

All about

Carleton Place

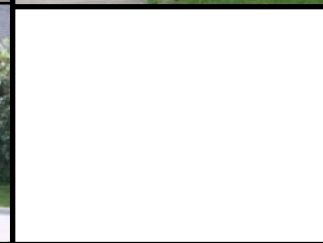


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First Impressions Community Exchange

<i>Community Visited</i>	CARLETON PLACE, ONTARIO
<i>Date of Visit</i>	JUNE 8 TH 2006
<i>Length of visit</i>	Day visit, six hours in community
<i>Weather on date of visit</i>	Overcast—warm spring day
<i>Visit completed by</i>	ROCKLAND, ONTARIO

VISITING TEAM PROFILE

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OUR STARTING POINT

Prior to your visit

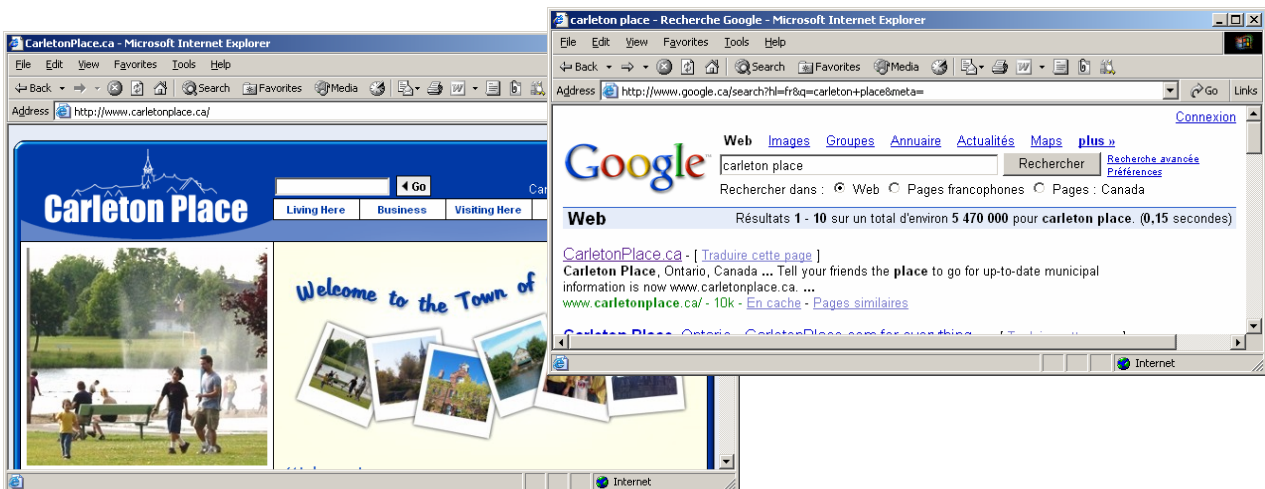
What is the impression of the community before the visit? What was the visiting team expecting to see?

Team members had very little knowledge of the community prior to the visit. Overall, we expected the community to be a nice, quaint town, priding themselves on Victorian style architecture. New housing development would be very well organized and would offer a wide range of choices for first time home buyers and for the professional commuter. The downtown would offer an interesting mix of businesses including a typical country style Tea Room. Team members were looking forward to seeing the development centered on the water front.

From the Visiting Team Coordinator

How easy was it to get information about the community? What was the level of satisfaction with the quality of the information received? Did the information arrive in a timely fashion?

The preferred method of contact was first a quick web search. A simple Google search offered the Carleton Place municipal Web page as the first hit. This site had everything required (or just about!). Hyperlinks were well maintained and business listings offered an organised view of the business community. The pages related to day care services, museums, etc. impacted positively on the virtual visitor.



1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Needs urgent attention			Satisfactory				Excellent		

Observations:

Two additional comments are worth mentioning. First is that the Google search did provide additional WebPages to visit and included the Carleton Place Canoe Club, the Hospital and local and regional advertising portals, all presenting Carleton Place very well.

Second, a map of the actual town would be a great asset to add to the web page. It could indicate what the better choice of gateway would be to best discover Carleton Place in all of its glory!

The “FIVE MINUTES” Impression

After taking a five-minute drive through the community without stopping, the following reactions were noted:

The team entered the community through the first gateway (McNeely Rd). This was obviously not the right choice. There was initially little signage to assist newcomers in navigating through the town. Fortunately, the team did drive into the town core by High Street which offered great landscaping, beautiful homes and an impressive view of the town hall. The downtown was initially very inviting.

However, the team felt that they fell into the town. There was little indication (signage, etc.) to allow the visiting team to comfortably navigate through the community.

COMMUNITY ENTRANCES / HOUSING

The Community ENTRANCES

The following observations were noted when entering the community from major entrances.

? Entrance 1 : Highway 7 (from Ottawa) onto McNeely

The team was first introduced to the community by a run down motel and a hidden Carleton Place sign. It was difficult to establish the appropriate entrance to the town. The commercial highway development seems to hide the gateway. The drive in went from a commercial big box development to new residential to old industrial within a few kilometres. At the intersection of McNeely and Townline, the team did not have any indication which turn to take or even if we were in Carleton Place or not. Again, some directional signage would be of great value.

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<i>Needs urgent attention</i>			<i>Satisfactory</i>				<i>Excellent</i>		

? Entrance 2 : Townline East Rd

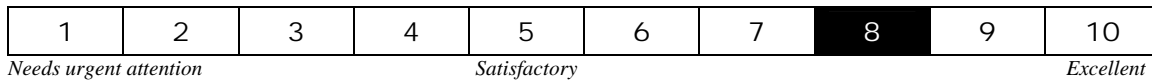
Yet another type of sign to welcome us to Carleton Place... We did notice some consistency between the signs (the old and the new were both present). The team felt that some attention should be given to directional signage (downtown, sport complex, etc.) so not to just drive through.



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<i>Needs urgent attention</i>			<i>Satisfactory</i>				<i>Excellent</i>		

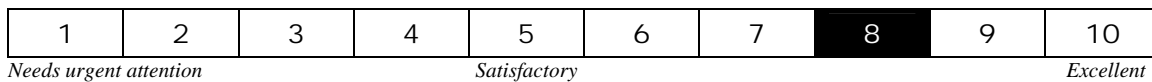
? Entrance 3 : Highway 7 (towards Ottawa) onto High Street

What a great introduction to Carleton Place. The team was impressed by the cleanliness of this gateway, the landscaping and the new Carleton Place sign. The residential area on High Street was so impressive that we just had to slow down. This was by far, the most welcoming entrance way to the community



? **Entrance 4 : Off Hwy 7 onto Franktown Road**

This gateway offered an interesting way into town. It is a typical highway commercial development offering accommodation, dining and some big box offerings. Here we knew we were entering Carleton Place from a logical point. The Franktown Road offered a variety of sights, from lightweight industrial, to education, to small commercial strip malls and led directly into the downtown core. Again, the team felt they fell into the downtown – not having seen any signage to help the newcomer navigate through the community.



HOUSING and RESIDENTIAL areas

Overall Quality, Affordability and Availability of housing in the community...

Overall, Carleton Place offers something for everyone. The new developments seem to cater best to the professional couples, commuting to and fro Ottawa. The older residential districts were a good mix of heritage homes and mid 70’s architecture.

<i>Quality (rating 1 – 10)</i>	<i>Type of Housing</i>
8	<i>Existing / Older Homes</i>
8	<i>Senior Citizen Housing</i>
6	<i>New Construction</i>
3	<i>Apartments / Rental Housing</i>

There seemed to be very little available for the empty nesters who would be looking for a moderate (size and cost) home. As to the renting market, there was little being offered. Living downtown would not be the choice of any of the visiting team members.

? ***About the mix of housing that suit a variety of income level...***

The community seem to be sectionalized – the new development was a high end, professional oriented market (not necessarily children friendly). The downtown core seemed to be attracting lower income families and individuals while the two other areas were a mix of heritage homes and modest income earners. The conversion of the old watermill into condominiums was very well perceived. The team did not see any townhouses in the community.

? ***About the most appealing features...***

Carleton Place has beautiful properties. Most are clean and well kept. In the older residential areas, flowers were predominating and were an impressive sight. This gave the team the impression that Carleton Place has a strong sense of community (people coming together to create this attractive feature!)

? *About the least appealing features...*

The downtown residential options are so limited that the team felt it impact negatively on what could be a great focus for the community. Also, it was unfortunate that the new developments had little appeal for middle income families.

? *About the quality and availability of residential infrastructure...*



Carleton Place does not seem to offer any public transport. Sidewalks (especially in the downtown area) were nice and wide but some repair should be coming soon. The street lamps were very attractive (again, nicely detailed with flowers).



Green spaces were available throughout the community. The park in the new housing development was catered to an adult user with open yards to the park (great concept). Other parks could require more creativity to include walk paths, play structures, etc.

? *About the overall appeal of housing*

The visiting team felt that the community appealed to seniors and professionals. New residential development was mostly for the upscale / professional. The west end of the town seemed to be more friendly to families (with the schools, the parks with or without play structures, the beach which were all in walking distance). Seniors would feel most at home in the north end. Single young adults would find little in terms of housing options. This along with the lack of entertainment would not likely attract young adults to Carleton Place.

<i>Appeal (rating 1 – 10)</i>	<i>Group</i>
4	<i>Single young adults</i>
6	<i>Young Families</i>
7	<i>Middle income</i>
8	<i>Senior Citizen</i>
8	<i>Upscale / Professional</i>

EDUCATION, HEALTH, SOCIAL AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

EDUCATION

Availability and appearance of schools

? *Pre-school / Daycare*

Carleton Place has an impressive list of daycare services. It appears to be well organised and listings of services offered through the web page offer a variety of daycare facilities. Rarely does a

community offer services for newborns. What a great added feature for Carleton Place. The visiting team was impressed by the modified train station location.

Some concerns were voiced concerning the lack of security in these facilities. Members walked in and wandered through the halls of one location without being noticed or intercepted. We did finally speak to one caregiver. She indicated that she didn't have much time to talk since she was on break. Some measures should be taken to insure that these facilities be locked with limited access to visitors.

? **Primary / Elementary**

The visiting team, being from a bilingual environment, was very impressed by the number of schools that offer French Immersion programs. We felt however that schools seemed to be concentrated in the western part of town. In general, the schools we passed by seemed to be in a good condition. There seems to be no plans to build a new school in the residential development in the east end of the community.

? **High School**



Three high schools are listed as being in Carleton Place, one of which is a French Catholic School. *Did you know* that in the North end Industrial Park, there is a sign indicating the J.L. Couroux School? What a surprise to actually have found this beautiful structure in the south end of town! The visiting team did not see the TR Leger Alternative School. We noted that the Mississippi School has been closed.

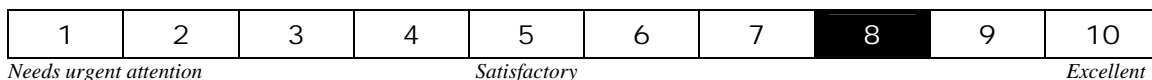
? **College / University**

Carleton Place is not home to any college or university campuses.

? **What did residents have to say?**

Residents speak well of the French Immersion Programs. We did hear that only one elementary school does not offer the program but they have the pool! Residents (newly graduated) speak very highly of their schools.

? **About the quality and availability of schools for a community of this size...**



This community offers an impressive array of education options. From a very young age, the children of Carleton Place are well serviced all around. This would be a great marketing spin to attract new families to this beautiful community.

HEALTH CARE SERVICES

Availability and apparent quality of healthcare facilities

? **Hospital(s)**

Carleton Place seemed to be well serviced with their good size hospital (must be nice to have one in town!) The visiting team felt that the hospital was strategically located within the town and signage was clear and precise.

? **Physician and dentist offices and clinics**

The hospital seems to have the monopoly on health care in Carleton Place. No other general practitioner or medical clinic was found. However, dentists do seem to offer a wide range of services and some office signs indicate that they are taking new patients.

“Good luck finding a doctor... there are none available in town!”

Resident

? **Long-term care and nursing home facilities**

The visiting team members saw a few nursing home facilities and what was believed to be a long-term care facility. Although we did not inquire as to services available, the team felt that little information was available about these facilities. Some energy could be invested in promoting the community for seniors.

Independent, newly retiree complexes were readily available and offer an attractive place to live. There were some concerns regarding the noise of the falls in the back of the old mill.

? **About other health services**

Carleton Place is home to many practitioners including chiropractors and physiotherapists. The location in the downtown (near the mews) is strategically located.

? **About the overall health care services for a community of this size**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<i>Needs urgent attention</i>				<i>Satisfactory</i>				<i>Excellent</i>	

The only concern the visiting team had was the lack of medical offices... but realised that this is a situation we all have in rural Ontario...

SOCIAL SERVICES

Observations regarding social services available in the community

? **About Social Services**

Carleton Place seemed to offer various social services. Youth centres, daycares and senior activity centers are readily available and accessible. The team did mention the appropriateness of the youth

center strategically situated in the downtown. Members were weary of the impact of some youth issues (vandalism, etc.).

As for food banks, community organisations servicing lower income families, none were found or apparent in the community.

? *About not for profit organizations and clubs*

Not for profit organisations are believed to contribute directly to a healthy community. Team members were happy to (finally) find the sign which promotes these organisations. It was suggested to increase their visibility by insuring more signs at the various gateways of the community.



EMERGENCY SERVICES

How do resident feel about their emergency services



The newly built fire hall / police station is impressive to any newcomer and relays the message that these services are important for the community. Discussions with residents revealed no issues around emergency services.

LOCAL ECONOMY

OVERALL IMPRESSION

Impressions about the overall health of the economy

On the surface or as a first impression, the local economy looks prosperous and healthy. We initially found there were a good mix of businesses and noted that the mews was an attractive focal point. The newly erected mall which houses the book store was a great indicator of things to come.

Once the team started to walk around, they found that it was more an economy in decline than on the rise. The business mix was seen as inappropriate for the demographics of the population (we noticed several second hand stores, thrifts stores, low end apparels and felt that the new home owners couldn't find a lot locally that could answer their needs).

Team members had the opportunity to speak to some store owners who strongly recommended not to start-up a retail business in Carleton Place. They felt that the focus was now on big box stores (rumours regarding the WalMart) and that patronage was generally in decline.

***People from here
don't buy here!***
Store owner

DOWNTOWN

Impressions about downtown

? *Ease of finding downtown*

In Carleton Place, you just end up in Downtown. There is no specific signage inviting newcomers to the downtown (no signs regarding downtown, city hall, tourism info centre). The only slight indication of a business core is a sign off McNeely (business district). The visiting team did not find that this signage reflects a downtown district. It would have been exciting to see an invitation off any main artery to visit the “historical downtown” or the “main street merchants”. The team literally fell into the downtown because of the street configuration but was not drawn to the area because of a tourism pull.

The limits of the downtown weren’t clear. The team felt that downtown started at the bridge and finished just before the food store (were we right?)

? *About the overall appearance of the downtown*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<i>Needs urgent attention</i>			<i>Satisfactory</i>				<i>Excellent</i>		

The Carleton Place downtown is very beautiful. Flower baskets decorate the street lamps, the parking is accessible, the rest area is a great addition. The street and sidewalks are clean and inviting to pedestrians. The river adds that certain cachet to the area and those heritage buildings makes a visit a worth while experience.

However, some work would be required to repair sidewalks and clean up of the bridge would be suggested (along with a relocation of resident spiders). The visiting team members were impressed by the BIA map but found it could use a little bit of work. As for buildings (other than heritage buildings), we found some in dire need of repair.



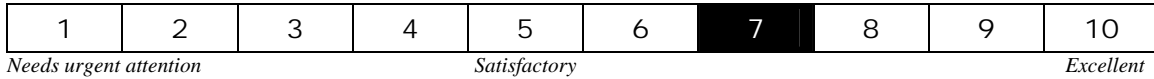
? *About the variety of shopping in the downtown*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<i>Needs urgent attention</i>			<i>Satisfactory</i>				<i>Excellent</i>		

The business mix found was not at all what we had expected. Little or no boutiques were located in the downtown. A most anticipated Tea Room was no where to be found. There were many second hand stores, strip bars and a surprising number of spas and beauty salons. We found no accommodations (either hotel or B&B) in or around the downtown.

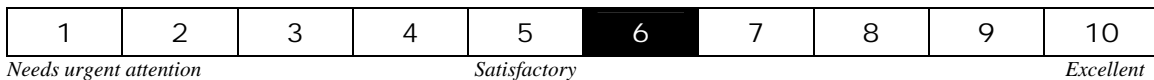
Restaurant options were limited and only one offered a terrace (unfortunately, this was on a busy street corner and we opted to dine inside). No commercial development was centered around the river which was disappointing to visitors.

? ***About the customer service received in the downtown***



Greetings from store owners and staff were always friendly, polite and courteous. We were well received in all stores and restaurants. However, the balance of our shopping experience was limited. We received little service (after that initial “hello”, we could walk about without even being acknowledged).

? ***About the signage in downtown***



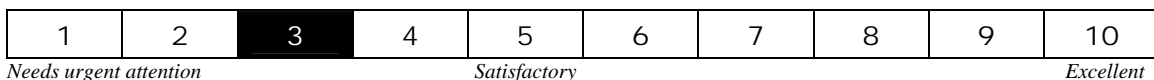
All through downtown, banners are hung to indicate that this is a BIA district. The team felt that this was a great initiative and would have liked to see a bigger (roll up format) version of this at both end of the district. Some were unfortunately hidden by overgrown trees or wrongly angled so that passer-by would have difficulties reading them.



The various storefronts had overhead awnings or other structure that could be used to better advertise their stores.



? ***About the window displays in the downtown***



The visiting team members felt that windows displays were not as inviting as the general appeal of the downtown. One member suggested that the BIA could host a training workshop in window displays and arrangement.

? ***About the variety and quality of merchandise in the downtown***

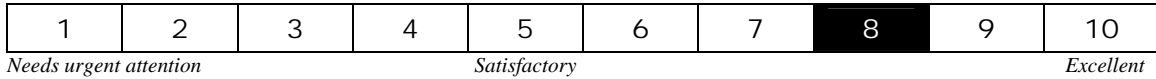


Members were taken back with the quantity of thrift store and second hand stores (including a shoe store!). There were no apparent high-end stores, no tourism oriented operation (trinkets and souvenirs). Off the beaten path was the new shopping plaza which was a great find.

? *About the mix of facilities and services in the downtown*

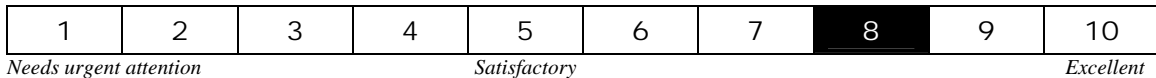
The business mix was surprising; the Downtown offers a wide range of product and services including banking, employment, insurance, legal, health and retail. Green spaces are lacking and would be nicely centered around the river. Options for dining are limited and we found no suitable accommodation in the downtown core.

? *About the quality and availability of parking in the downtown*



The parking lot and on street parking was an added value. Signage to that effect would better direct newcomers (we actually parked at the mews thinking this was our only option). There were no crosswalks on Bridge Street except at the Tim Horton Intersection (which can be difficult to navigate).

? *About the lighting in the downtown*



The street lamps present all through downtown, are nice and well accessorized (banners, hanging flower baskets). Unfortunately, the visiting team had planned a day visit only and could not comment on the adequacy of the lighting.

? *About the role of tourism*

Carleton Place has been very successful in merging the history within its business core. Plaques that have been installed in front of various heritage buildings make it an interesting find along the way. It would be a great asset to marry a “hunt for our heritage” with a local downtown shopping experience.

All the ingredients are there to make Carleton Place Downtown a tourism experience! We just need the right mix!

However, tourism doesn’t seem to be a great engine in downtown Carleton Place. No specific signage has been installed (temporarily or permanently) to invite people into the tourism office. The commercial mix doesn’t cater well to tourists and little or no accommodation is present in downtown. Music would be a great addition to complete the tourism experience in Downtown Carleton Place.

? *About the residential housing mix and desirability of living in the downtown*

The main street residential mix is typical of a rural main street setting. We found some single family dwellings and some 2nd story apartments. Most would have needed some repairs. Unfortunately, the visiting team members were not at all attracted to the downtown as a place to live.

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT OVERALL RETAIL

Retail shopping available through out the community

? *About the overall mix of retail shopping available*

Outside of the downtown core, there seemed to be little retail available with the exception of the highway commercial development. The team found one strip mall near the south-end industrial park. It was surprising to see that residents had little access to fast food or corner stores.



In general, the town seems to focus its residential attraction strategy towards upscale/professionals but the retail doesn't seem to provide high-end stores, variety, etc. that would meet their needs. Fortunately, all commodities (grocery store, hardware and sporting good store, dining) are available on Highway 7.

? *About travelling to buy because stores or services were missing in the community*

The visiting team felt that most residents would need to travel a fair distance to get most of what they needed. There seems to be a lot of retail merchandise missing from the commercial mix such as: sporting goods, printing, gift shop, new shoe store, men's apparel, women high-end clothing store, furniture store, etc. There also seemed to be very little in terms of nightlife entertainment available.

? *About stores or services that were unusual or unexpected*

Carleton Place has interesting finds... There seems to be a lot of book stores and even more beauty salons & spas. The "used shoe store" (we believed could have been a marked down shoe store) was a new experience for our seasoned shoppers.

? *Would we travel back for a specific store or services...*

The wool factory would no doubt bring us back. What a beautiful, historical, one of a kind experience.

? *About the overall condition of the retail sector*

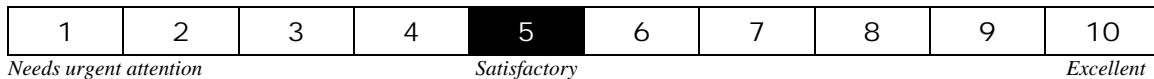
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Needs urgent attention		Satisfactory						Excellent	

In general, the retail sector was disappointing to some visiting team members. The lack of speciality shops, the distance to travel from the residential districts and the abundance of low-end stores were all surprising. It seems to conflict with what appears to be the demographics of the community.

THE MEWS

As a specific retail shopping area

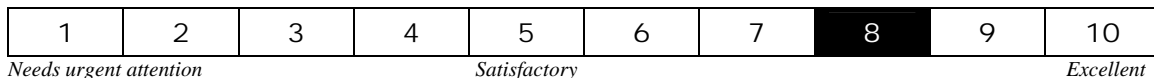
? ***About the overall appearance of the MEWS***



The mews was strategically located on a busy intersection. It is home to a beautiful, inviting clock tower (that actually works). At first, it attracts the newcomer because of its convenience, ample parking and its focal point.

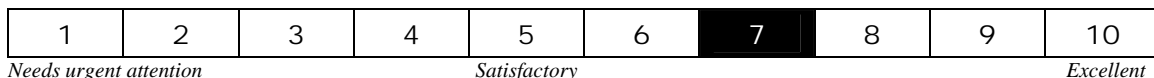
The walk about was filled with awe and sighs. Its nicely designed landscape and the variety of stores and services are very appealing. However, once you complete the last turn, you finish in the back of the mews, with the view and smells of the back yard of the wool factory, untamed green space and no where else to go. It would have been great to find that the stores were located all around this building (not just on two sides).

? ***About the variety of shopping of the MEWS***



The mews offers services (banking), general consumable goods (Giant Tiger) and some speciality shops and services (hair salon, children clothing, etc.) The visiting team felt that this was a good shopping experience (but would it not be great to find little hidden gems at this location?)

? ***About the variety of shopping of the MEWS***



Store owners and staff were very welcoming here. Some offered great customer service with helpful advice and suggestion for the patron. Others would greet you nicely but let you walk about without asking if assistance was required. All in all, the mews various stores were inviting and service was well perceived.

? ***About the variety and quality of merchandise at the MEWS***



The business mix in this strip mall was interesting. Most stores offered great selection and quality. Team members remain curious about the “used shoe store”...

LOCAL INDUSTRY

Considering industries only within or adjacent to the community,

? ***About the major industrial sectors in the community***

Carleton Place does not seem to have a major industrial focus.

? ***About the major employers in the community***

Again, the community does not seem to rely on industry to drive the employment in the area. Major employment seems to be driven by the education, retail and municipal/health sectors.

? ***About the major type of manufacturing in the community***

No one major manufacturing type seems to be present in this community.

? ***About the major types of primary industry in the community***

Outlining areas of Carleton Place seem to have agriculture as a primary industry.

? ***About the industrial park or serviced land***

The three industrial parks are well advertised (on maps) but disappointing once you get on site. The north end park has great signage (although confusing when considering that the French high-school is not at all at this end of town). We were surprised to find a cemetery hidden in the industrial sector of the north end park.

The south end park seems newer and better organised for small industry establishments. As for the east end park, it seemed focused on big box commercial development and not suitable for small or medium sized industries.

The team felt that most industrial sites were not at all inviting to potential investors. One team member suggested that better maintenance and advertisement backed by a good attraction strategy could help the community expand their industrial based.

? ***About the potential of the community as an attractive location for manufacturing development***

Carleton Place could have a lot to offer in manufacturing. Some questions around availability of work force would need to be answered before proceeding to the development of an attracting strategy (this community seemed to be focused more on the commuter than on creating local employment opportunities).

The visiting team would suggest that maintenance be done at some sites. An attracting strategy for investors could be developed and promoted directly with visitors when seeking information about the community (including lot description and availability of land and building posted directly on the web site).

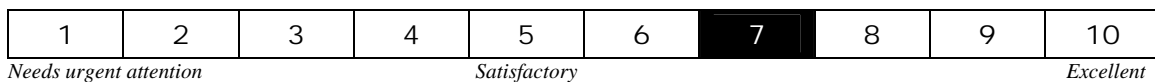
PROFESSIONAL, COMMERCIAL & GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Professional Services

? *About banks and ATMs*

Financial institutions were found in the Downtown. Their hours of operations were typical and ATM were available at most sites.

? *Rating the adequacy of financial services for a community of this size*



? *About other professional services*

Most professional services seemed to be available in town including legal, accounting, and real estate. The team found that the mix of services was very appropriate. We did not notice many drug stores on the territory.

Commercial Services

? *About the types of commercial businesses servicing the local community*

We found little commercial offering outside the town main core (downtown). The south end industrial park does offer a mix of services.

? *About what seems to be missing in the community*

It is difficult for the visiting team to comment on what would be missing in the community. We found little businesses outside the town's downtown.

Local Government Information

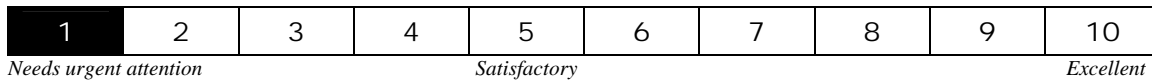
? *About the location of the municipal offices*

The municipal offices are strategically located in a beautiful heritage building right in the core of the downtown. Its clock tower focuses our attention of the building and draws the first time visitors to it. You couldn't have a more obvious and appropriate location!

There is however no apparent parking near or around the building. Suggestion of parking area would invite more people in.

Negotiating the entrance and hall ways of the building can be a challenge. Main entrance way should be clearly indicated. The visiting team was taken back by the lack of security, able to walk around at their ease without being questioned or directed.

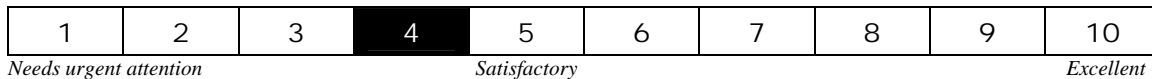
? ***About the availability and quality of information : Community Brochure/guide***



The quality of information offered through the Municipal Web site does not translate into quality nor availability of information on site. No brochures were offered to the team members who visited the town hall. They received little or no assistance when asked what activities were available in the area. No promotional kit for visitors, potential residents or investors was offered.

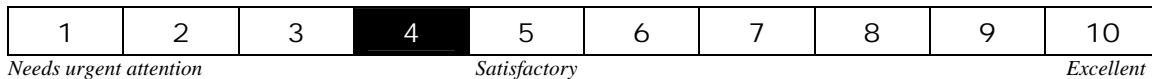
The BIA was on-site and displayed information on the Welcome Wagon, the Theatre Groups, and the brochure on the Sister City of Frankleen - Tennessee to name a few. The visitors obtained a copy of the town’s newsletter and a map which were perceived as great tools for local residents but did little for the tourists or newcomers.

? ***About the availability and quality of information : Business Directory***



The local BIA and the Chamber of Commerce offered no business listing or any assistance (suggestions, sites to see, etc.) for first time visitors. The better source of information remains a quick visit to the municipal web site. A public workstation could be made available with the municipal web pages available off line (to avoid unwarranted usage of web surfing).

? ***About the availability and quality of information : Community Profile***



The newsletter does offer interesting information on the community. No other source of information was obtained by our visiting team members who inquired at the town hall.

? ***About finding adequate information to make informed business investment decisions***

Our “potential investor” inquired about local by-law information, investment opportunities, site locations, etc. No information was available (even after the municipal staff inquired with colleagues). Investors would be required to make an appointment to meet a municipal representative to obtain further information.

It was suggested that an attraction package be available to potential investors and could contain basic information (community profile, site selection information, broadband & infrastructure information, name and number of municipal person or position to contact for further information, etc.)

Public Infrastructure

About the quality, accessibility or availability of:

? **Public Transport**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<i>Needs urgent attention</i>				<i>Satisfactory</i>			<i>Excellent</i>		

(N.A.) No public transport seem available in the community

? **Sidewalks**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<i>Needs urgent attention</i>			<i>Satisfactory</i>			<i>Excellent</i>			

The sidewalks in the downtown could use some work. There is also a lack of consistency even in the downtown core (some are too wide while others just down the road are too narrow). Sidewalks in other parts of town are satisfactory. There is one sector (Coleman Street) where the sidewalk and green space are a perfect combination.



Some streets did not have sidewalks while others are obviously still under construction.

? **Streets**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<i>Needs urgent attention</i>				<i>Satisfactory</i>		<i>Excellent</i>			

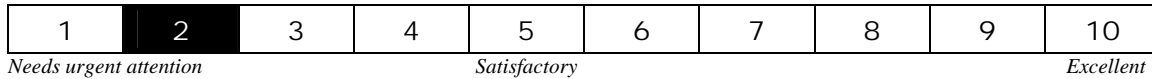
In general, the streets are satisfactory. No potential problems were detected in our drive through and around town.

? **Landscaping, trees**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<i>Needs urgent attention</i>				<i>Satisfactory</i>		<i>Excellent</i>			

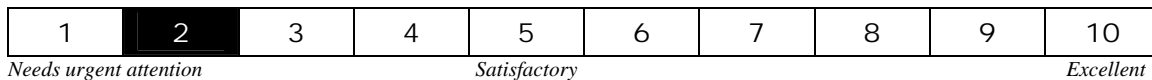
Most areas visited had great landscaping designs. Wide green spaces (like that of Coleman Street), and back streets were all impressive. It was obvious to the visiting team that Carleton Place had some sort of floral contest. Hanging flower baskets (some street lights even had three baskets) were a pretty sight. The visiting team had only good comments about the cleanliness of Carleton Place.

? **Public Restrooms**



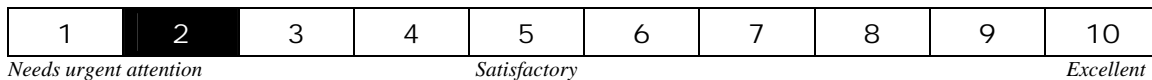
When in the downtown, visitors would have some difficulties finding restrooms. The recommendation to our team was to use the Tim Horton's facilities. We did notice the use of portable washrooms in the public parks (soccer fields, etc.).

? **Street Signage**



This street signage was interesting. Some had the poppies on them (members assumed this was a special commemorative effort for veterans from Carleton Place). Some street signs were oddly angled, making it difficult for drivers and pedestrians to see what street there were on (for example on the corner of Coleman & Rochester).

? **Pay phones, drinking fountains, benches, etc.**



The visiting team did not notice any pay phones except in the Tim Horton's. We were not expecting to find any drinking fountains.

Benches and picnic tables were scattered throughout the town (some nicer than others...). We noticed some in the downtown, others at various parks. We were pleasantly surprised to find garbage cans even outside of the downtown area. We would suggest repainting them to blend in with the landscape (without disappearing).

Planning

? About conflicting land uses in the community

There were a few noticeable land use conflicts. The cemetery in the industrial park set some team members back. It was a beautiful cemetery once the visitor was passed the long grassy field. Some signage could help alleviate this contradictory use of the land.

The back of the wool factory could be fenced in to hide the view of its yard. This area (new strip mall and residential development) seem relatively new and the space behind the mews will probably be used for future development of some sort. There would also be a need to address the smell emanating from the wool factory's yard (crude oil from the rail road wood). The team suspected that this parcel of land is still being used by the Rail Road Company for storage. Relocation of the rail storage would probably be a great initiative.



The team was also disappointed to see that the Farmers Market had changed location, finding that the wool factory site was more appropriate and could draw more visitors near the downtown.

As to the planning in general, the team felt that this town was redefining itself. The new residential developments were beautiful. The industrial parks were scattered through out the town and would have needed more attention.

? About traffic or pedestrian congestion

Very few crosswalks are available in the downtown or outside the core. Some new crosswalks (repainting, lights, etc.) could be a suggestion for future projects.

The team did not encounter any traffic congestion but the timing in the day did not allow for a valid evaluation of this aspect. A drive through town at peak time could reveal a different outcome.

? About accessibility for community facilities and infrastructure.

Most stores, restaurants or facilities did not have ramped access and very few had an appropriate interior design (shelving, etc.) to allow to comfortably managed a visit in a wheelchair. The team felt that it would be very difficult for a disabled individual to get around town.

TOURISM, CULTURE AND HERITAGE, FAITH, ENTERTAINMENT AND RECREATION

? *About tourism in the community*

The visiting team did not perceive tourism as an important sector or priority for Carleton Place. Little or no information is available to comfortably be directed through town (please note that the Tourism Office was not staffed on the day of the visit). We do recommend any new comer to walk about because of the sights this town has to offer (beautiful heritage homes and buildings, the community's involvement in making Carleton Place a nice place to visit, etc.).

? *About the community's slogan/brand*

See it... live it... love it!

The community slogan is well promoted on the web site and in most municipal publications. It would have been nice to be greeted by the slogan at the town's various gateways

The downtown BIA has its own branding "Get to know downtown Carleton Place". No slogan or branding accompanies the Carleton Place Chamber of Commerce publications or web pages. Some consistent branding could be used for any publication used in an attraction strategy.

? *About the community's well known attraction, event or festival*

No predominant activity, event or attraction seems to exist in Carleton Place. Once in town, one notices the flowers but no promotion exists to that effect. The monthly newsletter does offer a variety of community based activities. Historic and Heritage tours should be part of the tourism strategy in Carleton Place.

? *About the community events or attractions that could be expanded*

Activities stemming from the rowing club and the dragon boat festival could be of interest as a potential tourism attraction. Most team members felt that heritage buildings and homes and some churches should be part of either a bus or walking tour and that the wool factory should be a big part of that heritage tour.

? *About the quality and appearance of existing tourist attractions*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
<i>Needs urgent attention</i>				<i>Satisfactory</i>				<i>Excellent</i>		

The heritage homes and building are beautiful and generally well kept. What potential as a tourism pull...!

? *About the existing attractions as being underdeveloped*

Apart from heritage, the team felt little was available to draw tourists into Carleton Place. We did feel there would be great potential with the following: a mapping / “hunt for heritage” of all heritage buildings, water front development using some vacant land, some diverse used of green spaces. Little night life nor in town accommodation seem to exist in Carleton Place. Keeping tourists in town and not having to send them on Highway 7 could benefit the downtown merchants.

Services for Tourists

? *About servicing the needs of tourists*

It was only by chance that the visiting team found the Visitor’s Centre (which was hidden inside the Town Hall). No signage or indicating would have led us to the centre. Unfortunately, the office was not staffed on the day of the visit. Moreover, no one was available at either the BIA office or the municipal office to offer the same level of service as a trained, well versed tourism office attendant could deliver. Visiting team members did obtain a map of the town and appreciated the additional information provided on the map (listing of schools, facilities, retirement homes, churches and the BIA insert).

? *About the availability and selection of accommodation in the community*

All accommodation seemed to be situated in the outside limits of the town, on Highway 7. It is the only obvious place where one could get overnight accommodation. The visiting team was disappointed not to find a quaint little bed and breakfast in one of those heritage properties (maybe was there some in the *Carleton Heritage?*).

? *About the facilities that could accommodate a conference or large number of visitors*

The only logical facility that could hold a large number of visitors would be the community center. Lodging close to the facility would however be unrealistic. None of the hotels promoted conference facilities.

? *About the quality of restaurants in the community*



The restaurant we patronized was nice and offered an interesting variety on its menu. It would have been great to see the menu elegantly displayed outside (either on a pedestal or as a wall display).

? *About the variety and mix of restaurants in the community*



We did find a listing of restaurants on the municipal web site but with the exception of those situated on Hwy 7, we saw very few dining options in Carleton Place.

? *About the local residents' recommendations*

While in downtown, residents suggested we eat at *The Carleton Heritage*. They had only good things to say about this establishment but weren't sure if it offered a lunch menu. We also inquired about any night time options and were told that we would have to be in early since this particular establishment closes early (not set closing time, it would just depend on the evening).

? *About what would bring us back to this community in the near future*

Again, the wool factory was a great find...

Culture and Heritage

? *About popular community events or the lack of... with residents*

The various discussions we held with local residents did not reveal any specific community events in this area.

? *About the community's heritage buildings*

Carleton Place can take pride in its heritage buildings. Both private homes and designated heritage buildings are an impressive site for the first time visitor. Some buildings have been nicely converted. It was surprising not to see more focus on them or a museum or interpretative centre speaking of them...

Faith / Religion

? *About the number, appearance and selection of religious buildings in the community*

All denominations seem to be present in this community. The visiting team would have loved to see the inside of a few of these buildings because of how impressive their architecture was but found that they were all locked. The visiting team was curious to see if any churches offered services in other languages.



? **About the overall impression of religious buildings.**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<i>Needs urgent attention</i>			<i>Satisfactory</i>				<i>Excellent</i>		

Again, because of the impressive architectural designs and heritage of some of these buildings, a bus tour could bring tourists around these properties. Some of these churches could even be featured in Open Doors Ontario.

Entertainment

? **About the entertainment in the community**

The community seems to have little entertainment options. When inquiring about entertainment options, residents suggested we visit Ottawa. Some visiting team members were curious about the “Riverside Jam” but found little information pertaining to it. We did notice the movie theatre in the converted church.

? **About what the resident feel they lack in entertainment opportunities**

The residents did not suggest any entertainment opportunities as they felt they were too close to Ottawa to develop this sector further.

? **About the night life**

The visiting team was not able to evaluate any night life because their visit was only for the day. However, residents did relate that Carleton Place had little to offer at night.

Recreation

About the availability and appearance of recreational facilities

? **Parks**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<i>Needs urgent attention</i>			<i>Satisfactory</i>				<i>Excellent</i>		



The community offers great green spaces for the local residents. Some are more focused for professionals while others offer play structures and sport fields for families. Some members did note that not all parks were fenced in (for children’s security reasons)

We liked the small beach near the Rowing Club. However, some members of the team were concerned with the proximity of the play structure to the water and would see it being moved back onto the lawn.

? **Public Recreation Facilities**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<i>Needs urgent attention</i>			<i>Satisfactory</i>				<i>Excellent</i>		

The sport complex seemed to offer access to most if not all sports. It was however very difficult to find. Some signage could help new comers and visitors locate this great facility. The visiting team even requested direction from municipal staff and they too found it somewhat awkward to explain.

? **Private Recreation Facilities**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<i>Needs urgent attention</i>			<i>Satisfactory</i>				<i>Excellent</i>		

It was unclear to the visiting team which facilities were privately owned and which others were municipally owned. We did find the Curling Club and the Rowing Club which are great additional to the community and were perceived as non municipal (ie: owned and operated by a not for profit organisation).



? **About what people in this community appear to do for recreation**

Sports in general seemed to be popular in Carleton Place. The visiting team was pleased to see a bike path but felt that its potential had yet to be achieved. Some commodities (ie: facilities, vending or vendors, signage, etc.) would be great additions. We also found a boat launch nestled (or hidden away) at one end of town. The marina was believed to be out of town (which was unfortunate because we would have hoped that a more direct link existed between the town and the marina).

Other sports and recreation are also featured in Carleton Place: kayaking, curling, golf (we did see golf courses on various maps and listing but we did not visit the clubs)

Some team members felt that although their seemed to be a lot going on in this community, it isn't obvious what options are available.

? **About what recreational facility surprised the visiting team**

The sport complex seemed to offer everything!

? **About recreational activities seemed to be missing**

Carleton Place seems to offer everything for its residents. We did not however find any gyms (other than Curves) in the area.

? *About the overall suitability of recreational facilities.*

Single young adults seem to be disadvantaged in Carleton Place, not having a lot of option on how they can stay busy. Healthy seniors (ie: early retirees) can walk around, curl, etc.

<i>Suitability (rating 1 – 10)</i>	<i>Group</i>
5	<i>Senior Citizens</i>
8	<i>Families</i>
3	<i>Single, young adults</i>
6	<i>Teens</i>
8	<i>Children (13 and under)</i>

INFORMATION FROM COMMUNITY RESIDENTS

Quality of information and assistance provided by residents and business employees

? *About the knowledge of local residents about their community*

Initially, the team met with one resident who spoke of how well the French speaking residents were well integrated with-in the community.

When asking for directions, some municipal staff had some difficulties explaining their way around town. No one we spoke to (including shop keepers, municipal staff or residents) provided insight into Carleton Place... we would have loved to hear some stories...

? *About the referral practices of residents*

The team felt a bit lost in Carleton Place. The municipal staff were very friendly but not very helpful with our questions and suggested booking an appointment with someone to get answers to our questions. The employment resource centre couldn't help our "job seeker" with any employment opportunities in the area (all they could do is provide assistance in résumé writing). No one referred us any where for immediate assistance.

? *About the attitude of residents toward their community*

We did find that people were general happy about living in Carleton Place. We did not however feel any general sense of pride. No one say "this is a great place to live, retire, visit, etc". Some shop keepers discouraged us on establishing a business in the area while residents had little recommendations about places to see or things to do. Some even went on to say that there is no need to try to change things... "it just won't happen"!

? ***About particular issues identified by residents***

The only issues the team heard about pertained to the retail and health sectors. Some retailers felt that they weren't able to compete against the Ottawa markets and the big box commercial developments. Residents in Carleton Place did not encourage local retailers. As for health, some concerns were raised around access to general practitioners.

? ***About the quality of information from community residents and business employees***

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<i>Needs urgent attention</i>			<i>Satisfactory</i>				<i>Excellent</i>		

As a rule, people wanted to be helpful and informative.

Other Observations

? ***Taste***

Nothing held our attention

? ***Smell***

The unfortunate smell emitting from the back of the mews... (back of wool factory) left us with a negative souvenir...

? ***Sight***

Flowers, flowers and beautiful homes were what made an unforgettable impression for our team.

? ***Sound***

What a quiet, peaceful town (except near the water fall)

? ***About the overall environmental health of the community***

Carleton Place is a clean, peaceful, quiet little rural town. It's speaks to its quality of life.

? ***About what impact us negatively or positively***

Some members felt shopping was a lonely experience... very few customers, little interaction and one can walk in and out of stores with out even being noticed. Others were initially so impressed by the community that they felt disappointed that the heart of the town wasn't has strong as its beauty.

? *About the perception of the visiting team*

The team found those beautiful heritage homes they had expected see. We did not accurately predict the waterfront development where we were expecting to find waterfront properties, some commercial development and tourists attractions near the water.

? *About the information gathered prior to the visit*

Carleton Place has a great web site. It was organised, well presented, complete and gave the virtual visitor a great tour of the town's assets. Unfortunately, the web presentation and actual visit to the community revealed contradictory impressions. Once in town, first time visitors have some difficulties navigating through town (little or no signage) and finding appropriate information.

As a business person or a potential investor, Carleton Place doesn't seem to be organised to make a good "pitch" to newcomers.

? *About the most outstanding feature of this community*

On a positive note, Carleton Place makes a great first impression. Its beautiful heritage properties, the inviting streetscape of the downtown and the cleanliness of the entire community was most impressive.

However, little or no attention has been give to what the team felt was a great asset for the community – the water. And we were taken aback by the dichotomy that seems to be happening between the limited retail offering and the expensive, high-end new residential developments.

? *About relocating to the community*

As a young family, Carleton Place has everything to offer in terms of infrastructure (schools, hospital, outdoor activities, etc.) but would need to encourage new housing development that could attract and sustain all middle income families.

As a retired person, Carleton Place offers quality of life, tranquility and an array of outdoor activities suited for healthy seniors.

As a young single adult, Carleton Place has limited options in post secondary training, employment opportunities and entertainment. It would be difficult for a young single adult to enjoy a friendly evening out.

As a tourist, Carleton Place has little to offer presently. It has no showcase event or attraction that would encourage individuals to get off the highway. It does however have the great potential!

As a retail or service business owner, Carleton Place offers limited options. Local shopping initiatives along with a high commercial vacancy rate do not leave a positive impression.

As a manufacturer, Carleton Place lacks the availability of the required workforce (residents of this community seem to be mostly professionals who work in Ottawa).

? *About the positive things about this community*

1. The cleanliness
2. The heritage
3. The water
4. The tranquility
5. The landscape

Carleton Place has everything to fills your eyes!

? *About the potential opportunities available to the community*

1. Expanding of the waterfront developments
2. Mapping the heritage assets
3. Increasing tourism offerings in the community

? *About the biggest obstacles/challenges facing this community*

1. Commercial development (making a home for small business)
2. Signage (directional)
3. Tourism development
4. Manufacturing
5. Bilingualism (building on this asset!)

? *About what we will remember most about this community*

Carleton Place has great potential. The first impression is great and one that will stay with us for a long time!

? *About what we have learned in this community that has changed our impression of our own community*

Rockland doesn't have those great heritage buildings (we only have a few)... we don't have the beautiful streetscape of the downtown. We do however cherish our heritage and need to better build on it. We need to look at specialty stores and stops that can make our time a great place to be!

? *About how this experience has given us new ideas of what is needed in our community*

Rockland will need to build more momentum for its downtown development. Adding flowers to the street lamps and seriously look at helping businesses with facades and storefronts will increase the positive retail experience in our downtown.

? *About ONE idea that we will borrow for use in our community*

The BIA MAP: The municipal staff will look at working in collaboration with downtown merchants and the local Chamber of Commerce to design a Downtown map of our merchants, heritage buildings and other assets.

OUR FINAL THANK YOU

The visiting team from Rockland would like to extend their heart felt thanks to everyone we encountered during our little venture to Carleton Place. It's the people that make a house a home... and in Carleton Place, it's the people, its history and heritage that makes this town a community...

Thank you

Rockland FICE Team

