

COMMUNITY SWAP ASSESSMENT GUIDE

Things to Consider

Topic

Slide Reminder

I. Community Entrances

Approach the community from all major entrances. Rate each entrance and record your comments.

Look for signage, landscaping, and eyesores. Pay attention to safety issues as well as appearance.

Consider ranking the entrances by how much traffic they carry or by what part of town the approach provides access to.

Think about other places you have visited or your own community. How does this entrance compare to those you have seen in other places?

What could be done to improve the approaches to the community?

Approach #1 _____
(name route and directions)

How favorably does this approach rate as a first impression of the community? (circle one)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Poor Excellent

Please comment on your observations:

Approach #2 _____
(name route and directions)

How favorably does this approach rate as a first impression of the community?(circle one)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Poor Excellent

Please comment on your observations:

Approach #1

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Approach #2

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COMMUNITY SWAP ASSESSMENT GUIDE

Things to Consider

Topic

Slide Reminder

I. Community Entrances

Approach #3 _____
(name route and directions)

How favorably does this approach rate as a first impression of the community? (circle one)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Poor Excellent

Please comment on your observations:

Five horizontal lines for writing observations.

Approach #4 _____
(name route and directions)

How favorably does this approach rate as a first impression of the community? (circle one)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Poor Excellent

Please comment on your observations:

Five horizontal lines for writing observations.

Approach # 3
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Approach #4
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Things to Consider

T o p i c

Slide Reminder

II. Housing

The appearance, quality, diversity, and availability of residential housing can make a lasting impression on a visitor.

A few things to consider when evaluating housing quality are:

- (1) type of construction (frame or brick)
- (2) the design or style, nice old Victorian or post WW II ranch
- (3) the setting, lot size, landscaping, and neighborhood character
- (4) appearance and maintenance

Do houses need to be painted? Are yards unmowed? Or, does it look like people take pride in the appearance of their homes?

If possible, talk with a real estate agent and/or scan a newspaper for housing prices.

What is the availability of housing in different price ranges?

How do prices of homes and apartments compare with those in your community?

Drive through as many neighborhoods as possible. Rate and comment on each category. Use a scale of 1=Poor to 10=Excellent.

How would you rate the overall **quality** of housing?

<u>Quality Rating</u>	<u>Housing Category</u>
_____	Existing/Older Homes
_____	Sr. Citizen Housing
_____	New Construction
_____	Apartments/Rental Housing

Please comment on your observations:

How would you rate the overall **affordability** of housing?

<u>Affordability Rating</u>	<u>Housing Category</u>
_____	Existing/Older Homes
_____	Sr. Citizen Housing
_____	New Construction
_____	Apartments/Rental Housing

Please comment on your observations:

Housing #1

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Housing #2

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Housing #3

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Housing #4

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COMMUNITY SWAP ASSESSMENT GUIDE

Things to Consider

Do you see many houses or apartments for sale or rent? Where are they located and what is the condition of the property and structure?

A lack of available housing options can have a chilling effect on community development. New residents moving to an area may be looking for rental housing prior to buying or building. If there isn't anything available they may go down the road.

Many rural places are evolving into bedroom communities. The quality, availability, and cost of housing has a significant influence on whether or not a community will remain active and vital.

T o p i c

II. Housing

How would you rate the overall **availability** of housing:

Availability Rating	Housing Category
_____	Existing/Older Homes
_____	Sr. Citizen Housing
_____	New Construction
_____	Apartments/Rental Housing

Please comment on your observations:

How would you rate the **overall appeal** of housing to the following populations (1=Not Appealing, 10=Very Appealing):

Appeal Rating	Category
_____	Single young adults
_____	Young families
_____	Middle income
_____	Senior citizen
_____	Upscale/professional

Please comment on your observations:

Slide Reminder

Housing #5

Housing #6

Housing #7

COMMUNITY SWAP ASSESSMENT GUIDE

Things to Consider

T o p i c

Slide Reminder

II. Housing

What did you consider to be the most appealing neighborhood?

Four horizontal lines for writing.

Housing #8
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What did you like about it?

Four horizontal lines for writing.

Housing #9
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What did you consider to be a problem with local housing?

Four horizontal lines for writing.

Housing #10
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What do you consider to be a strength of local housing?

Four horizontal lines for writing.

COMMUNITY SWAP ASSESSMENT GUIDE

Things to Consider

Topic

Slide Reminder

The quality of schools is one of the three most important factors influencing the location decisions of families with children. In many places, especially in bedroom communities, the school is literally the social, cultural, and economic hub of the community.

III. Schools

Comment on the appearance of schools. If the community does not have the school category leave the line blank.

Elementary _____

Middle _____

High _____

Higher Education _____

If possible, tour inside the buildings and comment.

Were you able to find information on the school system? Did the information provide a comprehensive assessment? Was it helpful and accurate?

Schools #1
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Schools #2
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Schools #3
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COMMUNITY SWAP ASSESSMENT GUIDE

Things to Consider

Ask as many residents as possible about the schools. Find out if they are satisfied with the school system.

When you visit the school ask for a copy of the school report card. Does the high school have different tracks for students with different career objectives, such as college preparatory and vocational education programs?

Topic

III. Schools

What do residents think about the school system?

How would you rate the overall quality of the academic program? Why?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Poor **Excellent**

Slide Reminder

Schools #4

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Schools #5

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Schools #6

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COMMUNITY SWAP ASSESSMENT GUIDE

Things to Consider

Topic

Slide Reminder

IV. Churches

Churches are a point of pride in many communities.

What denominations are represented?

Are there any new church buildings?

Where are the churches located in the community?

Are there any obvious signs of church-sponsored community services such as a food pantry, day care/preschool, or playground?

Churches are frequently among the most impressive buildings in a town. Even in places where historic downtown buildings are in decay, the churches may be well maintained, preserving an important part of local history.

Comment on the number, appearance, and selection of churches in the community.

Are there any outstanding architectural or design features of church buildings?

What is your overall impression of churches you visited?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Poor **Excellent**

Comments:

Churches #1
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Churches #2
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Churches #3
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Churches #4
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COMMUNITY SWAP ASSESSMENT GUIDE

Things to Consider

T o p i c

Slide Reminder

V. Central Business District

Explore the downtown area and visit as many businesses as possible. Rate and comment on the following, using a 1=Poor to 10=Excellent scale:

Rate and comment on the overall appearance of the downtown:

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
Poor **Excellent**

Rank and comment on the variety of shopping in the downtown:

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
Poor **Excellent**

Rate and comment on the customer service of businesses you visited:

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
Poor **Excellent**

In many communities, the central business district or downtown is in decline. However, downtown continues to be an important, if not the only, commercial center in many small communities.

What is the condition of buildings, streets, sidewalks, parking, and other features?

Are there areas that are unique? What makes them unique?

Is there trash or other debris on the streets or in alleys?

What types of stores are present:

- Apparel
- Grocery
- Hardware
- Furniture
- Specialty
- Professional services: doctors, dentists, legal, accounting, ...
- Restaurants

Are there any governmental offices?

Surveys of consumers in rural areas indicate that customer service is one of the key reasons for shopping there.

Were clerks friendly and knowledgeable?

CBD #1

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CBD #2

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CBD #3

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CBD #4

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COMMUNITY SWAP ASSESSMENT GUIDE

Things to Consider

Topic

Slide Reminder

V. Central Business District

Rate and comment on the signage in the downtown:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Poor Excellent

Four horizontal lines for handwritten comments.

Slide reminder for CBD #5 with five dotted lines for notes.

Rate and comment on the window displays in the downtown:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Poor Excellent

Four horizontal lines for handwritten comments.

Slide reminder for CBD #6 with five dotted lines for notes.

Rate and comment on the variety and quality of merchandise in the downtown:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Poor Excellent

Four horizontal lines for handwritten comments.

Slide reminder for CBD #7 with five dotted lines for notes.

Slide reminder for CBD #8 with five dotted lines for notes.

Things to Consider

T o p i c

Slide Reminder

VI. Other Retail Shopping

Explore other retail shopping centers and visit as many businesses as possible. Rate and comment on the following, using a 1=Poor to 10=Excellent scale:

Rate and comment on the overall appearance of other retail shopping areas:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Poor **Excellent**

Rate and comment on the variety of shopping in other retail centers:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Poor **Excellent**

Rate and comment on the customer service of businesses you visited in other retail shopping areas:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Poor **Excellent**

Other Retail #1

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Other Retail #2

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Other Retail #3

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Other Retail #4

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COMMUNITY SWAP ASSESSMENT GUIDE

Things to Consider

T o p i c

Slide Reminder

VI. Other Retail Shopping

Rate and comment on the signage in other retail shopping centers:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Poor Excellent

Rate and comment on the window displays in other retail shopping areas:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Poor Excellent

Rate and comment on the variety and quality of merchandise in other retail shopping areas:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Poor Excellent

Other Retail #5
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Other Retail #6
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Other Retail #7
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Other Retail #8
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COMMUNITY SWAP ASSESSMENT GUIDE

Things to Consider

T o p i c

Slide Reminder

VII. General Observations on Local Commerce

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

Miscellaneous Commerce #1

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

Miscellaneous Commerce #2

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What store or service would you travel a distance (more than 20 miles) to patronize?

Miscellaneous Commerce #3

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COMMUNITY SWAP ASSESSMENT GUIDE

Things to Consider

T o p i c

Slide Reminder

VIII. Recreation

Comment on the availability of and appearance of each of the following types of recreational facilities. Rate each type of facility.

Parks:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Poor Excellent

Public recreation facilities:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Poor Excellent

Private recreation facilities:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Poor Excellent

Recreation #1
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Recreation #2
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Recreation #3
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Things to Consider

T o p i c

Slide Reminder

VIII. Recreation

Based on your impression, what do people in this community appear to do for recreation?

Recreation #4

What recreational facility (private or public) in this community surprised you?

Recreation #5

What recreational activities or facilities seemed to be missing?

Recreation #6

Rate the overall suitability of the recreational facilities for each of the following populations (1=Not Suitable, 10=Very Suitable):

<u>Rating</u>	<u>Category</u>
_____	Senior citizens
_____	Families
_____	Singles, young adults
_____	Teens
_____	Children (13 and under)

COMMUNITY SWAP ASSESSMENT GUIDE

Things to Consider

T o p i c

Slide Reminder

IX. Tourism

What have you seen that might be considered a tourist attraction?

- Tourism #1
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Comment on the availability and quality of overnight accommodations for the community.

- Tourism #2
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If there are no accommodations in town, are you aware of any within a reasonable distance? How close?

- Tourism #3
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Things to Consider

T o p i c

Slide Reminder

X. Visitor/Community Information

Comment on the availability of and quality of each of the following:

Street maps:

Community brochure or directory with information on how to get more information:

Community profile (including business and industrial opportunities):

Recommendations on places to stay, eat, visit, ...

Overall, how would you rate the availability and quality of visitor and community information?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Poor Excellent

Things to Consider

T o p i c

Slide Reminder

XI. Information from Community Residents

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

Were community residents knowledgeable about the community?

Did they refer you to someone else who would help?

What was the attitude and appearance of the individuals you talked with?

Other comments:

Overall, how would you rate the quality of information from community residents and business employees?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Poor Excellent

COMMUNITY SWAP ASSESSMENT GUIDE

Things to Consider

T o p i c

Slide Reminder

XII. Infrastructure

Comment on and rate each of the following:

Sidewalks:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Poor Excellent

Streets:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Poor Excellent

Public restrooms and other public facilities:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Poor Excellent

Signage:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Poor Excellent

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Infra #2
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Infra #3
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Infra #5
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COMMUNITY SWAP ASSESSMENT GUIDE

Things to Consider

Topic

Slide Reminder

XIII. Local Industry

Comment on local industry.

What appears to be the condition of local industry?

Three horizontal lines for writing.

Are the industrial facilities well maintained?

Three horizontal lines for writing.

Would this community be an attractive location for industrial development? Why or why not?

Three horizontal lines for writing.

Other comments:

Three horizontal lines for writing.

Overall, how would you rate local industry?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Poor Excellent

Industry #1
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Industry #2
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Industry #3
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Industry #4
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Industry #5
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COMMUNITY SWAP ASSESSMENT GUIDE

Things to Consider

Topic

Slide Reminder

XIV. Health Care Services

Comment on the availability and apparent quality of health care facilities.

Hospitals:

Three horizontal lines for notes under Hospitals.

Physician and dentist offices and clinics:

Three horizontal lines for notes under Physician and dentist offices and clinics.

Long term care and nursing home facilities:

Three horizontal lines for notes under Long term care and nursing home facilities.

Other comments:

Three horizontal lines for notes under Other comments.

Overall, how would you rate the level of service for a community of this size?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Poor Excellent

Health #1
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Health #2
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Health #3
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Health #4
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Health #5
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COMMUNITY SWAP ASSESSMENT GUIDE

Things to Consider

T o p i c

Slide Reminder

XV. Other Services

Comment on the availability and apparent quality of the following services and facilities.

Fire protection and emergency services:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Poor Excellent

Financial services (banks and ATMs): Are banks and branches conveniently located? Are there convenient hours of service?

How would you rate the level of financial services for a community of this size?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Poor Excellent

Other comments:

Other serv. #1
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Other serv. #2
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Other serv. #3
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Other serv. #4
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Other serv. #5
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Things to Consider

T o p i c

Slide Reminder

XVI. General Observations

The following questions may be assigned to individuals.

Would you consider this a suitable location for a young family?
Why or why not?

Would you consider locating your retail or service business here? Why or why not?

Would you consider locating a manufacturing business here?
Why or why not?

Would you consider this a suitable location for a retired person?
Why or why not?

Things to Consider

T o p i c

Slide Reminder

XVI. General Observations

Would you consider this a suitable location for a young single adult? Why or why not?

The following questions are to answered by all individuals.

List five positive things you observed about this community.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What is the most outstanding feature of this community?

What do you see as the greatest potential obstacle to economic and community development?

Things to Consider

T o p i c

Slide Reminder

XVI. General Observations

What things have you observed here that you would like to bring back to your community?
