

Brockville

November 7, 2016



Full Picture First Impressions Community Exchange Report Back from
Pembroke

Before the Visit

Our impressions before the visit:

- Small, historic community with plenty of culture
- Key location factors: On the 401, waterfront, and close proximity to the USA
- A tourist destination with a focus on history, downtown & water activities
- A community with a large manufacturing base

Websites that were visited: City of Brockville, Brockville Tourism, Downtown Brockville

First Impressions

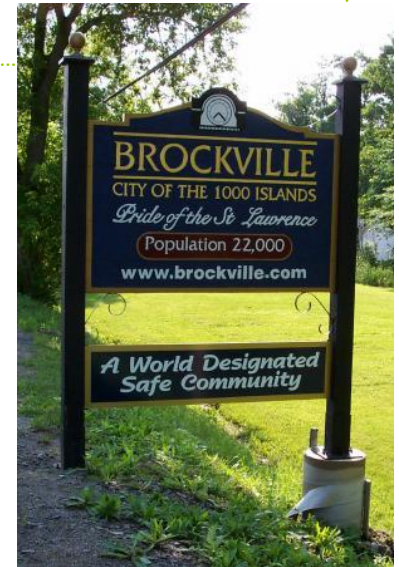
Common words among our group: welcoming, small community, clean & historical

- One entrance to town had a focus on strip malls and car dealerships, not attractive, but purposeful. All agreed that the commercial and residential downtown was beautiful and well-maintained. Brockville population and welcome signage, while nice was fairly dark and small.
- Noted many accommodations while coming into town, but few once in town.
- Plenty of car traffic near big box stores, less downtown, but plenty of pedestrian traffic downtown.

Entering the Community

A major theme that our group noticed were the dark and fairly small welcome signs for Brockville. They were very nice & well maintained with flower beds, however, sometimes hard to read.

- Noted signage for the airport and plenty of bus stops, however, could not identify location of bus terminal.
- Roads seemed well-maintained.
- 60% of our visitors saw directional signage, and 40% did not.



Housing and Residential Areas

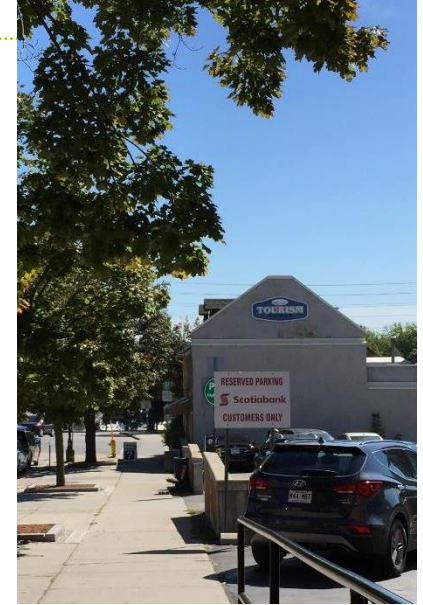
There is an adequate mix of existing/older homes, retirement housing, and apartments/rental housing, and we did not see any new residential construction.

- Most Appealing: Waterfront homes and housing near downtown was well-kept and beautiful
- Least Appealing: No new construction



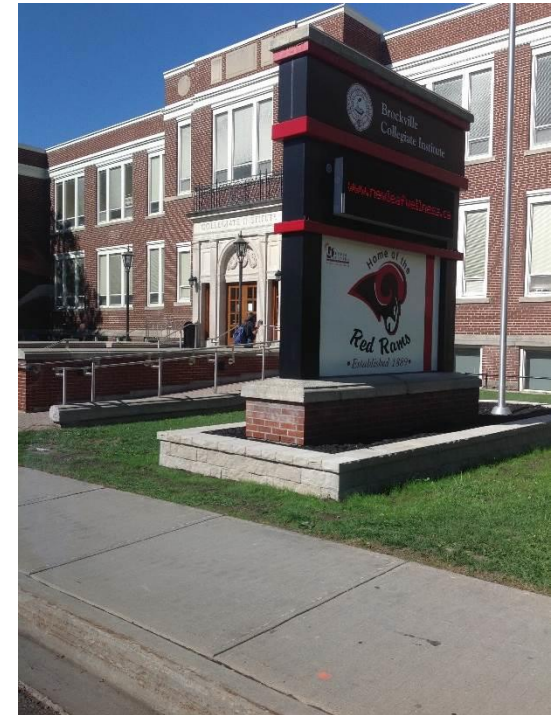
Local Government Services

- The municipal office is very well-located and the free parking is an asset.
- Staff were helpful and knowledgeable when questions were asked. Did have trouble actually getting to speak to someone about a business venture due to busy schedules of staff.
- Plenty of helpful information at the tourist bureau and City Hall.



Education

- A great mix of schools that were easy to located and nicely situated near green space
- Many schools seemed dated, and some with some historical characteristics (BCI)
- St. Lawrence College students were positive about their experience at the College due to the attention they received, however, noted declining enrollment numbers and that most students were local
- Did note that the College was easy to locate, but was separated due to the Highway from the downtown and near the industrial area



Health, Social and Emergency Services

Health: Saw one of the hospital campuses which was conveniently located and seemed more modern, good signage and had a healthcare facility nearby. Did not see many nursing homes.

Social: The group did not see an abundance of social services, some downtown and some just outside of downtown. Did note the Salvation Army which had good signage and a Senior's Centre – Shepherd's Welcome Centre, however it is closed in the summer.

Emergency Services: Police station was conveniently located, but seemed outdated. We understand that there are two fire halls, however we only saw the smaller one located in the residential area near downtown. Did not see a large police presence in the community.



Downtown Appearance

Best:

- Historical elements appealing
- Well-kept streets
- Clean
- Beautiful waterfront and greenspace

Needs improvement:

- Availability of benches and crosswalks
- Cycling lanes in the downtown core
- Better signage or availability of parking lots and free parking
- Street furniture could be repainted or updated
- Weeds on sidewalks



Retail and Services



- Appearance downtown is very nice; the malls are less appealing
- Excellent customer service – owners love Brockville and promote other businesses
- Accessibility an issue in older buildings

Retail and Services Continued

- Business hours appear consistent, although downtown not open late
- Good mix of stores – apparel, giftware, hand-made goods, boutiques, box stores
- Missing: outdoors/recreation store; musical instrument store
- Vacancies evident, but well kept downtown – very evident at mall
- Professional services blend well with retail stores downtown
- Services available, and easily found through online search
- Great selection of restaurants
- College students feel too many bars



Industry

Our group was very impressed with the number of manufacturers in Brockville. The John G Broome Business Park seemed very populated with multi-national businesses. The Waste Management Site did detract from the other well-kept properties. There was plenty of garbage/recycling along the roadway and grass surrounding the facility. The signage to the Park was limited and fairly dark. The local services for manufacturers, Manpower for example were very helpful and did note a decline in the manufacturing sector suggesting that there are people looking for employment in the field.



Community Mobility

Public Transportation

- Saw many bus stops throughout town, few with shelters, did not see any actual busses

Active Transportation

- Some very nice trails along the waterfront and Brock Trail that are useable for walkers and cyclists.
- Did not see any bike lanes or signage for bikers on public streets
- Did note the construction of the Brockville Railway Tunnel as a recreation trail



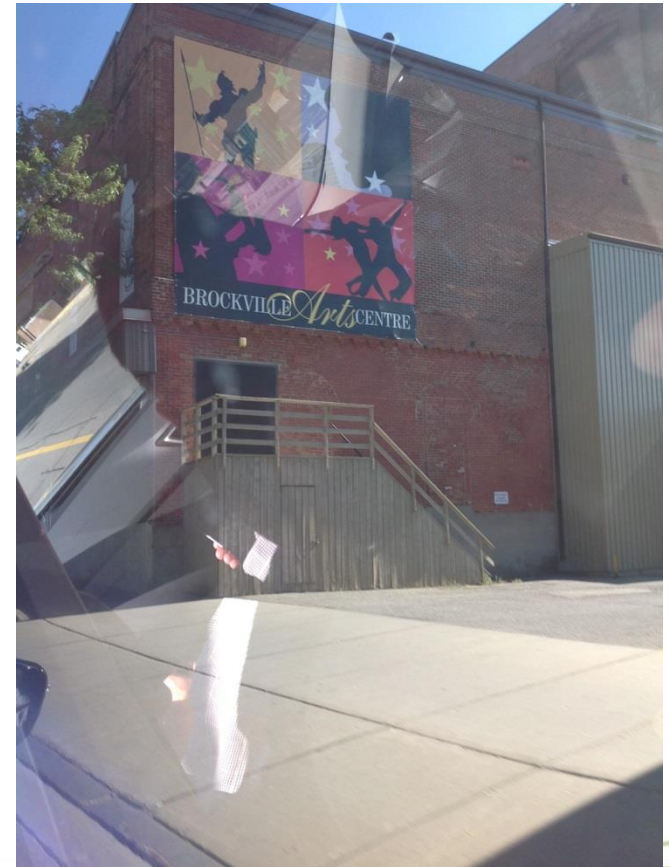
Tourism

- Sector is alive and well
- No community slogan or brand evident
- Excellent service at tourism office; however, facility not easy to find
- Good number of businesses related to tourism sector
- Plenty of accommodations, but more was expected near the waterfront



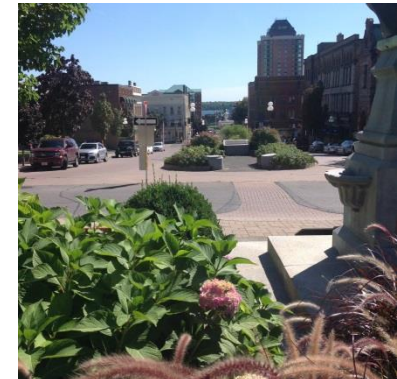
Entertainment and Recreation

- Good number of facilities and opportunities available
- Tall Ships noted as popular, signature event
- Lack of nightlife and events aimed at students
- Resident Relocation Guide is an excellent source of information



Culture and Heritage

- Heritage evident in city and adds to its charm
- Many heritage buildings
- Heritage building plaques and story plaques well liked
- Not much in way of public art
- Square is a beautiful focal point with important heritage buildings



Environmental Sustainability

- Green space found throughout the city
- Bike paths available, but not at commercial areas
- Transit does not seem very accessible
- City is very clean and people are proud of it
- Solar panels at arena



Information from Residents

- Residents and business owners very willing to share information and provide recommendations
- Strong sense of pride in community
- However, see community as a retirement one with not much to do for younger people and concern over lack of jobs
- Negative comments about Aquatarium



Using your Senses

Taste

- One visitor has shawarma for the first time and loved it, and one noted the lemon meringue pie from Tait's, and the coffee at Café Boboli was great

Smell

- Some sewage smells near the waterfront
- Fresh, open air

Sight

- Beautiful waterfront with great sight lines in town
- Church steeples when entering the vibrant downtown
- The interlocking brick for the street at the courthouse square was beautiful

Sounds

- Very low levels of noise in the community

Five positive features about Brockville

- 1) Beautiful Waterfront
- 2) Historical Downtown
- 3) Plenty of green space & parks
- 4) Positive attitude of businesses and residents
- 5) Clean & well-maintained City



Three potential opportunities for BROCKVILLE

- 1) Update entrance and directional signage
- 2) Host events in downtown and sell the downtown as a destination
- 3) Work closely with St. Lawrence College to engage youth population

Five biggest challenges facing BROCKVILLE

- 1) The City is very divided between the waterfront/downtown area and the mall/industrial area
- 2) Aging population – need to attract youth
- 3) Employment opportunities to attract new residents
- 4) Attracting investment
- 5) Promotion of active transportation