

# **First Impressions Community Exchange (FICE)**

## **DOWNTOWN**

**Kemptville, Ontario**

**July 12, 2011**

# Visiting Team

## Group 1 – Tourists

- **Lynn Grinstead, female, age 36 -55**
- **Deborah McCorkell-Hoy, female, age 56 – 70**
- **Robin Smith, Female, Age 36 – 55**

## Group 2 – Young Family / Young Single Person

- **Mark Nibourg, Male, Age 19 – 35**
- **Erin Clarke, Female, 19 – 35**

## Visiting Team Continued

### **Group 3 – Outdoor Enthusiasts**

- **Kimberley O'Shaughnessey, Female, age 36 – 55**
- **Dennis Turpin, Male, age 36 – 55**

### **Group 4 – Retiree considering relocation/ Business Person**

- **Denis Lacroix, Male, age 56 – 70**
- **Bernice Horne, Female, age 56 – 70**

## Before the Visit

### **Visitors perceptions prior to visit:**

- Similar to Arnprior
- Good location at Hwy 416
- Compared to other towns such as Richmond and Merrickville
- Typical of many small Ontario towns
- Large variety of shopping options
- Strong focus on agriculture because of college presence

## Community Information

- Difficult to find online information if you are unfamiliar with North Grenville
- Information was not received after a telephone request
- Once in the community very high quality information was readily available
- The Chamber of Commerce is professional and knowledgeable when providing information

## Community Information Recommendations

- Consider a website devoted solely to Kemptville to simplify the search
- Increase distribution of information throughout the community and in nearby communities

## Entering the Community

- Different gateways were used to enter the community including; Hwy 416 / Cty Rd. 43, Cty Rd 44 and Dwyer Hill Rd.
- Old Town Kemptville signs are well designed and contribute to the historic effect however, more directional signage would be useful
- The Cty Rd 43 entrance is very commercial while the Cty Rd 44 entrance near the college is very natural and well maintained
- Some areas leading into downtown are prime targets for redevelopment and revitalization

# Examples

- The signs pictured here are excellent examples of directional signage



- The photo pictured to the right is an example of a prime building for façade improvement



## Downtown Appearance

- Streetscaping very well done
- Visitors liked the lights, signage and street furniture
- Many businesses have made strong revitalization efforts
- Visitors enjoyed the mature, well maintained residential area and the churches and older homes

## Examples

- Right: examples of two of the historic buildings in the mature residential neighbourhood



- Right: Complementary street signs and lighting enhance the historic character of downtown



## Downtown Specifics

- New buildings have integrated very well with historic buildings
- Upper level housing appears to be in exceptional condition
- Clothier St. needs infrastructure repairs and revitalization to more closely resemble Prescott St.
- The addition of more waste and recycling receptacles as well as benches would be useful
- Visitors enjoyed the town square / park at the corner of Prescott and Clothier
- Curry Park would benefit from development to increase usage and functionality

## Downtown Specifics

- Façade improvement Program may be useful to stimulate private sector investment from some property owners
- Certain areas need improvement such as green space, flowers, trees etc, eg; near Giant Tiger and grocery store
- Old signage should be removed from vacant buildings and windows should be cleaned to increase appeal to new potential merchants

## Downtown Businesses

- The Chamber of Commerce office is highly visible and functions well as a tourist information centre
- The town as a whole has a strong mix of businesses
- More “necessity” type businesses downtown would draw traffic away from the highway commercial district
- The grocery store, Giant Tiger and Home Hardware are in good locations to draw people downtown
- Many of the specialty businesses are appealing to visitors

## Downtown Businesses

- Visitors were impressed with the variety of restaurants and cafes
- Professional services were readily available, these should be encouraged in the downtown core
- Generally people were very friendly however there were some customer service issues
- Store hours are a challenge because of the commuter base

## Downtown Business Recommendations

- Attempt to fill gaps in the downtown business mix by encouraging more “necessity” type businesses (ie; clothing, shoes etc.)
- Encourage increased store hours
- The Chamber of Commerce can consider providing a seminar for sales and customer services strategies to all interested businesses
- Consider using the Official Plan to designate permissible uses for the downtown to encourage service related businesses to locate there

## Health and Social Services

- Physiotherapists, chiropractors and massage therapists are available
- The hospital and physicians are easy to locate from the downtown
- Child care is readily available and easy to locate

## Local Government Information

- Visitors did not find any local government information in the downtown core
- The new library is a good spot for government information to be provided

## Public Infrastructure

- Public Infrastructure including pool and ball diamonds are well maintained
- The library is well designed to suit it's location
- Parking is readily available
- Clothier St. needs repairs and upgrades to mirror Prescott St.
- Install more benches and picnic tables at Curry Park to increase usability
- Consider waterfront projects such as pathways to link the parks and downtown

## Tourism

- Niche businesses are attractive to visitors
- Waterfront can be used as a significant draw
- The Dandelion Festival is a strong event, promote it aggressively
- Consider developing more events throughout the summer to create an ongoing flow of visitors
- Attempt to increase the availability of overnight accommodations near the downtown core

## Tourism

- New businesses or new revenue streams for existing businesses such as kayak and bike rentals would attract outdoor enthusiasts
- Aggressive promotion in surrounding communities and throughout Eastern Ontario will stimulate increased tourism, consider partnering with downtown businesses on promotional programs
- A sign board near the dock at Curry Park would help to direct boaters to downtown businesses and amenities

## Recreation

- The pool, ball diamonds, and curling rink are in a good location downtown
- Increased focus on trails linking the parks, waterfront and downtown would encourage additional use

## Culture and Heritage

- The walking tours are clearly laid out in print form and showcase Kemptville's heritage well
- The recent streetscaping works well with the heritage theme of Old Town
- Visitors did not see evidence of a museum
- The new library is in a strong location and will work to draw residents into the downtown core

## Environmental Sustainability

- The park areas and green space were clean and well maintained
- Additional waste and recycling receptacles would allow for environmentally friendly disposal

## Example

- Right: The park at the intersection of Clothier and Prescott adds significantly to the appearance of the area



## Welcoming Community

- Generally, the people volunteers spoke to were very friendly
- Kemptville has a very relaxed atmosphere and is a comfortable place to spend time
- The staff at the Chamber of Commerce were very welcoming and knowledgeable

## Using Our Senses

- Kemptville is very clean and has a fresh “cut grass” smell
- Visitors found the park at Prescott and Clothier very inviting
- Volunteers were impressed with the quality and variety of eating establishments
- Some volunteers were disappointed with the variety of shopping choices downtown and would like to see more options

## Information from Residents

- The residents were knowledgeable and very informative about the community
- The majority of people were very friendly and happy to chat to the visiting teams
- One resident described Kemptville as “the best place to live”!

## The Most Outstanding Feature of Kempptville

- Kempptville has many outstanding features including;
  - The new library
  - The parks
  - The streetscaping and street furniture
  - The people

## More Than Five Positive Things About Kemptville

- The people (friendly and positive)
- Clean and tidy, mostly well maintained
- Good streetscaping on Prescott
- Good signage
- Visible chamber of Commerce Office
- Green space
- Pre-marked walking tours

## And Still More...

- Outdoor cafes
- River front
- Library
- Restaurants
- Availability of local arts and crafts
- Local food initiative at the Branch Restaurant
- Private investment has been occurring with new buildings and businesses
- Appealing, mature residential area

## Five Biggest Challenges Facing Kemptville

- Lack of wheelchair access
- The need for more variety of businesses in the downtown core to draw people away from the highway commercial district
- Increased marketing of downtown
- Store hours
- Obvious divide of the town between downtown and highway commercial district, difficult to create flow between the areas

## Possible Quick Win Projects

- Additional garbage cans, recycling and benches on Prescott St.
- Remove signs from vacant buildings
- Clean windows in vacant buildings
- Addition of benches and picnic tables at Curry Park
- Addition of waterfront pathway
- Increased directional signage to downtown
- Develop tourist / visitor booth downtown and in highway commercial district
- Involve shop owners to participate in tourism programs
- Have the restaurants and town partner to promote 100 mile dinners to take advantage of the proximity to agricultural areas

## Five Potential Opportunities Available to Kemptville

1. Continue with downtown revitalization on Clothier St. to mirror Prescott St.
2. Look at redevelopment and beautification of waterfront areas
3. Increase the number of annual events to create a continuous flow
4. Develop a marketing strategy geared towards new business and tourism
5. Keep up the good work!