



A First Impressions Project

Cuba City, WI—Late Summer 2015

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Contents

Executive Summary.....	4	Customer Service	14
Evaluation Team	5	Signage	14
Evaluation Visit & Site Conditions.....	5	Window Displays.....	15
Prior to Arrival.....	6	Quality of Merchandise Available	15
Pre-visit Impression & Expectation.....	6	Mix of Facilities and Services	15
Community Website	6	Evening and Weekend Hours.....	16
Social Media	7	Parking	16
Facebook.....	7	Walkability	17
YouTube	7	Lighting.....	17
Twitter.....	8	Natural Environment in Downtown.....	18
Identify and Comment on Other Websites or online sources.....	8	Social Spaces Downtown	19
Wikipedia	8	Downtown & Tourism	19
Google Business search.....	8	RETAIL	20
10 Minute Impression.....	10	Mix of Retail	20
Community Entrances.....	11	Retail Needs Served Outside Community.....	21
Entry 1: Route 80 heading South	12	Missing Stores or Services.....	21
Entry 2: Route 80 heading North	12	Unusual or Unexpected Stores or Services.....	21
Entry 3: County H heading East	12	Re-use Stores	21
Entry 4: County H heading West.....	12	Stores Which You Would Travel 30 Miles.....	21
DOWNTOWN OR CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT	13	Overall Condition of Retail Sector.....	22
Overall Appearance of Buildings, Displays, Signage, Street-scape	13	Quality of Restaurants	22
Shopping Options.....	13	Quality of Grocery Stores & Other Retail Food.....	22
		Growing Food.....	23
		TOURISM	23
		Unique Features or Populations	23

Community Slogan or Brand	24	Fitness Centers & Physical Recreation	31
Strong Tourism Sector	25	Healthcare Facilities	31
Visitor's Center	25	Emergency Food Services	31
Quality of Existing Tourist Attractions	25	Emergency Services	32
New Tourist Attraction Potential	25	Emergency Shelters	32
Existing Natural or Ecological Attractions	26	GOVERNMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE & LAND USE	32
Overnight Accommodations & Conference Facilities	26	Location of Municipal Offices	32
HOUSING	26	Availability of Community Brochures	32
Residential Housing Mix	26	Helpfulness of Government Employees	33
Quality and Affordability of Housing	27	Public Transportation Overview	33
Housing Overview Chart	27	Transportation Infrastructure Overview	33
Open Community	27	Bike Paths & Pedestrian Facilities	33
Most & Least Appealing Features of Housing	27	Security & Safety for Bikes & Pedestrians	34
Flooding Risk	27	Accessibility of Community Facilities	34
BUSINESS & ECONOMY	28	Street Amenities Overview	34
Major Employers	28	Parking Outside Downtown	34
Primary Industry	28	Directional Signs for Public Parking	35
Industrial Parks	28	Directional Signs for Pedestrians & Bikes	35
Commercial Services (Internet, web, print shops)	29	Bicycle Parking	35
Professional & Financial Services	29	Land Use Compatibility	35
Broadband Internet	29	Water Management	35
EDUCATION, HEALTH SOCIAL & EMERGENCY SERVICES	29	Traffic Congestion	35
Availability of Social Services	29	Developing or Declining Areas	36
Schools	30	RECREATION, FAITH & CULTURE	36
Civic Organizations	30	Recreational Facility Overview	36

“FAMILY” Recreation & Fun.....	36	Consider Living in this Community.....	41
Youth Recreation & Fun.....	37	Information & Assistance from Community Members...	41
Senior Citizen Recreation & Fun	37	Accuracy of Pre-visit Impressions	42
Missing Recreation Opportunities	37	Accuracy of Pre-visit Information	42
Recreational Facility Overview.....	37	Most Outstanding Feature.....	42
Historical Buildings & Resources.....	37	WRAP-UP.....	42
Annual Events & Cultural Festivals	38	Was Pre-visit impression accurate?	43
Welcoming Community	38	Most Outstanding Feature.....	43
FIRST HAND COMMENTS FROM RESIDENTS.....	38	Positive Observations.....	43
Friendliness of Residents	38	Opportunities.....	43
Local Resident Event Recommendations.....	39	Obstacles.....	43
Referrals for More Information	39	Six month memory.....	44
Helpfulness of Residents.....	39	Learning changing Impression of own community.....	44
Residents’ View of Community.....	39	Borrowed Idea.....	44
Concerns of Residents.....	39		
USING YOUR SENSES.....	39		
Taste.....	39		
Smell.....	39		
Hear.....	40		
Environmental Health	40		
Strong negative or Positive events	40		
Time of Year Perspective	40		
REFLECTIONS.....	41		
Why Would you return?	41		
Consider locating business in this community.....	41		

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Cuba City is a well maintained community. It has the appearance of many small towns in rural Wisconsin, and similar to those communities, most likely faces tight budgets and limited financial resources. It was obvious to the passerby that there is a level of pride which community leaders should be proud of. There were nice "welcome" signs posted on the main roads. The electronic signs were very nice. It was evident very early on that the Presidential theme carried over on the signage and throughout the entire city.

The downtown area was clean and neat. The most memorable and unique feature of the community is the Presidential theme throughout. A beautiful rail car is well maintained but was not open for viewing. There was a mixture of buildings (i.e. types and styles) which were well cared for. The Team noted that the facades lacked visual continuity and there was no obvious overarching theme for the commercial and retail buildings. Finding on-street parking was easy. The city parking lot is a nice complement to the on-street parking. The downtown had adequate parking for the day and time the Evaluation Team visited. Sidewalks appear to be relatively well-maintained. There are no sidewalks in some residential neighborhoods, which is a common cost-saving measure in smaller communities. The Team noticed some buildings were not open during our mid-week visit, which was surprising. The mix of retail shopping available in Cuba City is typical of a community this size. Smaller communities tend to not have a full array of business and shopping opportunities. Oftentimes, when a small business is open during the weekend they customarily close Monday and / or Tuesday.

For a small community there are a lot of housing services. The schools are well located which likely facilitates children walking to and from school, as well as facilitating easy access by school bus.

Overall, private properties are well maintained. It is nice to see some home renovations and updates going on throughout the community. Also some new construction is going on

The customer service in several businesses was outstanding. People and shop keepers were friendly. The young woman in the Tin Lantern Antique Mall was very helpful! She provided some insight to activities in the area, restaurants and shopping opportunities. The Team received helpful verbal and print tourist information from City Hall (i.e. staff from the city clerk's office and the city police department). The staff provided a high level of customer service in speaking with the Team. Print materials provided enough information to lead the Teams to points of interest around town.

EVALUATION TEAM

Five people from the Princeton Team performed the evaluation on Wednesday, 19 August 2015.

- Ed Ellison
Business owner, Princeton, WI
- Vickie Wielgosh
Chair, Community Development Authority, City of Princeton
- Ashton Kallenbach
High School Student, Princeton, WI
- Mary Lou Neubauer
City Administrator, City of Princeton
- Jay Dampier
Instructor, University of Wisconsin Extension in Green Lake County, Green Lake, WI

The Evaluation Team member's ages ranged from teen through to mid-60s. The Team was instructed to assess community features using the following rubric:

- A = What I experienced far exceeded my expectations.
- B = What I experienced was better than my expectations.
- C = What I experienced met (but did not exceed) my expectations.
- D = What I experienced did not meet my expectations.
- F = What I experienced was far worse than my expectations.

In addition to the Evaluation Team, the City of Princeton Community Development Authority provided significant support, assistance, and insights during the First Impressions Evaluation.

Community Development Authority members include: Vickie Wielgosh, Matt Greget, Jasper Kallenbach, Matt Schneider, Clairellyn Sommersmith, Betty Wegner, Eric Koehn, Maureen Ellison, Mary Lou Neubauer and Jay Dampier.

EVALUATION VISIT & SITE CONDITIONS

The visit occurred on Wednesday, August 19, 2015. The Evaluation Team arrived in Cuba City at approximately 10:00AM. The day was overcast and unseasonably cool with temperatures in the high 50s. The Evaluation Team first conducted a 10-minute drive through the town while observing the four main entrances. The Team then drove through the Industrial Park on the south side of town, drove through the residential areas, and finally spent time exploring what the downtown and city parks had to offer. The Evaluation Team split up, but met together for lunch at a local eating establishment. The Team finished mid-afternoon and completed the visit by one final drive through in order to reduce the likelihood that items were missed.

PRIOR TO ARRIVAL

Pre-visit Impression & Expectation

What is your impression of the community before your upcoming visit? What are you expecting to see?

Evaluation Team members expected to experience a small town atmosphere; simple, friendly, with a relatively small business area. Many Midwestern towns tend to be well laid out-this was another expectation. Prior to the visit, one Team member remarked that he was hoping to check out the parks and the cheese store. Another Team member said that all she knew about Cuba City was that the community was in the southwestern corner of the state and that it was about the size of Princeton. The Evaluation Team expected to see a lot of information and history covering United States Presidents.

Prior to coming to the community another Team member mentioned that she had only known about Cuba City through the school sports programs and the road to state championships / playoffs.

Community Website

Grade and Comment on the Community Website for its appearance, usefulness, and credibility of information.

The primary website for Cuba City appears to be <http://cubacity.org/>.

Grade Summary		
A	B	B
C	D	



Figure 1. Cuba City website

Overall, the Cuba City website provides information which is well organized, business-like and informative. Information is presented in a clear and straight forward manner. Additionally, it provides useful background and pertinent information such as location, maps, and lots of pictures. The website appeared up-to-date with the community calendar automatically removing out-of-date items. The website could very well be the first place visitors

learn about the City of Presidents reference. This intrigued the Evaluation Team members.

The Team would suggest that the web page entitled, "About Cuba City" give a clear explanation why Cuba City is known as the City of Presidents. The fact the community boasts one of the longest lasting remaining bicentennials projects is buried at the bottom of "Cuba City History" page. The History page provides important historical information which may help resident's increase their sense of place and foster community pride.

The Quick Links menu on the main page is very helpful and makes website navigation easy. The Evaluation Team feels that the website serves community members and tourists, as well as families and businesses who are considering relocation to Cuba City.

Finally, the website's Business Directory is helpful and well organized. When viewing the website, an Evaluation Team member got the sense that the main street has some interesting businesses. The Team suggests using photos of buildings for *all* of the businesses. Using photos can be help visitors less familiar with the community find buildings and landmarks throughout the community. Presently, some businesses in the directly have street-view photos, while others do not.

Social Media

Grade and comment on the usefulness and credibility of information you obtained about the community through social media.

Grade Summary		
A	B	C
D	-	

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/Cuba-City-WI-160470897312856/>

Cuba City has a Facebook page, but hadn't any posts since 2010 indicating that community is not keeping the Facebook page current. The Team recommends that maintenance of the facebook page be assigned to someone, and establish a schedule to post one or two posts per month, relating to events, new business welcomes and other important community information.

<https://www.facebook.com/cubacityfire/>

The Fire Department has a very current Facebook page which was informative as did several of the other businesses in town. Some other Cuba City hits on facebook reveal some pages are active while others have not been updated in over 4 years.

<https://www.facebook.com/CubaCityChamber/>

The Chamber Facebook page displayed current activities and events.

YouTube

<https://youtu.be/wqlqb2DtpQU>

The Evaluation Team discovered a recent YouTube video for Cuba City. It is well produced. But it difficult to ascertain who the intended audience is. It seems that the video is produced with an older audience in mind, based on voice-over and music. Some material presented is useful for people considering to relocate. The video showcases establishments which sell to the convenience market such as mentioning the schools, pharmacy and grocery store. The video doesn't seem too target a tourism, destination market, however, the antiques stores are mentioned. The video also claims the community has a college town feel. The Team did not get this sense during the visit, perhaps this changes when school is in session.



Figure 2. Cuba City YouTube video

Twitter

It appears that Cuba City, WI does not have a Twitter account.

Identify and Comment on Other Websites or online sources

Identify and comment on other websites or online sources you used. Was there information you looked for but could not find online?

The Team attempted to find a specific Chamber of Commerce website, but the only Chamber information was posted on the City website. An assumption the Team drew was that the City and the Chamber are interconnected in some way. It was hard to determine what the benefits of being a Chamber member are. The Team suggests posting current Chamber member benefits online (which may aid in recruitment).

Wikipedia

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cuba_City,_Wisconsin

Wikipedia's entry for Cuba City, WI provides some useful general background information about the community. The demographic information provides general insights into the overall community and demonstrated a traditional home-town.

Google Business search

Google business search provided some good information on the business mix of Cuba City, although some retail establishments are not included. The Team suggests that Cuba City businesses check to see if they're listed on Google, If they are not listed we suggest they create a Google My Business profile.

<https://www.google.com/business/>

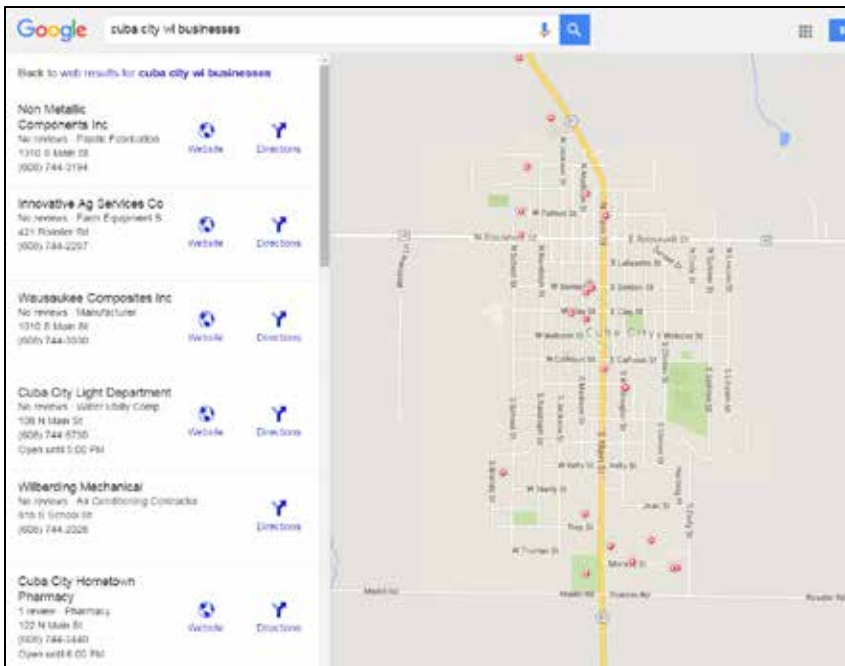


Figure 3. Google Business display of Cuba City businesses

Identify the feeling or sense about the community you now have from doing only the online research. What is your gut reaction? Would you want to visit there with family or friends? Is this a community that seems welcoming to you or others visit or live there? Why or why not? Consider your income, age, interests, hobbies, family, health/disabilities, race, and ethnicity.

Based on the online research, the Evaluation Team members feel that this is a friendly community with good reasons to live there. It appears to be friendly for all ages. The materials reviewed online were very informative. It was a good mix of text and pictures. One Team member said she was excited for the visit and Cuba City appeared to be a community with a significant mix of

history exhibited throughout the community. Another Team member remarked, that the websites portrayed the community as having good schools, nice parks and close to UW campus, and other major centers. One Team member provided a strong critique. She noted that the social media presence didn't encourage her to visit the community.

10 MINUTE IMPRESSION

Enter the community through the designated route and take a 10 minute drive without stopping. What was your first impression? Find a place to safely pull over to the side of the road and write down what you felt about the community based on your first impressions.

We drove through town and checked out all of the entrances. There were nice "welcome" signs posted on the main roads. The electronic signs were very nice. It was evident very early on that the Presidential theme carried over on the signage and throughout the entire city. In addition to the Presidents on the lamp posts, the Team noted many flags throughout the community; both commercial and residential properties.



Figure 4. Attractive welcome sign greets visitors to Cuba City

The community seems well cared for and is quite clean and well-kept. It is very inviting. Bushes are maintained. Overall, private properties are well maintained. It is nice to see some home renovations and updates going on throughout the community. Also some new construction is going on in the neighborhood behind Dollar General. The industrial park to the south of town is well maintained grounds and is highly visible.

Overall the community had tidy, well maintained neighborhoods and main streets, however, some roads are in need of repairs.



Figure 5. Some of Cuba City's road require maintenance

COMMUNITY ENTRANCES

The Evaluation Team entered the community on all of the entrance roads:

- Route 80 heading South
- Route 80 heading North
- County H heading East
- County H heading West.

The Team noted that all were equally clean and portrayed a sense of community pride. The entrances were typical of what one might expect. All Entries were adequate, with Entries 1 and 2 appearing as primary entry points, while Entries 3 and 4 appearing to be secondary points. This assumption was made in part due to the obvious signage investment on Entries 1 and 2. The Team also noticed signage uniformity, with Entries 1 and 2; and entries 3 and 4 being the same.

Signage was nice, city seems lonely

Good signage and well kept.



Figure 6. Cuba City map, with entries presented

Entry 1: Route 80 heading South

Grade Summary		
A	A	B
A	B	

Entry 1 appears to be a primary entrance into Cuba City. This point has a highly visible, high quality sign which clearly lets travelers know they are entering Cuba City. The highly visible marquee message is a nice detail, and provides important community messages.

Entry 2: Route 80 heading North

Grade Summary		
A	B	B
B	C+	

Entry 2 also appears to be a primary entrance into Cuba City. This point also has a highly visible, high quality sign which clearly lets travelers know they are entering Cuba City. The highly visible marquee message is a nice detail, and provides important community messages. Good signage, clean, well kept. The industrial park was impressive. A Team member noted how neat and clean it was.

Entry 3: County H heading East

Grade Summary		
B	B	B
C	C	

Entry 3 appears to be a secondary entrance into Cuba City. The sign at this entry is older than the ones on 80, but are still well maintained. This entrance is marked by a well maintained school and grounds. Some road bumps were noted as entering the community.

Entry 4: County H heading West

Grade Summary		
A	B	B
C	C	

Entry 4 also appears to be a secondary entrance into Cuba City. The sign at this entry is older than the ones on 80, but are still well maintained. This entrance is marked by farm fields, a storage facility, residential area, and the nicely signed Jefferson Substation which has Presidential themed signage

DOWNTOWN OR CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

The downtown area was clean and neat. The Presidential theme ties the community together. There was a mixture of buildings (i.e. types and styles) which were well cared for.

Overall Appearance of Buildings, Displays, Signage, Street-scape

Grade and comment on the overall appearance of buildings, displays, signage, street-scape.

Grade Summary		
B	C	C
D	-	

The Team noted that the facades lacked visual continuity and there was no obvious overarching theme for the commercial and retail buildings. This is commonplace since individual building owners have freedom to maintain buildings to their own liking, and its apparent that the city does not require a façade scheme for business or commercial properties. Directional signage is great. Some commercial and retail buildings downtown are in great shape, while others need some TLC. Some store window displays could be improved. The buildings in the industrial park, schools and Epione Pavilion have well-maintained exteriors.

Some businesses remained closed into the afternoon during the Wednesday visit. Also, the visitors center was closed.

Shopping Options

Grade and comment on the variety of shopping options.

Grade Summary		
B	C	C
C	C	

It appears that Cuba City has all the primary stores required to sustain a community of this size; including a grocery store, some downtown retail, a pharmacy, and restaurants. However, it was noted that the community has limited shopping opportunities. A Team member speculated that travel might be necessary in order for residents to obtain some day-to-day shopping needs. Another Team member reflected on his expectations prior to arrival and stated than he expected to see more retail shops. The “smallness” of the commercial area surprised him. The Team also noted that a nice variety of antique shops exist, but unfortunately it appears that the community doesn’t presently have a critical mass of shops which would draw tourists and destination shoppers. Developing and encouraging retail opportunities centered around antiques might be an important strategy for the future.

Customer Service

Grade and comment on the customer service you received during your visit

Grade Summary		
B	B	B
C	-	

The customer service in several businesses was outstanding. People and shop keepers were friendly. The young woman in the Tin Lantern Antique Mall was very helpful! She provided some insight to activities in the area, restaurants and shopping opportunities. It is very good to have an employee like this when tourists visit Cuba City. Some store keepers didn't seem well-informed of town, county, or local events. One shop employee wasn't from the area and couldn't provide us much information on the community, and ironically, a couple came in the store asked the same questions which she could not answer.

In another store we stopped in and made a purchase. The first store employee appeared to be on the phone with the owner and the second store employee appeared to be ending her shift and wasn't willing to converse at all. Nick's Café provided great food and service. Employees were helpful about the area and things to check out. Most of my customer service experiences were friendly and helpful.

Signage

Grade and comment on the signage

Grade Summary		
B	B	B
B	C	



Figure 7. An example of a Presidential shield along Main Street.

The Presidential shield signs were the main focal point in the downtown. The nicely themed signage provided the community a uniform look. Initially they overshadowed (perhaps even distracted the Team) the rest of the downtown signs but once the Team started walking the Team felt the signage was adequate. The Team also noted that business signage was clear and

understandable. Not all Team members, however, were in agreement, one member felt the signage was unorganized and not always visible.

Window Displays

Grade and comment on the window displays

Grade Summary		
B	B	C
C	C	

The Team felt that the window displays were what is to be expected and are appropriate for the product they are selling. It looked like shop keepers took care, opened shops and overall have good displays. Although, the Team did observe that some windows have many advertisements that appear cluttered and a bit tacky.

Quality of Merchandise Available

Grade and comment on the variety and quality of merchandise.

Grade Summary		
B	B	C
C	D	

Great antiques and cheese shop, but not much else. As in many smaller communities, merchandise selection is often limited. However, a Team member commented that there was a good selection of merchandise, especially related to antiques. One Team member commented, "I mainly checked out antique stores. Some really neat interesting finds."

Mix of Facilities and Services

Grade and comment on the mix of facilities and services in the downtown (housing, professional services, retail, recreation, accommodation, industry, parks, etc.).

Grade Summary		
B	B	C
-	-	

For a small community there are a lot of housing services. Also there seems to be strong industrial, retail, opportunities. There is a mixture of businesses types in what appeared to be the commercial corridor (primarily Main Street). The mixture is likely acceptable variety for both convenience shoppers and shoppers passing through, however the mix might not be large not enough to "draw" people from outside the area.

The city parks throughout the community are nice and well kept. It is not clear whether or not the hotel in town is open or closed. The daycare suggests that the community has a critical mass of younger families living in or near the city. The Team suggests that antiques need to be more heavily promoted. Perhaps another store could be attracted to move into the closed tavern.

Evening and Weekend Hours

Grade and comment on the accessibility of downtown merchants during evening and weekend hours.

Grade Summary		
C	C	C
C	F	

The Team noticed some buildings were not open during our mid-week visit, which was surprising. Oftentimes, when a small business is open during the weekend they customarily close Monday and / or Tuesday. It was noted that the cross-section of Cuba City businesses (which may cater to a destination market) had a variety and sometimes unusual hours of operation. A case in point was the visitors center which had posted hours of operation only open a few hours on a Saturday. A Team member noted that one store as only open on weekends. This suggests that the store owner may feel few tourists are drawn to the community during the week and cannot justify expanding hours. Weekend store hours appeared to be adequate – the Team visited on a Wednesday in August. Posted evening business hours were limited.

Parking

Grade and comment on the quality, availability, or necessity for parking in the downtown.

Grade Summary		
B	B	B
C	C	



Figure 8. Public Parking area just off Main Street in Cuba City

Finding on-street parking was easy. The city parking lot is a nice complement to the on-street parking. The downtown had adequate parking for the day and time the Evaluation Team visited. There was signage for a public parking lot by the Presidential Park which indicated available parking; however since the parking lot was not paved and parking spots were not marked, visitors may have difficulty knowing the preferred parking configuration.

Walkability

Grade and comment on the walkability (presence or absence of footpaths, sidewalks, pedestrian rights-of-way, crossings, building access) of the downtown.

Grade Summary		
B	B	B
C	-	

Sidewalks appear to be relatively well-maintained. There are no sidewalks in some residential neighborhoods, which is a common cost-saving measure in smaller communities. Crosswalks are painted on the main street, but are lacking in residential areas. The Team got the sense that residents could easily walk to obtain the basics (such as grocery, pharmacy, doctor, etc.) with ease. According to walkscore.com the Cuba City has a score of 49 which suggests that most errands require a car. This walk score is typical of small rural Wisconsin communities.

Lighting

Grade and comment on the quality (appearance, adequacy, etc.) of lighting in the downtown.

Grade Summary		
B	B	B
C	-	

Main Street had old-fashioned style lighting which adds to the community's sense of place. The Team noticed that the Presidential Shields were a nice feature on the light posts. The Team conducted the evaluation during daylight, however it appears that the community has adequate lighting in high traffic areas such as downtown. Some areas lack street lights, which is to be expected in a community of this size.



Figure 9. Main Street Cuba city is lit with period street lights

Natural Environment in Downtown

Grade and comment on the quality of the natural environment in the downtown (trees, flower plantings, pocket parks, green spaces, etc.)

Grade Summary		
B	B	C
C	-	

The streets were clean and minimal litter was noticed. Trees and bushes throughout the downtown and broader community were well maintained. One Team member stated that he “enjoyed the flag theme.” Another Team member remarked that there were, “some nice street tree plantings.” Having hanging flower baskets would visually improve the downtown, however, some nicely placed potted plants in front storefronts did add a nice touch.



Figure 10. Street trees and potted plants add beauty to Cuba City's downtown

Social Spaces Downtown

Grade and comment on the quality of social spaces in the downtown (indoor or outdoor cafés, shaded outdoor seating areas, pubs, diners etc.)



Figure 11. Presidential Park provides nice outdoor seating

Grade Summary		
C	-	-
-	-	

The Evaluation Team did not notice a lot of outdoor spaces in the downtown area, other than the gazebo at Presidential Park, which may act as a nice place to sit and read a book. The Presidents' pictures around the inside roof line of the gazebo were an interesting touch.

Downtown & Tourism

Does the downtown or central business district play a role in tourism? Is there potential for it to play a greater role? What evidence did you see or not see that leads you to this opinion?



Figure 12. Close up of the Presidential Rail Car in downtown Cuba City

The Team received helpful verbal and print tourist information from City Hall (i.e. staff from the city clerk's office and the city police department). The staff provided a high level of customer service in speaking with the Team. Print materials provided enough information to lead the Teams to points of interest around town. It appears that the Presidential Rail Car acts as the community's visitor's center. It was disappointing that the center's hours limited to only 4 hours per week. This is, however, somewhat understandable considering it may be difficult recruiting volunteers to staff the rail car.

The downtown seems to be the focal point for tourism activities. With some additional development, perhaps the downtown could be a larger tourist draw. Some empty store fronts offer development potential. Adding side street stores might be helpful. Encouraging main street anchors may play a role in developing the tourism sector. Presently it appears that Giles Cheese Store and the Junque store may already be playing this role to a certain degree. Furthermore, an important community asset which can be used to develop a stronger tourism sector is encouraging shop keepers to maintain their enthusiastic and welcoming manner.

RETAIL

The mix of retail shopping available in Cuba City is typical of a community this size. Smaller communities tend to not have a full array of business and shopping opportunities. The Team's observations and findings kept this fact in consideration.

Mix of Retail

Describe and comment on the mix of retail shopping available in the community (malls, specialty shops, strip malls, big box stores).

It has essential shopping for a convenience market, including grocery, pharmacy, taverns, restaurants and gasoline. Also as expected, the community has no malls or big box stores. There appears to be a small destination market centered on antiques, which may provide additional opportunities should Cuba City become known as an antiques destination. The Team members speculate that Cuba City's proximity to other larger communities may be a factor leading to residents shopping outside of the city.



Figure 13. Cuba City possesses a mix of retail and service opportunities for residents and visitors alike

Retail Needs Served Outside Community

What retail goods do local residents appear to need to travel outside the community to find?

It appears that a number of goods cannot be found locally, requiring residents to shop outside of town. These missing goods include; clothing, furniture and some specialty grocery. One Team member observed that, "Dollar General provides a good mix of general items, however clothing needs would require the travel to a larger city."

Missing Stores or Services

What stores or services were missing that you would expect to find?

The basics are covered through the current retail mix; however, the Team expected to find a small hardware store for a community of this size. There also appears to be a lack of stores and services directly marketing teens and young adults. It was unclear whether or not the community had recreation center or other safe places for teens to "hang out." If the building on Jackson and Yuba Streets services this community purpose, proper signage is required. Team members were unable to locate the community's Chamber of Commerce office. Is the Chamber part of the City?

Unusual or Unexpected Stores or Services

What retail stores or services did you find that were unusual or unexpected for a community of this size?

The good selection of merchandise across the antiques stores was unexpected. Also one might expect to find the specialty meat and cheese stores only in bigger communities. The size (looking from the street) of the child daycare was much bigger than the Team anticipated. Additionally, it was nice to see that a public swimming pool and golf course are within close proximity to Cuba City.

Re-use Stores

Are their stores or other outlets where residents and visitors can go to reuse, resell, and/or recycle goods (e.g., clothing, electronics, household items, etc.)?

The Evaluation Team could not find any stores or other outlets where residents and visitors can go to re-use, re-sell, and/or recycle goods – other than perhaps antique stores.

Stores Which You Would Travel 30 Miles

What stores in this community would you travel a distance of more than 30 miles to patronize?

There are a number of stores the team would travel 30 miles to visit. Some Team members would consider traveling to town for the antique stores if they had all been open. One Team member remarked that if all the antique stores were open, "I probably could have made a half day of shopping out of it." Team members also remarked that during a day of antiques, they would plan to visit the cheese and meat stores; and have lunch at Nick's.

Overall Condition of Retail Sector

Grade and comment on the overall condition of the retail sector.

Grade Summary		
B	B	C
C	C	

Overall the Team evaluated the condition of the downtown as good. One Team member commented that she would have liked to gather a bit more information from the businesses during the visits, but what was provided was helpful. Another Team member remarked that some business signage and facades require some maintenance.

Quality of Restaurants

Grade and comment on the variety and quality of restaurants. Comment on location, cost, and types of foods available.

Grade Summary		
A	B	B
C	-	

The Team met for lunch at a pleasant, friendly, café style restaurant, which was recommended by locals. As a whole, the town offers a limited variety of restaurants. The Team noticed a Subway and a Pizza place as well as a few taverns which appear to be nice eating establishments. Some taverns were closed, limiting options available during the lunch hour. Also, it appears that a number of family-owned restaurants, supper clubs and taverns are a close driving distance from Cuba City.

Quality of Grocery Stores & Other Retail Food

Grade and comment on the variety and quality of retail food outlets (e.g., grocery stores, superstores, convenience stores, gas stations.) Comment on location, cost, and types of foods available. Are healthy food options available?

Grade Summary		
A	A	B
B	C	

The community has a nice grocery store which serves the local population. Also the gas stations offer fuel as well as prepared foods and light grocery. Healthy food options do not stand out. For a community this size, variety was good and costs seemed reasonable. Specialty cheese and meat stores nicely round out the community's food shopping options.

Growing Food

Comment on any apparent ways that residents grow their own food or access food through local farms (e.g., community gardens, backyard gardens, farmers markets, community supported agriculture farms or drop sites).

Grade Summary		
B	B	C
C	-	

Community members and visitors can access local foods in the summer during monthly farmers market in Veterans Memorial Park. We visited the community on the Farm Market and it was suggested that the team visit the market. Using the city park as a farmers market venue can capitalize on the community and tourist draw. It also appears that there's at least one community supported agriculture operation nearby. The team did not note any community gardens but did notice that it appears that some homes have backyard gardens.

TOURISM

Tourism is important to the area. The Wisconsin Department of Tourism reports that in Grant County alone, \$42.4 million of direct visitor spending occurred in 2014, generating approximately \$5.3 million in state and local taxes. It might be expected that a community the size of Cuba City wouldn't have a huge tourism industry, and this has been taken into consideration. Tourism marketing in smaller communities is often times conducted on an area or regional scale, which is evident in some of the area tourism publications.

Unique Features or Populations

What unique features or populations exist in this community?

The most memorable and unique feature of the community is the Presidential theme throughout. A beautiful rail car is well maintained but was not open for viewing. Also, it appears that Cuba City may serve as a bedroom community for Dubuque, IA (approximately 20 miles away), and Platteville, WI (approximately 10 miles away). If this is in fact the case, perhaps there's opportunity to cater to this unique market.

Community Slogan or Brand

Does the community have an identifiable slogan/brand?

The Presidential theme is an identifiable brand. "The City of Presidents" could be used and explained in a much more intentional and extensive manner. It was challenging for the Team to find out why the community has a presidential theme. Prior to learning the reason, some Team members speculated that maybe past presidents came from Cuba City or perhaps the community was an important campaign stop. The Presidential theme is followed throughout and was obvious on city signs, municipal structures, public works vehicles and the flags throughout town, and even the water tower.



Figure 14. Even Cuba City's water town sports the presidential theme



Figure 15. Cuba City truck displaying the presidential theme

Strong Tourism Sector

Does the community appear to have a strong tourism sector? Why or why not?

The city does not appear to have a strong tourism sector. It does appear to have a strong residential (convenience market) sector, along with a few antiques shops. One Team member remarked as a tourist, "I did not see any physical or environmental amenities which would draw me to the community."

Visitor's Center

If the community has a visitor's center, grade the customer service you received when you visited.

Grade Summary		
C	D	D
D	-	

The rail car tourist center has limited hours (which is a problem from a tourists' perspective). This surprised the Team since the visit was conducted during peak tourist season. It appears that City Hall serves the function as a tourist center. Highly visible signage at Presidential Park directing the Team to City Hall for tourism information would have been helpful. The rail car presently serves solely as an attraction open for limited hours. This should not serve as the tourism information center. The Team received a high level of customer service from the staff at City Hall.

Quality of Existing Tourist Attractions

Grade and comment on the quality and appearance of existing tourist attractions.

Grade Summary		
B	C	C
D	-	

Well kept, easy to find, inviting.

New Tourist Attraction Potential

What have you seen that could be developed into a tourist attraction (natural or man-made)?

The rail car could act as a good starting point in developing a tourist attraction. It looked really interesting but the Team could not access the inside since it was closed for all but 4 hours a week. This might be overcome by directing visitors to City Hall where a key could be signed out, allowing guests to view the inside. Antique shops possess potential as an attraction. Perhaps shop owners could coordinate hours of operation to help ensure visitors will have opportunity to see all the shops during visits. Also the parks are well kept and perhaps new events could be added to what is already happening throughout the year.

Existing Natural or Ecological Attractions

What natural, ecological or environmentally-related tourist attractions or accommodations exist in the community?

The city has some very nice parks.

Overnight Accommodations & Conference Facilities

Grade and comment on the availability and selection of overnight accommodations in the community (hotels, motels, B&B's). Grade and comment on the availability and adequacy of facilities to accommodate a conference, wedding, or large number of visitors.

Grade Summary		
B	C	C
C	D	

The only hotel the Team could find appeared to be closed and locked up. Has it permanently closed? Oftentimes small towns cannot support a motel chain which is no fault of the community.

HOUSING

According to the 2015 Wisconsin Department of Revenue assessment data, Cuba City has 763 residential units with a valuation of nearly \$88 million.

Residential Housing Mix

Describe the residential housing mix in the downtown (apartment, townhouses, single-family, multi-family, etc).

Cuba City has a good range of house sizes; from older smaller homes to newer larger homes. There is a good mix of housing types which include apartments, multi family, and single family residential.



Figure 16. New home construction in Cuba City

Quality and Affordability of Housing

How would you grade the overall quality, affordability, and availability of housing in the community?

Grade Summary		
B	B	B
B	-	

Housing Overview Chart

Grade and comment on the condition of the following:

Note: letter grades are presented in ranges, as assessed by the Evaluation Team.

Existing / Older Homes	B-C
Vacant lots for new homes	B-D
New Homes	A-B
Apartments /Rental Housing	A-C
Transitional housing	B-F
Senior assisted living / group homes	A-B
Assisted living/group homes for those with disabilities	B-C

Open Community

Are there neighborhoods or areas of the community that appear more or less welcoming to people of all: races, ethnicities (Hispanic/Latino etc.), abilities (wheelchair access, deaf/blind), religions (variety of worship opportunities), sexual orientation

(LGBT individuals/families), or by marital statuses (single, married, divorced)? Why or why not?

Neighborhoods appear to be appropriate, based on the community's US Census demographics. The Team did not observe anything that appeared discriminatory.

Most & Least Appealing Features of Housing

What are the most appealing and least appealing features of the housing? Why?

Most homes and yards were neat, clean, and well-cared for. The community also seems to be well-planned, with one exception being that some housing appears close to the industrial park. The streets are well-marked and signed. Parks were conveniently located near residential areas. Some of the community's roads in residential areas are in disrepair. The Team noted that there were a few unmowed lawns, and homes in need of a fresh coat of paint, but this was in the minority.

Flooding Risk

Does residential housing appear to be located near water sources that are subject to flooding (e.g., rivers, lakes, streams, etc.)? If so, does the community appear to have put in place any protections against flooding?

Residential housing does not appear to be located near water sources that are subject to flooding.

BUSINESS & ECONOMY

According to ESRI Business Analyst Cuba City's top three industries expressed in businesses / establishments are: Service (23%), Retail Trade (13%), and Health Care and Social Assistance (9%).

Major Employers

What appear to be the major employers in the community?

It appears that businesses located in the industrial park provide jobs for Cuba City and surroundings. Another noticeable industrial sector includes; agriculture (such as Gro Alliance). Other jobs are likely provided by the medical field, small manufacturing, municipality, schools, and retail. The Team speculates that at least some residents are employed outside the city.

Primary Industry

Is there a primary industry in the community (e.g. agriculture, tourism, mining, advanced manufacturing, food processing etc.)? Is the community noticeably dependent on any one type of industry?

Agriculture appears to be the dominant industry in Cuba City, along with light industry. The town is surrounded by farm fields. One Team member remarked that the retirement home would likely employ many.

Industrial Parks

Is there a well-maintained industrial park of improved land where industries could locate or expand? Would this community be an attractive location for industrial development? Why or why not? Grade and comment on the appearance of industrial facilities.

Grade Summary		
A	B	B
B	-	

If Industrial Parks are not maintained well, have covenants to address outside storage of equipment, they can look very cluttered. This was not the case here. The Industrial Park is well kept with good signage and good mixture of businesses. The park is also easily accessed from Route 80. The Park was attractive near the south the entrance to Cuba City. For the most part the Industrial Park is away from residential areas, however, some housing and Epione Pavilion is within sight of the Industrial Park. It also appears that there could be room for future expansion, should the need arise.

Commercial Services (Internet, web, print shops)

Grade and comment on the adequacy and availability of commercial services (e.g. high speed internet providers, print shops, web design etc.)

Grade Summary		
C	C	C
D	-	

The community has high speed internet, local printing, and web design services. If the community is lacking any key commercial services, it appears larger centers are within an easy commute.

Professional & Financial Services

Grade and comment on the adequacy and availability of professional and financial services for a community of this size (e.g. engineering, insurance, legal, and accounting firms, banks, ATM's).

Grade Summary		
B	B	C
C	-	

The community has adequate professional and financial services for a community of this size. Services we noticed included real estate agents, insurance, banking, and accounting.

Broadband Internet

Grade and comment on the adequacy and availability of high speed internet services in this community.

Grade Summary		
B	C	C
C	-	

It appears that Cuba City has access to high speed internet services, with a number of them operating within the community. The Team was unable to determine if the Library provided free WIFI to the community.

EDUCATION, HEALTH SOCIAL & EMERGENCY SERVICES

Cuba City appears to have all the essential services expected for a community this size.

Availability of Social Services

Grade and comment on the visibility and availability of social services (e.g., day care, senior center, counseling, etc.) for a community of this size. How do local residents feel about these services?

Grade Summary		
A	A	C
C	-	

Team members noted that the community has a day care as well as a multi-use facility called Epione Pavilion which appears to house some health and social services and a home for the aging. The grounds and building at Epione Pavilion appear to be in very good condition.

Schools

Grade and comment on the visibility and availability of schools for a community of this size (preschool/ kindergarten/Headstart, primary/elementary/middle, high schools, colleges/universities). How do local residents feel about schools?

Grade Summary		
A	A	B
C	-	

The schools are well located which likely facilitates children walking to and from school, as well as facilitating easy access by school bus. Based on information found on the Cuba City website, it appears that there is community pride related to the school system in Cuba City. The school grounds and building appear to be in good condition.



Figure 17. Cuba City school grounds are well maintained

Civic Organizations

Grade and comment on the visibility and availability of civic organizations and clubs for a community of this size. Are there organizations and clubs that would appeal to a variety of age groups? How do local residents feel about civic involvement?

Grade Summary		
A	A	A
B	-	

The Cuba City website nicely displays all the civic organizations, providing the sense that these groups are an important part of the community. The website clearly presents information for each organization on the website, however specific

locations and meeting information could not be found. Some civic organizations in Cuba City might be more appealing for community members 40 years old and over. As the Team drove through the community, groups such as the Lions, K of C, and Veterans Groups etc. are active.

Fitness Centers & Physical Recreation

Grade and comment on the visibility and availability of private or public fitness centers or facilities for physical recreation. How do local residents feel about these services?

Grade Summary		
B	B	C
C	-	

Although not immediately apparent, it seems that the school may house a fitness center for community members.

Healthcare Facilities

Grade and comment on the visibility and availability of healthcare facilities (hospitals, physicians, dentists, optometrists, or other medical offices and clinics, longterm care or assisted living facilities, other health services such as chiropractic, mental health services, yoga, massage, etc.). How do local residents feel about these services?

Grade Summary		
A	A	B
C	-	

Cuba City appears to have adequate health care facilities for a community of its size; including, a long-term care facility, dentists, pharmacy, chiropractic and other medical facilities.

Emergency Food Services

Grade and comment on the visibility and availability of emergency food services (e.g., food pantries, soup kitchens, community meals) for a community of this size. How do local residents feel about these services?

Grade Summary		
C	C	D
-	-	

No obvious visibility and availability of emergency food services in Cuba City.

Emergency Services

Grade and comment on the visibility and availability of emergency services (police, fire, ambulance and emergency medical) for a community of this size. How do local residents feel about these services?

Grade Summary		
B	B	C
C	-	

The Police Department was visible in the community and was very helpful. There appears to be a large EMS facility on the south side of town.

Emergency Shelters

Grade and comment on the visibility and availability of emergency shelters available to the public to accommodate residents in the event of a heat wave, flood, or other disaster. Do they appear accessible to people without vehicles? Is there signage in the community indicating where these shelters are located?

Grade Summary		
C	C	-
-	-	

Emergency shelters were not visible. It is suspected that during emergency situations, (i.e heat wave, flood, or other

disaster) the school and other civic buildings would be made available.

GOVERNMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE & LAND USE

Cuba City is a well maintained community. It has the appearance of many small towns in rural Wisconsin, and similar to those communities, most likely faces tight budgets and limited financial resources. It was obvious to the passerby that there is a level of pride which community leaders should be proud of.

Location of Municipal Offices

Are municipal offices conveniently located?

The municipal office conveniently located on the Main Street in Cuba City.

Availability of Community Brochures

Comment on the availability and quality of community brochures, business directories, or community profiles if they are available (either online or paper)

City Hall had a number of well displayed brochures and information. Also the online material on website was good. Outside signage to direct people off street would be helpful. Visitors from larger communities may not know that smaller communities provide visitor information at City Hall.

Helpfulness of Government Employees

Grade and comment on the helpfulness of government employees

Grade Summary		
B	-	-
-	-	

Very friendly and helpful

Public Transportation Overview

Grade the availability and accessibility of the following modes of public transportation.

It appears that the community lacks the following modes of public transportation: local bus, intercity/regional bus, van service, train, taxi, ride sharing, shared bicycles. For a community of this size these services are typically not expected.

Transportation Infrastructure Overview

Grade and comment on the availability and apparent quality of each of the following:

Note: letter grades are presented in ranges, as assessed by the Evaluation Team.

Street signage	C-D
Bus Stops with shelters/shade	-
Bike lanes on street	D
Streets	A-B
Street lighting	C-D
Street crossings	A-B
Traffic controls	A-C
Sidewalks	B-C

Bike Paths & Pedestrian Facilities

Grade and comment on the condition of bike paths/trails and pedestrian facilities. If bike and pedestrian facilities exist, were people using them? If so, comment on the level of use.

Grade Summary		
C	C	-
-	-	

The team did not notice any bike or pedestrian paths.

Security & Safety for Bikes & Pedestrians

Grade and comment on your sense of security/safety as a pedestrian and/or bicyclist in the community. Are there any apparent incentives the community offers for transit users, pedestrians, or bicyclists (e.g., parking closer to destinations, "bicycle benefits" discount programs, etc.).

Grade Summary		
B	B	B
-	-	

The community provides a sense of security and safety as a pedestrian. Traffic seems to drive the speed limit which contributes to the sense of safety. Cuba City being a small town, bikers should be safe. Additionally, the community's friendliness added to the overall sense of security and safety.

Accessibility of Community Facilities

Are community facilities and infrastructure accessible for people with disabilities, the elderly, people carrying luggage, or pushing strollers, etc.?

The community's facilities and infrastructure appear to be accessible for people with disabilities, the elderly, or pushing strollers. However, some buildings have a step up to go inside which may pose a challenge for some.

Street Amenities Overview

Grade and comment on the availability and quality of each of the following amenities:

Note: letter grades are presented in ranges, as assessed by the Evaluation Team.

Benches	B
Shade areas	C
Drinking fountains	B
Street / Public Art	C
Landscaping / streetscaping	B-C
Wireless internet access points	-
Public restrooms	B
Public trash containers	B
Public recycling containers	-

Parking Outside Downtown

Grade the availability of parking outside of the downtown

Grade Summary		
B	C	D
-	-	

Parking outside of the downtown appears adequate.

Directional Signs for Public Parking

Grade directional signage for public parking:

Grade Summary		
B	B	C
C	C	

Directional Signs for Pedestrians & Bikes

Grade directional signage for pedestrians and bicyclists:

Grade Summary		
B	C	C
F	-	

Bicycle Parking

Grade and comment on the availability and accessibility of bicycle parking near schools, retail areas, community services, and recreational facilities.

Grade Summary		
C	C	C
NA	-	

It appears that (as in many communities) tree guards may be used for their unofficial purpose of locking up bikes. One Team member observed bike racks in Cuba City.

Land Use Compatibility

Do you see compatible or conflicting land uses in the community (e.g., a park near a museum) Are land uses appropriately located (e.g. commercial, residential, green space, etc.)?

For the most part, the community appears to be well planned, and conflicting land uses are minimal with one exception observed by the Team. The industrial park on the south side of town seemed to be in very close proximity to residential housing with little or no separation. One Team member commented on how creating a visual screen at Presidential Park could hide the direct view of buildings.

Water Management

Comment on the apparent effectiveness water management in the community (e.g. storm water drains, rain barrels, rain gardens, permeable pavement areas). Are there any large areas of standing water? If there is a river or stream, are there developed areas that appear to be close enough to be damaged by flooding?

Water management appears to be good and there are not obvious issues.

Traffic Congestion

Did you experience traffic congestion anywhere? If yes, please provide location.

The Evaluation Team did not experience traffic congestion.

Developing or Declining Areas

Are there areas of the community that appear to be developing or declining? Comment on how effectively the community appears to be managing this.

There appears to be some housing development in the southeast corner of town, behind Dollar General. Some main street commercial buildings appear to be in decline and in need of some care. Overall the whole community seemed to be well-developed and appears neat, well-kept, well-managed, appears to have unified community pride.

RECREATION, FAITH & CULTURE

It is perceived that a lot of the recreation is initiated through the school system or perhaps private organizations. However, the Team didn't observe this first hand during the visit.

Recreational Facility Overview

Please grade the availability and appearance of each of the following types of recreational facilities.

Note: letter grades are presented in ranges, as assessed by the Evaluation Team.

Parks (municipal, county, state, national)	A-B
Public recreation facilities	A-B
Private recreation facilities	A
Non-motorized bike or walking paths	-
Motorized trails (ATV, snowmobile)	-

"FAMILY" Recreation & Fun

What do "families" in this community appear to do for recreation/fun?

It not entirely apparent what families in this community appear to do for recreation or fun. Although it is likely families take advantage of the parks as well as the nearby swimming pool. Also, the Team suspects that the Library is frequented by families. One Team member asked a store clerk what was available for family fun. The clerk noted there were several nearby county fairs because Cuba City is situated near county lines. It was also noted that the once a month farmers market was gaining in popularity. Also, due to the close to proximity of two larger centers, the Team suspects that families likely take advantage of recreation opportunities in other communities.

Youth Recreation & Fun

What do young people in this community appear to do for recreation/fun?

It is unclear what young people in Cuba City do for recreation or fun. However the Evaluation Team observed nice playgrounds, baseball diamonds, sports fields and basketball hoops throughout the community.

Senior Citizen Recreation & Fun

What do senior citizens in this community appear to do for recreation/fun?

It is unclear what seniors in this community appear to do for recreation or fun. Although the Team suspects that seniors take advantage of the parks, antiques stores, dining as well as the nearby golf course and swimming pool.

Missing Recreation Opportunities

What recreational activities or facilities seemed to be missing?

The Team did not notice a community hall, or movie theater. Frisbee golf is gaining in popularity and perhaps this could increase recreation opportunities in the current park system.

Recreational Facility Overview

Grade and comment on the overall suitability of the recreational facilities for each of the following:

Note: letter grades are presented in ranges, as assessed by the Evaluation Team.

Senior citizens	A
Families	A
Young adults	B
Teens	B
Children (6-12 years)	B
Children (0-6 years)	B
Single adults	B

Historical Buildings & Resources

Does the community have historical buildings or places? Are they well-maintained?

There were older buildings but could not determine if they were of historic significance. The majority of buildings appeared to be maintained. The Presidential Rail Car appeared to have historical significance.

Annual Events & Cultural Festivals

Does the community hold annual events or cultural festivals? How did you hear about them? What did you learn about these traditions behind the festivals?

Through a web search, the Team learned that Cuba City hosts a number of annual events throughout the year, which include the Community Market, Christmas Glow, and a St. Patrick's Day Parade. The monthly farmers market appears have some momentum and may provide opportunity to expand into a larger event related to local foods or harvest season. The last Presidential celebration appears to have been quite a while ago. The Team became aware of the Presidents celebration from visitor brochures. The community may consider focusing on a historical/presidential celebration incorporating this theme, considering the current investment in the Presidential theme.

Welcoming Community

Does the community appear welcoming to people of all: races, ethnicities (Hispanic/Latino etc.), abilities (wheelchair access, deaf/blind), religions (variety of worship opportunities), sexual orientation (LGBT individuals/families), or by marital statuses (single, married, divorced)? Why or why not?

It is difficult to assess whether the community is welcoming to people of all: races, ethnicity, abilities, or religions, although the team did not observe any signs of discrimination.

FIRST HAND COMMENTS FROM RESIDENTS

Friendliness of Residents

Grade and comment on the friendliness of residents of the community or neighborhood.

Grade Summary		
B	B	-
-	-	

Overall, the community was friendly, and the people were talkative and informative, as residents provided Midwest hospitality. However, one store clerk was just a bit cold and another store clerk was uninformed of the community.

Local Resident Event Recommendations

What do local residents recommend regarding events? One way to phrase a question to a local resident might be: "We have only one night in this community, what is going on tonight that might be fun to do or see?" Consider asking families, young people, and senior citizens and noting any differences.

We went on a farm market day so that venue was mentioned. It was suggested that the team attend the market, from 2 pm to 7 pm monthly on Wednesdays.

Referrals for More Information

If residents and business employees/owners did not have answers to your questions, were they able to refer you to someone who could provide assistance?

Some business employees referred the team to city hall and the cheese store for more information.

Helpfulness of Residents

Overall, how would you grade the helpfulness of community residents and business employees?

Grade Summary		
B	B	B
C	-	

Residents' View of Community

In general, did residents you spoke with have a positive or negative attitude toward their community? Did you sense community pride?

Overall residents have a positive attitude toward their community, and the Team sensed community pride.

Concerns of Residents

Did residents identify a particular issue to be of major concern?

No major concerns identified.

USING YOUR SENSES

Taste

What did the community taste like? Was there any specialty food item, bakery, restaurant, or candy store that you will remember?]

The Gile Cheese Store had some excellent 7 year old cheese which one Team member brought home to share with his family. Lunch at Nick's was delicious and had good café type food. The wait staff were pleasant, and the food was good.

Smell

What did the community smell like? Were there any offensive smells? What about pleasant odors (e.g., flowers, food, etc.)?

No noticeable offensive odors.

Hear

What sounds did you hear? Please comment on the level of noise in the community (traffic, industrial, birds singing, water fountains, music on the streets, trains, clock chimes, etc.).

Noise levels in the community were appropriate with nothing unexpected for a small Midwest community.

Environmental Health

How would you describe the overall environmental health of the community (air quality, litter, noise pollution, etc.)?

The overall environmental health of the community appeared to be clean with one exception, of a little bit of trash near Presidential Park.



Figure 18. Overall Cuba City was quite clean and well-kept, with one exception

Strong negative or Positive events

Did you experience anything that had a strongly negative or positive impact on the way the community or neighborhood felt to you (children playing hateful or angry responses, crowded or deserted streets, safety issues, smiling faces, etc.)?

Overall the Team experienced a positive impact, and community members appeared to enjoy being in Cuba City.

Time of Year Perspective

Do you think your impression would be different if your visit occurred during a different time of day or at a different time of year?

The Teams' impression might be different if it visited during a different time year – although not all Team members agreed. It would be interesting to come back during harvest time.

REFLECTIONS

Why Would you return?

What local restaurant, specialty shop or attraction would bring you back to this community in the future?

There are a few things that would bring the Team back to this community. The gazebo in Presidential Park looks like a nice would be a nice place to come back after a morning of antique shopping. The unifying theme of City of Presidents is a nice touch. One Team member comment that she would stop in town if she was passing through but would not make it a destination location at this time – even if it was closer.

Consider locating business in this community

Would you consider locating a retail, professional or non-profit business here? Why or why not? Would you consider locating a retail, professional, or nonprofit business here? Why or why not? Consider your income, age, interests, hobbies, family, health/disabilities, race, and ethnicity in your response.

Team members commented that they were not sure if would consider locating a retail business to Cuba City. If a business was to be launched, the Team felt a better understanding of the local and regional markets would be required in order to identify any local or regional gaps. Potential opportunities could include a business which complemented the meat or cheese stores. Perhaps a quaint convenience or general store would work. Also, it appears that the community does not have a small hardware store. Acknowledging that Platteville is close, the Team is not sure if that would help or hurt Cuba City businesses.

Consider Living in this Community

Would you consider living here? Why or why not? Consider your income, age, interests, hobbies, family, health/disabilities, race, and ethnicity in your response.

Team Members commented as follows: I might consider living here if I could find gainful employment. I think the community would be a nice place to raise kids. The parks are clean and nice. There seems to be strong community pride. I don't know enough about employment options. If I was retired I would consider the community.

Information & Assistance from Community Members

Comment on the quality of information and assistance provided by residents and employees of local business

Shop keepers were very friendly and helpful. They could have had some more brochures / information in shops. Community members who knew the community were very helpful. Community members who could not answer questions tried to be helpful, and referred us to someone else.

Accuracy of Pre-visit Impressions

Was your perception prior to the visit accurate? In what ways was the community different from what you expected?

Team members commented as follows.

- The community was smaller than I expected.
- Small town Wisconsin is a great place to plant your roots. I was a little surprised that the downtown did not have a bit more retail
- Cuba City was more or less what I expected after visiting the website
- The information I collected was not enough and I got a better idea of what the community had to offer by visiting
- My perception prior to the visit was fairly accurate.

Accuracy of Pre-visit Information

Did the information you collected prior to the visit accurately reflect what you observed and experienced?

The information Team members collected from the internet prior to the visit accurately reflected what was observed and experienced.

Most Outstanding Feature

What is the most outstanding feature of this community?

Community features that stood out to team members included, the parks, community cleanliness, and the Presidential theme.

WRAP-UP AND LASTING IMPRESSIONS

As the Team completed and reflected on our time in Cuba City, some Team members provide their lasting impressions of the community.

- “As we toured Cuba City it was obvious that all of the residents take great pride in their community with neat and well managed subdivisions, parks, industrial area, etc.”
- “Building on and enlarging the Presidents theme with more in depth history as well as focusing on downtown façade improvements will only create a larger visitor base in the future.”
- “After six months of Visiting Cuba City, the lasting impression for me is the Presidential Theme. The “City of Presidents” is a very appropriate name seeing as to how well the theme is shared in various parts of the City.”
- “Thinking of our visit to Cuba City, the lasting impression I have is how the Presidential theme is carried throughout several aspects of the community. The theme showed up on signage, on municipal buildings, on the website and promotions and truly tied the community together. The large park was very well maintained and stood out in my mind as a perfect place for community events and activities.”

- “I still think about the cheese store, and look forward stopping by there the next time I’m through the area. I also hope to someday view the exhibits in the rail car. I’d love to learn more about the local history.”

Was Pre-visit impression accurate?

Was your perception prior to the visit accurate? In what ways was the community different from what you expected?

Overall the Teams perception of Cuba City was fairly accurate. One Team member noted the strong Presidential theme; however, perhaps more can be done to capitalize on it. Another Team member commented that she got a better idea of what the community had to offer after visiting. Prior information wasn't enough.

Most Outstanding Feature

What is the most outstanding feature of this community?

The most outstanding feature of the community was its neatness, cleanliness, and how the "President" theme was used everywhere.

Positive Observations

List positive things you observed about this community

The Evaluation Team observed the following positive things in Cuba City; clean parks, well laid out Industrial Park, a nice main street, ease in navigating through the city, friendly people and the Presidential theme throughout.

Opportunities

What are potential opportunities available to this community?

Some potential opportunities available to this community include a better explanation why the community is called the "City of Presidents." It is not always clear why the community is known as the "City of Presidents." Perhaps mentioning that Cuba City is one of America’s longest running bicentennial community projects in the tagline would be helpful. Work can be done to fill the empty store fronts downtown. The tourism center needs to be more accessible during the tourist season. Would a hardware store do well in the community? Also, expanding the antique businesses may serve the community in drawing tourist dollars to the community, while expanding manufacturing and the industrial park may serve to strengthen the local residential economy as works may live in or near Cuba City. Possibly the community could market itself as a bedroom community serving as a place for affordable housing near other larger centers. Finally, there may be opportunities in expanding the Presidential theme.

Obstacles

What are the five biggest obstacles/challenges facing this community?

From a visitor’s perspective, the largest obstacle is having a closed visitor’s center – especially since it is the focal point on the website. Being open only 4 hours per week too minimal; especially in the summer. Some employees working in the community should be better informed of community events or amenities. It appears that Cuba City doesn’t have its own visitors guide. (This may be an opportunity – store employees could pass this out to visitors if they don't know all the answers.

Six month memory

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

Evaluation Team members answered as follows.

- Nick's Cafe
- A positive visit with a good (but small) mix of restaurants, businesses, and parks. Continuity in signage was very attractive plus being informative. Quantity of businesses doesn't matter if the quality is there
- What a clean well-kept community; antique shops.
- How clean and friendly it was.
- I will remember most about this community six months from now includes the Presidential theme and the excellent experience at Gile Cheese store.

Learning changing Impression of own community

What have you learned that has changed your impression of your own community?

- We are not as friendly as we could be
- Cuba City website was wonderful – our website lacks information, pictures and those attractive items which draws you to look at other tabs. Our signage is lacking uniformity. We need to make sure our employers' staff are well informed or have information to pass out telling visitors about our businesses Our Chamber office is off the beaten path and that is a spot tourists always search out.
- Cleanliness, attention to detail makes a significant difference to positive first impressions.
- Our lack of residential pride (as a whole) lot of rentals and landlords.

Borrowed Idea

Describe one idea that you will borrow for use in your own business/community and describe how you will start to implement it.

- Uniformity on signage.
- I liked the "unified theme" and signage
- Create more interest and involvement from residents.