell" downtown as a unit which would help all merchants in the long run.

Large, easy to see.

Average.

Kind of "messy" and jumbled.

Old and faded.

Signs need some work.

5. Industrial park

None as such; industry is scattered. But a "park" is only one model and if your system works for you, great.

None

Lots of industry.

Scattered, but for the most part, in excellent condition. The printing headquarters and other large industries (from Marshall side) are wonderful facilities. You are lucky.

6. City Hall, police, ets.

Average.

Maybe could have a bigger sign in front. Didn't see it until we were told where it was.

It was a little difficult to find City Hall. Police station was easy to locate.

Like most small communities City Halls don't think about "marketing themselves" for people to find. Some directional signs would help.

Good.

Easily located.

7. Billboards/advertising, etc.

O.K.

You don't have a proliferation of tacky billboards. Good for you! Always something to watch out for.

A lot of advertising was shown for things going on.

Very little (good)

4. Visitor/community information

A. City/Village Hall

1. Is there a street map?

Just simply on Main Street

We stopped at the Village Hall. (It is my belief that the person working there knew why we were in town). She was very helpful.

Yes.

Yes.

2. Community brochure/directory

Yes.

Yes.

Yes.

In City Hall.

Nothing really, some old maps of the city. Was referred to City Hall.

3. Community profile (including business and industrial opportunities)

Didn't see any information (talk to WPL about their community profile brochure; it's free).

?

Very small.

No one I spoke with seemed to know of one.

Clerk in City Hall very responsive to our questions. *Also*, a "citizen" who happened to be in there gave us information.

4. Recommendations on place to stay/eat, visit, etc.

None.

The town lacked for places to eat lunch. In fact, we didn't see any supper clubs

either.

I couldn't find a place that would take a credit card (maybe there are some, but I looked from the street). This would be a problem for visitors, tourists, etc.

There seemed to be very few restaurants and the people I asked for referrals were very nice and polite but the referrals themselves were kind of grudging and apologetic. Maybe you should recruit a deli, a nice restaurant, etc.

I didn't see any motels or apartment buildings. There weren't many places to eat.

You have some neat old buildings which could become bed and breakfasts or inns. Have you thought about tourism?

Didn't see anything.

I was disappointed in the restaurants.

5. Contact people and addresses listed if I want more information

No

City Hall, I guess

6. Complimentary items (Postcards bookmarkers, coupons, etc.)

These are "walking billboards," the "gift that keeps on giving." Have you thought about marketing and promoting your wonderful community?

Drug store had these items.

B. Chamber office/visitor information center

1. Easy to locate, etc.

Bank referred me to City Hall. You could use your picnic area by the downtown monument to plug information

?

Yes

Yes

Referred to City Hall when asking for the chamber.

2. Comments on information available, etc.

City Hall had plenty of information available

I think some professional, technical assistance would be helpful to you.

O.K.

The City Hall had brochures available on the town.

Didn't see anything.

3. Recommendations on places to stay/eat/visit

Nothing.

"Grudging" and apologetic," like folks were kind of ashamed there wasn't more to offer. (Not from City Hall!)

Don't recall seeing anything that would tell me anything that would tell me there were tours or sites to see (Other than the carousel -- which only operates on Sunday).

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I think your wooden foot bridge (with some fix-up, some marketing, some signs) is neat. It was never mentioned.

Very negative.

Very limited restaurants available -- only two open at noon -- and one of those didn't offer much.

Fair.

4. How prepared/helpful were they

Very helpful.

City Hall was very helpful.

Not very.

5. Convenient hours?

No

C. Information from general community (service station/motel/bars/restaurants/
(shop employees etc.)

1. How Knowledgeable about the community were they

Seemed to know a lot about their town, even a man who lived there only two months knew about anything we asked.

The people I spoke with were very friendly and knowledgeable. Note: these were people "on the street." The merchants themselves were much more negative.

Didn't seem very outspoken (bank). Told lady what I was doing and she just sort of shrugged it off and referred me to City Hall.

One local individual at the restaurant seemed more interested in us talking about Necedah than Waterloo.

Downtown was very quiet on Friday. Didn't find a lot of people to converse with. Walked into City Hall, asked for rest room, looked at plaques and walls and the folks didn't seem too interested (looked busy, though).

Our waitress in the restaurant could not tell us where City Hall was when we asked. The restaurant was clean. We also stopped at the bakery. That individual was very helpful, talking a lot about what the town had to offer.

O.K., one person was real bad.

For such an attractive community, I was surprised at the negative comments I received from the question: "This seems like a nice community."

We also stopped at the drug store. They were polite but not overly friendly.

2. **Did** they refer you to someone else who could help?

Referred to City Hall.

Yes, City Hall.

Yes.

No.

They knew pretty much themselves (so no need).

3. Attitude, appearance, etc.

Very well-kept. Didn't see any dirty, smelly people.

Very friendly people. People on the street said "hi." Everyone was willing to help us find things.

Everyone appeared neat and clean.

I was impressed with how friendly everyone was. A nice feeling; a nice town. There was a lot of negativism from merchants if you probed just a little bit -- it wasn't very far beneath the surface. This really surprised me because the town has an awful lot going for it.

O.K.

4. Other comments

People in shop/taverns were not overly friendly.

5. General

A. Do residents know about their community history/events/directions/etc.

Yes, they knew about things that were going to happen and wherever we need to go.

Asked lady, she referred me to Marshall the following week.

Some do.

I asked directions several times and few knew street names.

Above average, I thought!

B. Services....variety of retail...lodging facilities...

I thought for a community of its size there would be more retail businesses. Downtown signs need improvement.

Not enough. No really big stores (not necessarily "bad").

We did not see any motels.

Lodging? B&B's? Where do visiting plant executives, salespeople, tourists stay?

Retail seemed limited, like most small towns.

C. Are there public rest rooms?

Yes, at park and village hall, all in very good condition.

Yes, clean (Thank you!)

Yes

Yes, in the park.

Yes, park

Only in park.

D. Payphones

Yes

Forgot to check -- sorry

Didn't notice

E. Industrial Park

Mostly excellent. Stuff north of Main Street could be little better.

Looks attractive.

Absolutely.

No park; industry areas nice.

Yes.

F. What does the community **TASTE** like? (Specialty restaurants/bakeries/etc.)

O.K.

Fine

No real specialty restaurant or "historical" or ethnic dishes. Something to think about...

G. What does community **SMELL** like?

Fresh (rain).

No bad odors.

Downtown smells really good, but when we got by the factory it didn't smell as nice.

H. What **SOUNDS** did you hear?

Quiet.

Awfully quiet; not a lot of pedestrian traffic, which surprised me.

Fairly quiet.

I. What did community **FEEL** like? (Emotional response, i.e., cold/warm, crowded/deserted, inviting, etc.)

Wasn't too full. Pretty peaceful. Was inviting. People were really friendly.

Cold, deserted.

A nice, friendly place with lots of potential.

DESCRIBE THE PEOPLE YOU MET (Friendly, helpful, etc.)

Very friendly.

Nice hospitable. A lot of negative attitudes on the part of merchants but those were toward the town; they were friendly towards me. Some customer service or hospitality training would be good (a lot of store owners didn't acknowledge or greet me when I entered).

Most people were unfriendly and upset to be living in such a "backward area."

People expressed a rather negative view toward their community.

We tried to strike up a conversation with the young people painting and cleaning at the park. They were not very talkative. A couple of people we met on the sidewalk in town said "hi."

People were very nice and willing to help. They all seemed to know where everything is.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND OBSERVATIONS:

Your recycling and garbage service is something to be proud of. Excellent trucks, and the folks used good cans and recycling buckets. Almost all of your homes are well-maintained. You must have a lot of pride.

Would love to have a new home section like a few of your subdivisions.

Your community has a lot going for it; you can be proud!

It really seemed the community was well-kept and close. (garage sale throughout the city and the carousel rides at the park).

It would appear you need a restaurant.

Clean and laid out nice. Nice new area to the north. By school very nice.

Downtown looked a little dingy and disarrayed.

Fortunate to have three factories. They all appeared to be clean, quiet, no offensive odors.

Don't overlook tourism! You have a wealth of buildings which could be fixed up, potential bed and breakfasts, the parks, the carousel, Trek (tie in bike events), the river, etc.

A very attractive community with good industrial base. Downtown's a bit drab. The community has far many more positives than negatives.

WHAT WILL YOU REMEMBER ABOUT THIS COMMUNITY SIX MONTHS FROM NOW

Fireman's park and the ball fields -- Excellent. The well-groomed lawns. Downtown seemed a bit sleepy and drab. It was very clean. Residential area exceptionally nice. Attractive, well-kept lawns. Exceptional park -- a big plus for city activities. Kept in good condition by retired firemen. Seems to be a good arrangement.

Would stop again for the park.

How absolutely neat and clean it was. If I ever wanted an ordinance and/or policy on junk vehicles, debris, etc., I would contact Waterloo!

How nice, friendly and well-kept it was. I think it would be a great place to live.

Lawns, houses well-maintained, excellent industry.

I've "met my Waterloo" -- and liked it very much. You are a "tale of two cities." A community with nice people, good industries excellent residential, marvelous park, etc., etc.

On the other hand, you seem to have a lot of unrealized potential: your downtown, your location, tourism, business (retail) recruitment, a little paint and fix-up, some marketing **and** promotion. But, I think we all loved your town. Personally, I'd like to live there. You're at one of those times in a community's life where it's time to "kick it up a gear" for awhile. I will always have pleasant memories of Waterloo. Thanks for inviting us in to your community!