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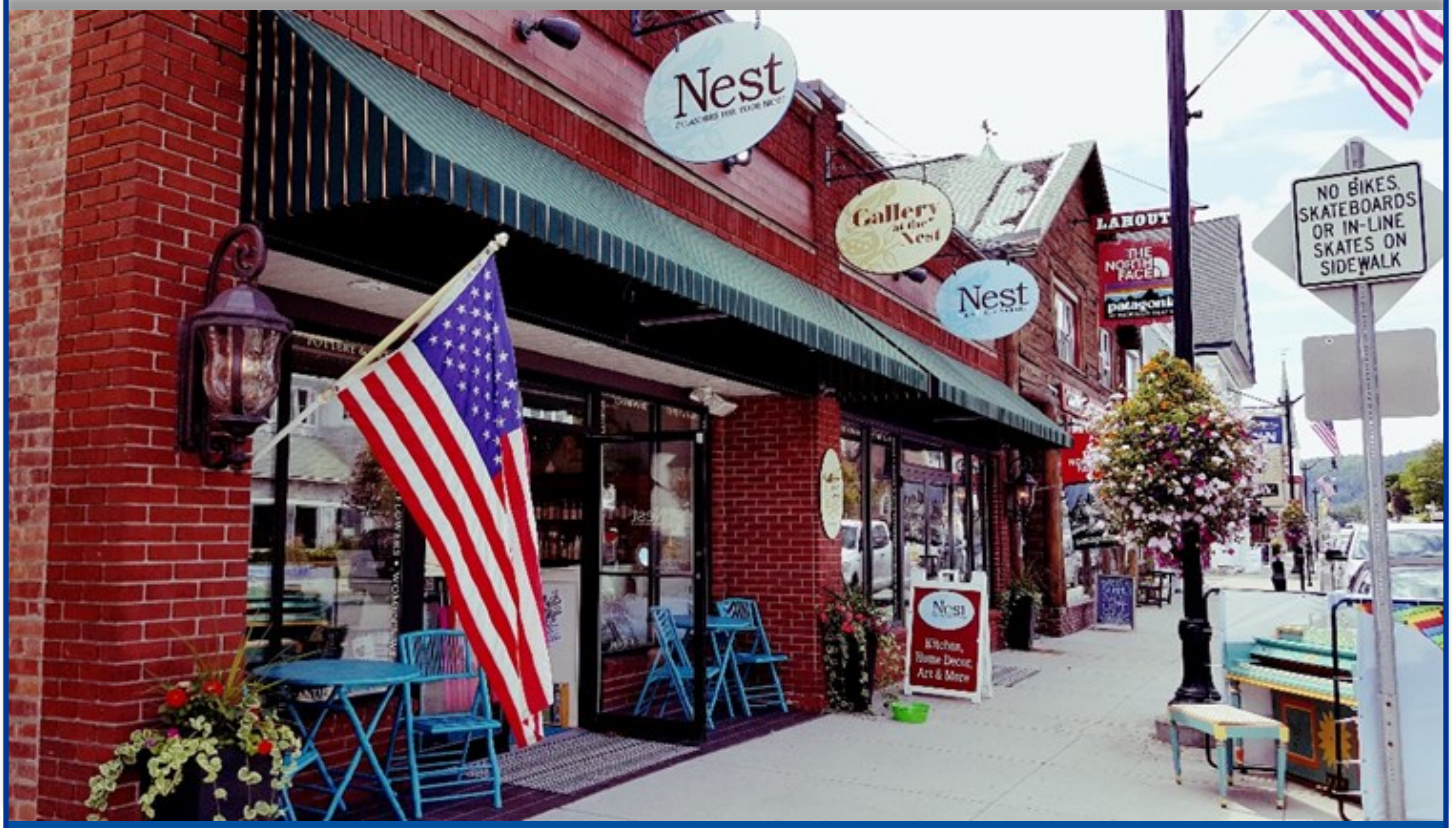

2016
November 1

First Impressions: Littleton

New Hampshire First Impressions

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Acknowledgements

Thank you to the community volunteers who are passionate about improving their communities and provided their time and effort to implement the First Impressions program.

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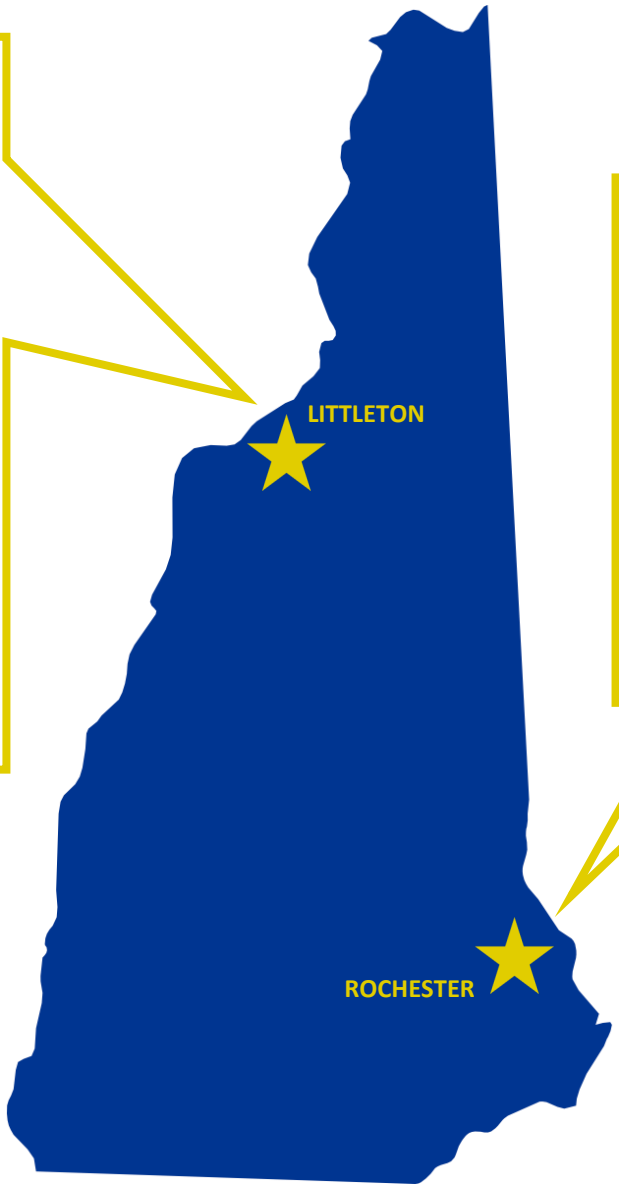

Community Leadership Team

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First Impressions was developed in 1991 by Andy Lewis, University of Wisconsin Extension Associate Professor, and James Schneider, Grant County, Wisconsin Economic Development Director. Since then, the program has been adapted by states across the US as well as in Canada. The First Impressions program has been adapted by University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension to meet the current and future needs of New Hampshire Communities.

Introduction

The look and feel of a downtown can influence the decisions of potential residents, visitors, and businesses. A vibrant downtown serves as a gathering place, a place for people to dine, shop, and conduct business. New Hampshire First Impressions is designed to help a community learn about their downtown's existing assets and opportunities for improvement as seen through the eyes of first time visitors. This is accomplished by matching two communities to conduct "secret shopper" assessments in the other community and report their findings.

Possible outcomes include:

- Improving the visual appearance of a downtown
- Strengthening the marketing and promotion of a downtown
- Enriching the climate of a downtown for new businesses, residents, and visitors

The First Impressions assessment consists of training meetings, a Pre-Visit Survey, a visit to the other community to conduct the assessment, and a Post-Visit Survey. During the visit, team members are using the following characteristics to conduct the assessment:

Business

Community Art

Displays & Signage

Downtown Entrance

Landscaping

Lighting

Park

Point of Interest

Public Facility

Seating

Sidewalks, Crosswalks & Trails

Streets & Transportation

Waste & Recycling

The First Impressions assessment is completed by community volunteers with no expertise regarding these characteristics. Throughout the report, these characteristics are identified as assets and opportunities. Assets are the strengths in the downtown—where characteristics exist and are excellent and well-maintained. For example, a well-maintained trail or a bench in a nice location would be considered assets. Opportunities are those characteristics that exist or do not exist, where there is room for improvement. An example of an opportunity for improvement might be lack of bike lanes, or a broken sidewalk.

Littleton and Rochester: Matching Communities

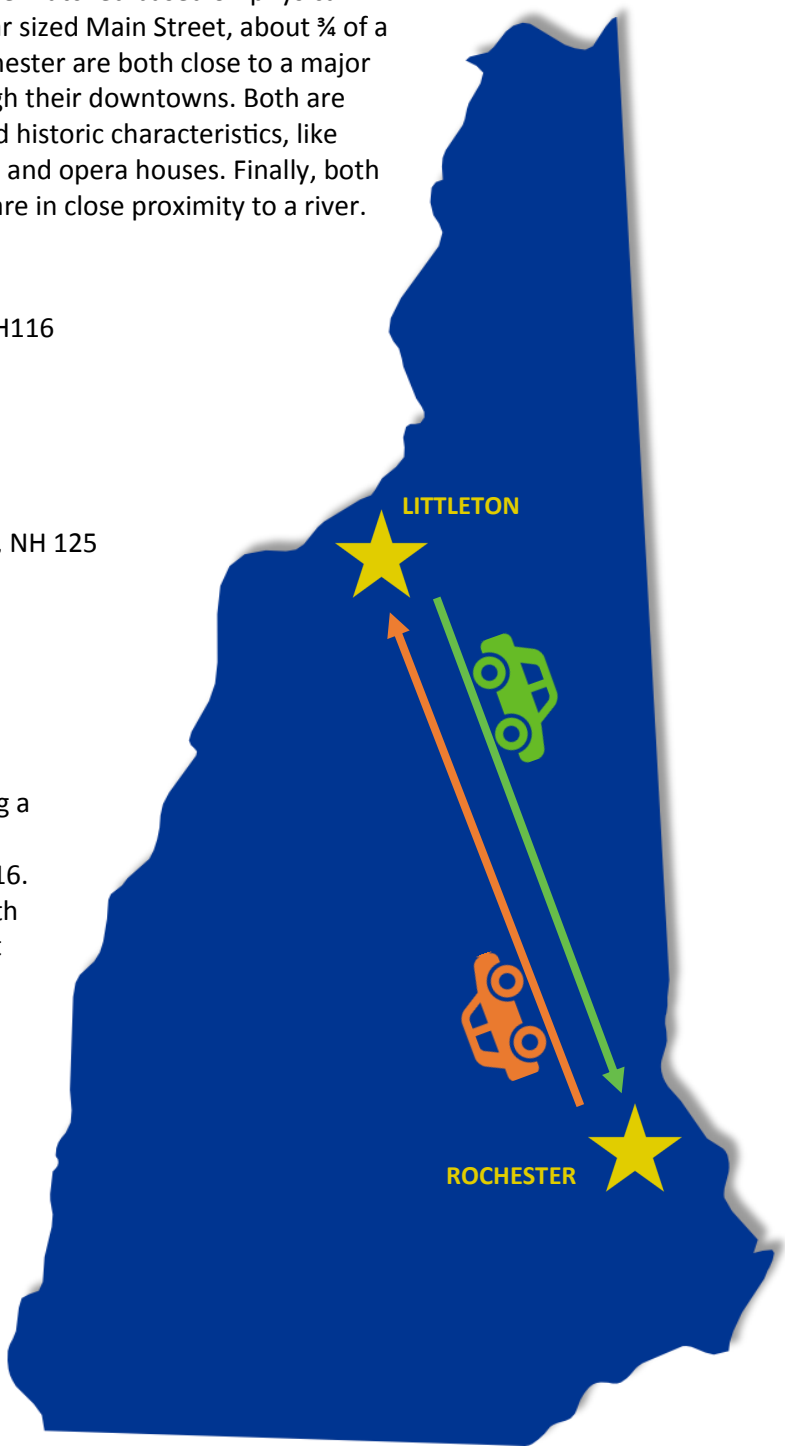
Two communities are matched who have a similar downtown based on a number of criteria, such as size, location, amenities, and natural resources. The Town of Littleton and the City of Rochester were matched based on physical characteristics. Both communities have a similar sized Main Street, about ¾ of a mile. The Town of Littleton and the City of Rochester are both close to a major highway, and have major roads directed through their downtowns. Both are aesthetically similar in design infrastructure and historic characteristics, like period lighting, brick façades, historic mill sites, and opera houses. Finally, both communities have Main Street programs, and are in close proximity to a river.

Littleton:

Nearby highway: I-93
Main Street throughways: US302, NH18, NH116
River: Ammonoosuc River
County: Grafton

Rochester:

Nearby highway: Spaulding Turnpike
Main Street throughways: NH202A, NH108, NH 125
River: Cocheco River
County: Strafford



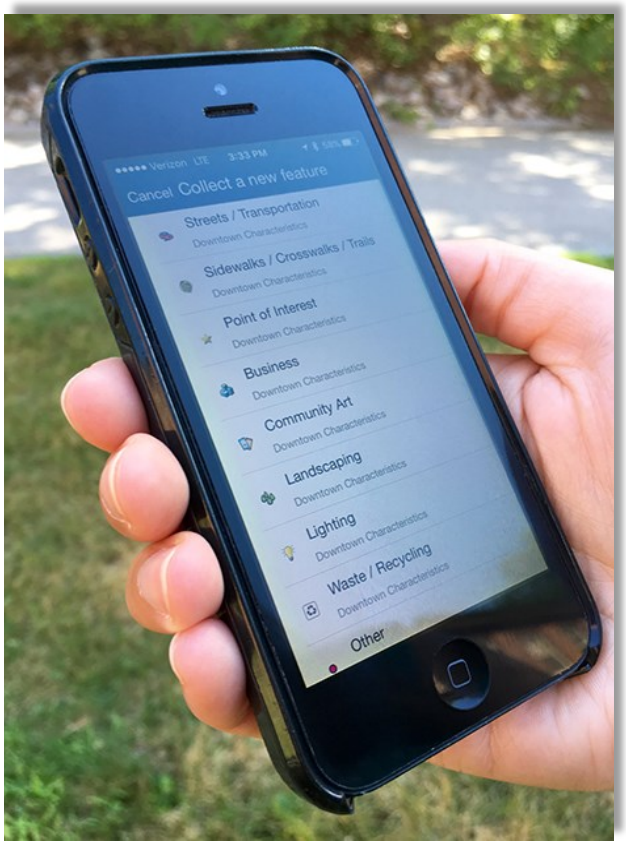
Forming the Community Leadership Team

Both communities began the process of forming a diverse and representative First Impressions Community Leadership Team early summer 2016. Community Leadership Team members met with UNH Cooperative Extension staff to learn about First Impressions, what characteristics are important in a downtown, and how to conduct a downtown assessment.

Pre-Visit Survey

The Pre-Visit Survey is completed by Community Leadership Team members online prior to conducting the visit. The survey collects information about team members' demographics, such as age, gender, and town of residence; and requires team members to conduct internet research on the community they will be visiting and reflect on the quality and availability of information on webpages as well as social media. Finally, the survey requires team members to reflect on any perceptions they may have about the community prior to their visit.

First Impressions Assessment Visit



During the First Impressions visit, Community Leadership Team members have access to two tools to conduct their assessment: the use of a mobile application: Collector for ArcGIS, and paper booklets. Collector for ArcGIS is a free mobile application that allows for data collection in the field. When a team member uses Collector, they select a characteristic from a list, fill out a description, observation, choose a rating on a scale of poor to excellent from a drop down menu, and have the opportunity to upload a photo or video. Once submitted, the information is stored as a point on a map. In addition to the mobile app, team members are able to use a paper booklet to collect their data. The booklet replicates the data collection process of the app: team members circle a characteristic from the list, and then write the location, description, observation, and select a rating on a scale of poor to excellent.

Post-Visit Survey

Following the visit, Community Leadership Team members complete a Post-Visit online survey. This survey allows team members to reflect on their visit and rate the downtown overall. Team members also reflect on their initial perceptions and whether they would like to live, visit or open a business in the community.

Post-Visit Community Leadership Team Debrief

The Community Leadership Team meets about two weeks following their visit, where they debrief, reflect on their experience and brainstorm assets and opportunities for improvement to provide to the other community during the Joint Community Leadership Team Debrief Meeting.

Joint Community Leadership Team Debrief Meeting

The Joint Community Leadership Team Debrief Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 8, 2016, at the Pines Community Center in Northfield, NH. Both teams from Littleton and Rochester will gather to network, share their experiences completing the First Impressions assessment, and present the assets and opportunities for improvement discovered during their visits.

Community Report Out Meetings

The Town of Littleton and The City of Rochester will both host Community Report Out Meetings during the month of October 2016 to share results with community members. A representative from the other Community Leadership Team will present the findings and then community members will break into small groups for discussion and action planning.

Key Findings

The Town of Littleton was one of two communities selected to participate in the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension's pilot New Hampshire First Impressions Program, an asset-based secret shopper visitation program designed to enrich a community's understanding of their downtown main street through the fresh eyes of a first time visitor. The Town of Littleton program team, led by 13 community volunteers and the Littleton Area Chamber of Commerce, representing a diverse range of background and experience, exchanged first impressions with their program partner, the City of Rochester. During the summer of 2016, the program volunteers for the City of Rochester secretly visited Littleton to assess and provide feedback on the assets and opportunities as seen through the eyes of a first time visitor.

Assets

Assets are the strengths in the downtown—where characteristics exist and are excellent and well-maintained.

Charming Main Street. Visitors described the Main Street as, "charming", "quaint", "welcoming", "walkable", "bright", "inviting", and "warm".

Historic Beauty. A "quintessential" New England town. Another member was amazed by the Town's theatre marquee on the corner of Pleasant and Main.

Diverse Business Community. The diversity of shopping opportunities along Main Street kept the visiting busy. They noted the wide variety of unique shops, antiques, etc.

Artsy & Folksy Streets. Art installations were well appreciated by the visiting team. From the hanging umbrellas to the pianos and the music park, the team felt the artsy and folksy vibrancy of the community.

Opportunities for Improvement

Opportunities are those characteristics that exist or do not exist, where there is room for improvement.

Wayfinding & Signage. Additional wayfinding signs needed---one visitor happened to find the River District by chance, not through wayfinding. Parking difficult to find, need better (larger and/or more impactful) signage for parking lots. River District parks could use more signage, better views of river, additional shade from sun and overall maintenance.

Visual Appearance. Outdoor appearance of the backside of Main Street, as seen from the River District needs work, for example, screening for dumpsters behind Main Street. No trees on Main Street and flower baskets may be too large. Not all lighting on Main Street are period lights. The school on Main Street could use some appearance clean up. Areas just beyond the main part of downtown lack trash containers.

Businesses & Workforce. Visitors weren't always greeted by staff, improvement could add to Littleton's already welcoming spirit. Additional overnight accommodations needed. Quick food options (like an ice cream shop).

Transportation. No bike lanes, few bike racks, no public transportation or taxi/ridesharing services. Traffic very slow, stop and go, very heavy for a weekday, only one traffic light. Areas just beyond the main part of downtown is much less kept up---sidewalks in need of repair, crosswalks in need of paint, need for additional crosswalks.

Image & Branding. Some visitors expressed that they did not know what the brand of Littleton was, even after visiting.

Community & Visitor Events. Could use more events and activities, especially for children and young adults.

Before the Visit

Community Leadership Team Meetings

The Rochester Community Leadership Team began meeting in early summer 2016. Community volunteers were invited to join the team in order to form a diverse and representative group. The Rochester Community Leadership Team consisted of City of Rochester staff members, a representative from Eversource, Rochester Chamber of Commerce members, a member of City Council, local business owners, and a representative from Rochester Main Street. All members of the Community Leadership Team are passionate about improving their community's downtown and volunteered their time to participate in the First Impressions program in order to help the City of Rochester move forward to action.

The Rochester Community Leadership Team held three meetings prior to visiting Littleton in order to learn about First Impressions. Team members learned about what makes a community vibrant, and reviewed the downtown characteristics that comprise a First Impressions assessment. The team also was instructed how to complete the assessment using the mobile application and the paper booklet.

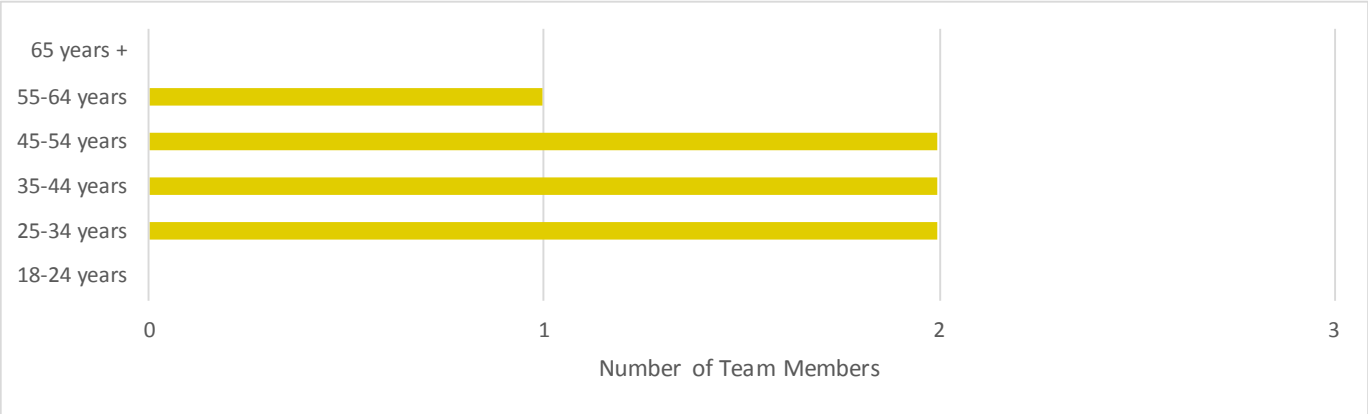
Pre-Visit Survey

The Rochester Community Leadership Team completed the Pre-Visit Survey prior to visiting Littleton. The survey provided opportunity to research Littleton on the internet and social media and describe their perceptions. The results of the survey follow:

Demographics

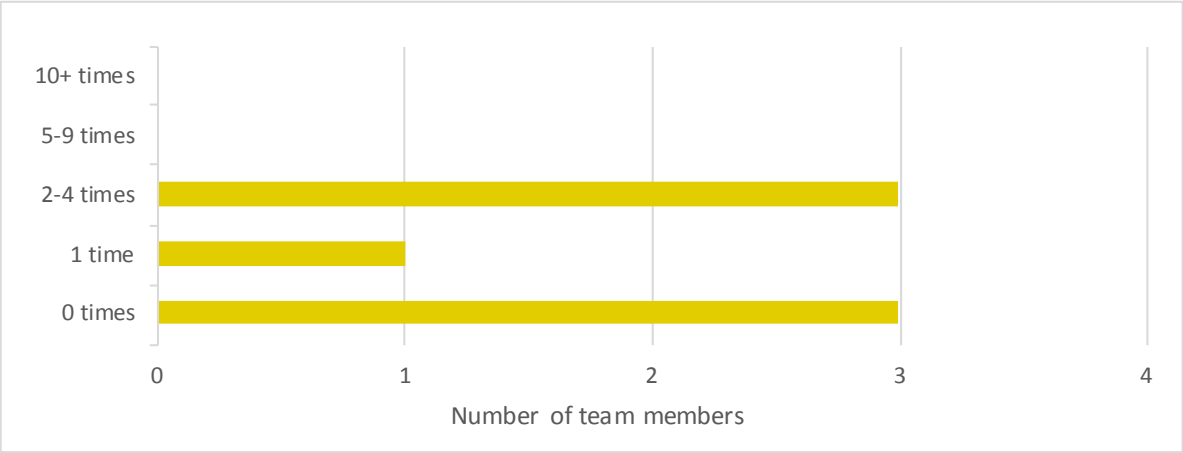
The Rochester Community Leadership Team was composed of six females and one male. All members live in Seacoast area towns including: Rochester, Rollinsford, Nottingham, Milton, Middleton, and Deerfield. Members on the team represented multiple age groups, as displayed below.

Age of Rochester Community Leadership Team



As evidenced, the Rochester Community Leadership team was a diverse group of individuals. Age is an important consideration of these demographics because people of different ages view things differently and may have different expectations of a downtown.

Number of times team members have visited Littleton prior to First Impressions



A little less than half of team members had visited Littleton prior to the First Impressions assessment. One member had visited Littleton once, and the other three members had visited between two to four times.

General Impression

Team members were asked to record their impression of Littleton, NH before completing any research. The following are their responses:

- None, know nothing.
- I don't know much about Littleton at all. Only what I have heard from our meetings and I know they are famous for something to do with Pollyanna and they are a Main Street Community that sits beside a major highway.
- Small New England picturesque town. Close to the White Mountains.
- I haven't seen much of the city. My impression is that it's a smaller community not close to a lot of amenities. It is further north so I imagine it's more quaint, sort of a standard New England ski town.
- Very little. My impression is that there isn't anything worth visiting since it is so far away from me. I believe that it is a small town with not a lot going on.
- Seems like the quintessential New England town.
- Small town, remote, has been working to revitalize the downtown area with small shops.

Internet Research

Team members were asked to use a search engine (like Google.com) to search for "Littleton, NH" in order to record what websites are at the top of the each search. Each team member recorded the same three websites, although in differing order, likely due to the use of different search engines. The top three websites recorded were: GoLittleton.com, Wikipedia, and TownofLittleton.org. Team members made the following comments on the quality and usefulness of the websites:

GoLittleton.com

- Excellent
- Offers a good glimpse of downtown. I liked seeing Harmony Park.
- Great and easy to use. I found out most of the information I wanted on this site.
- Full of fun information. I'm surprised to see Littleton as the 6th best small town downtown in America. The parks and events sound great. I'm looking forward to going there.

TownofLittleton.com

- The town page didn't have much interesting information unless you lived there
- I liked the official town site because of accurate stats.
- The town website has great information and is easy to maneuver.
- Useful

Wikipedia.org

- I found the sites informative, however, I don't rely much on Wikipedia.
- Wikipedia gave me some good history.
- Informative

Other Comments

- The Chamber of Commerce page was listed further down the Google search. That would have been helpful to have. If you were a tourist or someone that has never visited the area you would have a hard time figuring what to do.
- Nice websites and helpful for getting a better idea of what the city has to offer.
- Trip Advisor gave plenty of information on where to stay, eat and play.

Social Media

Team members were also asked to use social media to search for information about Littleton, NH. The following are comments on the quality and usefulness of information obtained:

- Ok
- General information on lodging, restaurants, and businesses were on Facebook.
- Found a pet center and a beer company. A good Chevy dealership. It seems like there's some good local restaurants. Not hugely helpful information for visitors but definitely gives an idea of some potential events and places to go.
- I only use Facebook and I didn't find much but their town page which I found to have the same information but not as useful and easy to use as the websites.
- I looked at Facebook. Searching Littleton, NH shows mainly real estate postings and a few tourist comments. I think it could use more help here.

General Information

All team members reported they were able to find general information about Littleton, NH.

Desire to Visit

Team members were asked if they would want to visit Littleton, NH with family or friends, and to share why or why not. Three team members said that they would like to visit Littleton, NH with family or friends, and four team members responded that they would not. Comments are below:

Yes

- Yes. 6th best small town/main street, near some very nice towns ... White Mountains, Old Man of the Mountain, riverfront, shopping, scenic.
- I would because the parks look interesting and the walking areas also look like something I would want to explore.
- I would as it appears to have some quaint shops and the Pollyanna statute.

No

- No. I would want to be closer to the Mountains for outdoor recreation. There was not a lot listed for outdoor activities.
- Not particularly. It's a long drive from where I am and seems very similar to my own town and nearby towns.
- Not really. There isn't anything that would interest me enough to drive there.
- No. It looks like a cute town but I am from the Seacoast and live in a cute town and when I travel I want to have something to do like hike, ski, camp and lakes and I don't see much of this here.

Welcoming

Team members were also asked if Littleton seemed welcoming to people to visit, live or open a business. Five members responded yes, and two responded no. Comments below:

Yes

- Visit, yes. But none if the websites including the Chamber say "open your business here!" And should.
- Yes, there's plenty of information available online that suggests they are open to visitors.
- From the website Littleton appears to welcome tourists. Also, the comments from visitors on Facebook were positive.
- Yes, they seem tourist friendly and have great information to show you were to shop, eat and stay. I don't see anything enticing business owners to move to Littleton but it looks like they have a lot of great touristy businesses that seem NH friendly and it doesn't push you away, just doesn't mention it.
- From the sites, it does look like Littleton welcomes tourists and visitors. I didn't see anything that welcomed people as a place to open a business or relocate to the area.

No

- No, it doesn't seem to be a tourist attraction.

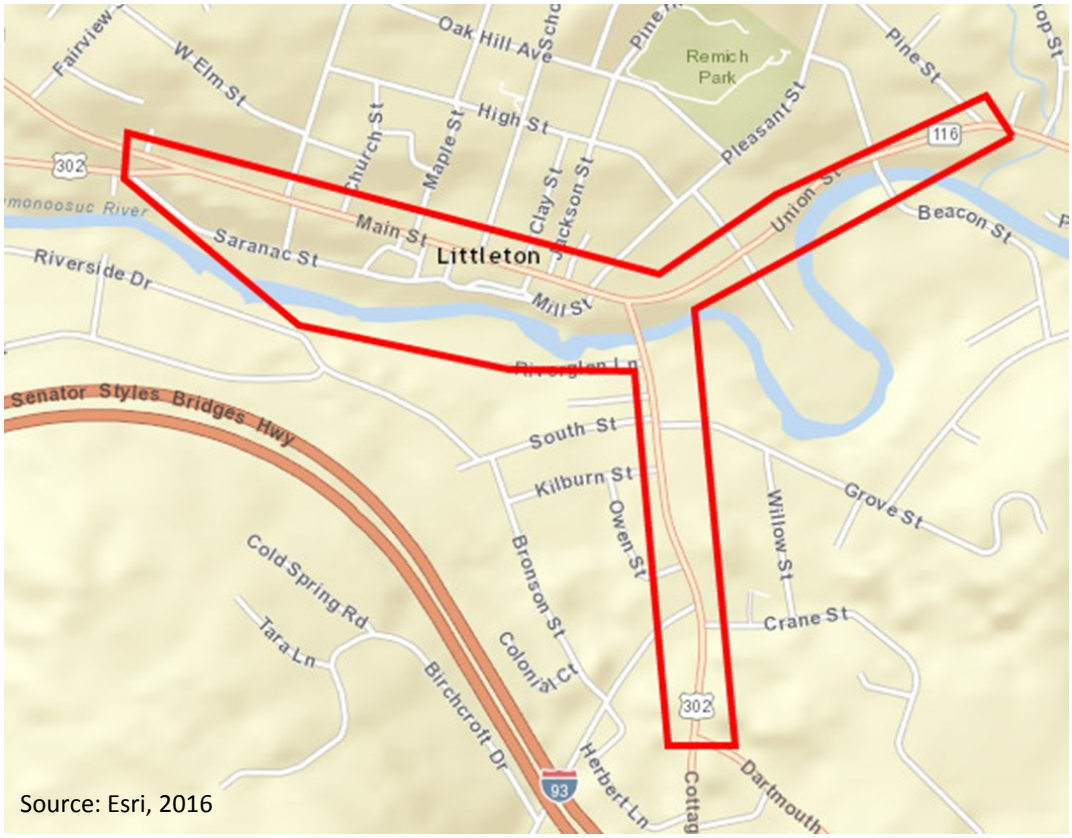
About the Visit: Rochester Visits Littleton

The Rochester Community Leadership Team consisted of seven community volunteers. Six community volunteers visited Littleton on Thursday, July 28, and one community volunteer visited Littleton on Wednesday, August 3. It was 82 ° and partly cloudy on Thursday, July 28, and 80 ° and partly cloudy on Wednesday, August 3. Visitors arrived around 10am, and spent time exploring, shopping, eating, and enjoying Littleton, and departed around 2pm.

The Assessment Area

The Littleton Community Leadership Team defined the First Impressions assessment area as shown on Map 1, below.

Map 1. Town of Littleton Assessment Area



Source: Esri, 2016

Findings

The following narrative is representative of data collected through Collector for ArcGIS during the visit, comments from the Post-Visit online survey, and comments during the Rochester Community Leadership Team Debrief Meeting. All seven team members utilized the mobile application Collector for ArcGIS; no team members used the paper booklet.

The data is organized by the downtown characteristics team members identified, and the comments have been coded as assets and opportunities. Assets are the strengths in the downtown—where characteristics exist and are excellent and well-maintained. For example, a well-maintained trail or a bench in a nice location would be considered assets. Opportunities are those characteristics that exist or do not exist, where there is room for improvement. An example of an opportunity for improvement might be lack of bike lanes, or a broken sidewalk.

Businesses

Assets

Diverse Businesses
The visit team had several positive comments regarding the diversity of businesses on Main Street. Team members referenced the movie theatre, business incubator space, the herbal shop, candy store, hotel, brewery, antique stores, restaurants, yoga studio, riverfront businesses, and a gift store. Members noted that several of the businesses carried local and USA made products. Comments included:

- Good variety
- Diverse and cultural
- Destination point with all the shops and antique shops there
- Retail was great, a little mix of everything
- Many cute shops and eateries

Outdoor Appearance
The visit team provided many positive comments regarding the outdoor appearance of the businesses in Littleton, and enjoyed seeing products out on the sidewalk. Comments included:

- Beautiful
- Great eye candy with items on the sidewalk
- Buildings like this are beautiful
- Sidewalk sales
- Outdoor shopping, very inviting

Businesses

Opportunities

Service
The visit team provided a couple of comments regarding opportunities for improvement for customer service in retail shops. Comments included:

- Felt unwelcomed
- Staff didn't acknowledge

Outdoor Appearance
While the visit team provided many positive comments regarding the outdoor appearance of businesses, there were a couple of comments referencing opportunities for improvement:

- Mill building outside of town has potential
- Back side of buildings by riverfront need repairs

Accommodations
The visit team identified increasing the number of overnight accommodations in proximity to the Main Street as an opportunity for improvement. Comments included:

- Improvement in accommodations—I wasn't particularly enticed by the hotel options
- Only one downtown hotel
- Need other hotel

Community Art

Assets

The visit team members took note of the “artsy feel” of downtown Littleton. Comments included:

- Piano project – great idea
- Umbrellas – cute, easy addition
- Large presence of community art projects
- Art was fabulous
- Community art inside business center

Displays & Signage

Assets

Business Signs
Visit team members provided many positive comments regarding business signage, including signs on businesses as well as portable signs on the sidewalks. Comments included:

- Nice signage for businesses
- Off premise signage for stores to show they are open
- Promoting business on buildings
- Portable business signs

Historical Signs
Visit team members also commented on signs providing historical information and data around the downtown. Comments included:

- Great historical info
- Historical data

Opportunities

Wayfinding Signs
The main opportunity for improvement for displays and signage identified was the need for additional wayfinding signs. Comments included:

- Need for better wayfinding signage
- No wayfinding signs – would have missed the whole back area with bakery and brewery

Parking Signs
The visit team also identified lack of parking signs as an opportunity to improve displays and signage in Littleton. Comments included:

- Parking sign not large enough
- Would like to see signs for free public parking coming into downtown

Downtown Entrances

Assets

There were many positive comments regarding the entrances to Littleton's downtown area. Comments included:

- Certain beauty that comes with an old theatre and to be one of the first things you see is awesome
- Awesome sign that says "have a fabulous day" – nice positive greeting when first coming to town
- Main Street wonderfully kept up with flowers and flags

Opportunities

The visit team only identified one opportunity in terms of downtown entrances. One commenter observed that when leaving the downtown, the quaintness ends abruptly and the area becomes much less kept up.

Bridge into downtown was inviting and patriotic

Landscaping

Assets

There were many positive comments on the abundance of hanging flower planters on the light posts as well as window boxes and planters on the sidewalks. Comments included:

- Flowers are very welcoming
- Well kept
- Cute window boxes
- What a great use of the lamps

Opportunities

The visit team identified a couple of opportunities with regards to landscaping in downtown Littleton. One comment was that the streets lacked trees. Another commented that while the hanging baskets were beautiful, they are quite large, and people were getting hit on the head by the baskets while paying their meters.

Lighting

Assets

There were not many comments made about lighting in downtown Littleton. Visit team members commented positively again on the lights with flower baskets as well as the nice gooseneck lighting.

Opportunities

There were a couple of opportunities identified to improve lighting in downtown Littleton. A team member commented on concerns about dark sky compliance, and there was another comment mentioning not attractive street lights as they exited the downtown area.

Parks

Assets

Atmosphere
Visit team members made several positive comments about parks in downtown Littleton, noting the inviting atmosphere. Visitors made comments about the park on Main Street as well as the park down by the riverfront, included:

- Quaint covered bridge
- Inviting and nice
- Hidden gem
- River walk with xylophone was interesting
- Fantastic outdoor space

Location
A couple of visit team members commented about the proximity of the parks to downtown Littleton. Comments included:

- Close to downtown
- Shaded out of the way park

Opportunities

Signage
Visit team members identified some opportunities for improvement with regards to parks in the downtown area. Comments referenced a need for signage:

- Small sign at entrance
- Didn't see signage leading to covered bridge
- Would have liked to see signage for the Riverwalk

Atmosphere
There were a few comments identifying opportunities to improve the parks in downtown Littleton, specifically the atmosphere. Comments included:

- Could open up to have beautiful river views
- Kind of plain and no sun protection
- One park lacked shade and personality

Points of Interest

Assets

The visit team provided many positive comments about points of interest in downtown Littleton. Comments centered on the historical buildings, architecture, and riverwalk. Comments included:

- Buildings were gorgeous and well-kept
- Good use of old buildings
- War memorial honors vets
- Pollyanna gateway – nice gateway in downtown draws people in
- Covered bridge
- Riverfront

Public Facilities

Assets

Central Location
The visit team reported on several assets in public facilities, noting their central location to downtown. Members commented most on the information booth, and also commented on the public library, business center, community center, Granite State College, and the post office. Comments included:

- Information booth – located in the middle of downtown
- Main Street business center right downtown
- Public library was centrally located and the outside was well kept

Opportunities

Appearance
The visit team only identified one opportunity for improvement: the school located outside of downtown.

- Schools outside of downtown could use some exterior cleanup

Seating

Assets

The visit team made few comments about seating in downtown Littleton, but added a few points: a cute bench, outdoor furniture, and outdoor tables.

Opportunities

Visit team members revealed during the debrief session that there was a lack of seating in the downtown area. Many members agreed that there is a need for more public seating, preferably shaded.

Sidewalks, Crosswalks, & Trails

Assets

Walkability
There were several positive comments about the walkability of downtown Littleton. Visit team members referenced the colorful crosswalks and wide sidewalks. The walkability of the downtown was often referenced in conjunction with pedestrian safety and handicap accessibility. Comments included:

- Very noticeable crosswalks
- Very bright and visible
- Nice wide sidewalks
- Great access for wheelchairs
- Freshly painted crosswalks
- Safe for pedestrians
- Handicap accessibility was great

Riverwalk
The visit team also observed the riverwalk as an asset in downtown Littleton. Responses mentioned the trail as well as the covered bridge. Comments included:

- Nice walkway along the river behind downtown
- Beautiful
- Attraction to tourists and residents

Cleanliness
Cleanliness was also mentioned many times by the visit team. Comments referenced seeing shop owners sweeping the sidewalks outside of their stores. Comments included:

- Clean sidewalks
- Shows pride in downtown

Opportunities

Walkability
While the visit team made several positive comments about the walkability in downtown Littleton, there were a few comments made about crosswalks and sidewalks, particularly towards the outskirts of downtown. Comments included:

- Crosswalk not painted
- Older sidewalks
- Tough sidewalks with overgrown grass
- Need more crosswalks
- Walking out of town the quality of sidewalks declined

Streets & Transportation

Assets

There were a few assets observed by the visit team. Comments included:

- Two way traffic in downtown. No speeding and it moves well.
- Bike rack
- Metered parking
- Easy exit to the highway
- Easy parking, small sign
- We found free parking within 1 mile which was great.

Opportunities

Parking
The visit team made several comments about public parking as an opportunity for downtown Littleton. Comments were focused around the lack of signage and size of signage as well as that the parking was confusing to find. Comments included:

- Hard to find signs on public parking
- Very small public parking sign, easy to miss
- Parking signage wasn't prominent from Main Street
- Free parking needs to be more visible

Other Forms of Transportation
There were many comments made by the visit team with regards to increasing opportunities for other forms of transportation, such as public transportation and bicycling. Comments included:

- Bike lanes are needed
- No shared lanes or bike signs anywhere
- No buses, taxis or ride sharing
- Did not see any public transportation

Traffic
The visit team made some observations about increased traffic throughout downtown Littleton. Comments included:

- Traffic – stop and go and stalled
- Traffic was very heavy, even for a weekday
- Only one traffic light that seemed to hold up traffic not improve the flow
- A lot of thru traffic

Waste & Recycling

Assets

The visit team did not make many comments about waste and recycling in downtown Littleton. A few comments touched on strategically placed trash cans, pet waste bags, and cigarette butt trays on top of barrels. Overall, the downtown was clean.

Opportunities

There were some comments about opportunities for improvement in waste and recycling in the downtown. Comments included a lack of recycling, a need for screening dumpsters behind businesses near the riverwalk, and a lack of trash containers near the outskirts of downtown.

One team member noted that the cigarette butt tray was a bit unsightly and smelly, but was great for keeping cigarettes off the streets and sidewalks.

After the Visit

Post-Visit Survey

Following Rochester's visit to Littleton, Community Leadership members completed the online Post-Visit Survey. The survey provided team members an opportunity to reflect on their visit and rate the downtown overall. Team members also reflected on their initial perceptions and whether they would like to live, visit or open a business in the community. The results of the survey follow:

Five-Minute Impression

Team members were asked to record their five minute initial impression of Littleton. This initial impression can greatly impact a visitor's long lasting impressions of a place. Comments were:

- That it was gorgeous. The theater was gorgeous, there was a nice positive sign welcoming everyone.
- Littleton looked cute, like the quintessential New England town. We found parking and restrooms within minutes and once I noticed all the little unique shops I knew Littleton was special and that I was going to enjoy spending the day there.
- It was cute. It was the stereotypical New England town. Not overly impressive but not run down either. A mix of new and old real estate, decently clean and inviting.
- A charming little town tucked between beautiful mountains. Steady flow of traffic, although signage was lacking on where to park for downtown. I couldn't wait to start walking and exploring.
- Cute, artsy, welcoming.

An Identifiable Brand

Team members were asked if they could identify a brand during their visit to Littleton. Their comments were:

Yes

- Yes, with the Pollyanna signage
- The Glad Town

No

- Not that I know, not that I noticed
- I don't think I saw one, but I would say it welcomes small, artsy, family oriented shops.

Using Your Senses

The survey asked team members to describe Littleton through their senses: taste (food and drink), smell (air in the downtown), and sounds (parks, roads, trains, construction, music, social gatherings).

Taste

- The downtown has a nice old home feeling. People were very friendly, smiling, and nice so like good old home cooking.
- The food was good, nothing spectacular. There were plenty of restaurants. That bakery would have been great to know about when we arrived and wanted a nice snack. Otherwise very sweet with all the candy! The fudge was delicious.
- Local, pub like, good, unique and diverse.
- Yummy candy, fudge and Italian food.
- There were a few restaurants. I didn't see anything that you could just pop in and get something quick. No sidewalk sitting. The restaurant I went to for lunch was reasonably priced, good food, and took a really long time to get our food.

Smell

- Normal New England. To me it was fresh and clean just like it should be. When you got to close to a trash can you could smell the ashtray.
- Clean air and coffee.
- The smell of candy, breakfast and pastries. However, one retail shop had a nasty smell that made me leave.
- I didn't notice any bad smells in town. It smelled clean to me and fresh.

Sounds

- Traffic was the only thing I could hear besides the normal everyday things. When we first arrived it was fine but by 2pm the traffic was heavy in the heart of downtown but nothing too noisy. The outdoor musical instruments were great and I love the sound of the water at the river. Maybe you could open the back park up more to see and hear the river more.
- Traffic
- Loud traffic. Pleasant sounds from the various musical instruments around the town.
- The sounds were of a crowded small town. Friendly and enjoyable in my opinion.

Unique Attractions

Team members were asked to reflect on what local restaurant, specialty shop, or attraction would bring them back to Littleton in the future.

- I will definitely be back to the Masonic Temple and the four levels of antiques to actually put in my home.
- I liked the river and the back area with brewery and bakery. The kids would love the candy shop. I loved the League of NH Crafters and other specialty shops. Great for relaxing and shopping.
- There were several unique local retail shops that would bring me back, restaurants and the community art.
- Nothing specific, just the variety.
- The antique shops and the small clothing shops would bring me back.

Live, Work, Play

The Post-Visit survey also asked team members to consider whether or not they would consider living in Littleton, opening a business in Littleton, or visiting Littleton.

Would you consider living in Littleton?
The majority of team members (4) indicated that they would not consider moving to Littleton; one person noted they would. Comments:

Yes
- The area is very attractive and it's nice to see some culture and development in the area.

No
- I need to be closer to the City and larger stores.
- Not likely. There aren't enough amenities like larger grocery stores or chains. The residential areas were not as well maintained downtown and the local elementary school looked run down.
- Not close enough to the ocean.

Would you consider opening a business in downtown Littleton?
Five team members reported that they would consider opening a business, and one reported that they would not. Comments:

Yes
- Business seems to be good with great downtown foot traffic.
- Yes I would. I especially loved the business center with small rentable office spaces.
- A small town atmosphere with cute shops that draws the public in.

No
- Far from where I live.

Would you consider visiting here with family or friends?
The majority of team members (4) noted that they would like to visit Littleton again; one person indicated they would not. Comments:

Yes
- Yes, it was cute for a day visit.
- Nice place to walk around, shop and dine.
- It was an interesting, friendly place to walk in, shop in, and eat in.

No
- We travel with kids and the only thing was the candy store. We go to North Conway where they have hiking, indoor water parks, and amusement parks.

Missing Attractions

The Post-Visit survey also asked team members to consider what was missing from Littleton's downtown. Comments:

- No, it was perfect.
- More outside seating for restaurants.
- An ice cream shop or some sort of snack bar. More wayfinding. There was the brewery and the bakery towards the back of the downtown businesses that were hard to find.
- Could have had more outdoor seating.
- More parking signage.

Change in Perception

Team members were asked to reflect on if their impression of Littleton prior to the visit was accurate. The majority of members (4) indicated no, it was not accurate; one person noted that their perception was accurate. Comments:

No, not accurate

- Doing the survey my impression was that Littleton was similar to Rochester and that they need a lot of help but there were no vacancies that I could find for new businesses to go in their buildings.
- Littleton was more built up and cuter than I originally thought. I thought we would be done in an hour but there was plenty of shopping to keep us busy.
- There was a lot more to do and see than I expected
- I thought there would be one or two shops, maybe a restaurant or two. It was much more developed and friendly.

Outstanding Feature

The Post-Visit survey asked team members to reflect on the most outstanding feature of the downtown. Comments:

- The theatre! Stunning!
- Crosswalks, walkability, riverfront, and the area in the back of the shops was adorable with the mural, but more signage is needed. Smaller signage was good with arrows to shops.
- The aesthetic appeal of the downtown area. The overall feel was inviting, warm, and artsy.
- The "happiness" factor. Veteran memorial on the bridge.
- The shops, the pianos, the river park.

Obstacles/Challenges

Team members were also asked to identify obstacles or challenges in Littleton's downtown. Comments:

- No bike lanes
- Traffic
- Wayfinding
- River is closed off to shopping for the most part.
- A lot of older real estate that is more challenging to maintain
- Lack of additional real estate to develop
- Small area, not much room to expand
- Not a pass-through area. It's a destination area.
- Difficult to get to
- Hard to bring people into the North Country

Opportunities for Improvement

Team members were asked to report opportunities available to Littleton's downtown. Comments:

- Better maintenance and highlighting of businesses along the Riverwalk
- Better maintenance of the areas right outside of downtown
- Outdoor seating
- Outdoor events / schedules
- Wayfinding
- Parking signage
- Traffic flow management
- Bike lanes
- More for children and young adults

Positive Things about Littleton

Team members were asked to provide positive things they observed about Littleton's downtown. Comments:

- Cleanliness, clean streets, clean and bright
- Friendly, friendliness
- Worked hard to create a welcoming image
- Symmetry
- Outdoor flower pots on buildings
- Walkability
- Good highlighting of the businesses
- Supportive of the local economy
- Variety of shops and eateries
- Community art
- Quaint

Reflections from the Littleton Community Leadership Team

The following two questions are from the Post-Visit survey completed by the Littleton Community Leadership Team. These questions ask team members to reflect on their experience participating in First Impressions and consider how they may apply their new ideas and knowledge to Littleton.

Did this experience change your impression of Littleton's downtown?
The majority of team members (9) stated yes, the experience changed their impression, while the remaining members (4) responded no. Comments:

- Fresh eyes is always helpful and we came back with our own fresh eyes. The church was already planning a new garden space for people and now we have a renewed energy on that project.
- Value of people, food, other reasons to shop.
- Littleton is lucky to have the largest old-time main street up here. We have too many junk stores on the Main Street. We have a number of welcoming good food restaurants.
- Keep our town looking clean and active.
- I realized how important little things are and how easy it is for them to become white noise.

Did this experience give you any new ideas about what is needed in Littleton's downtown?
Seven team leaders indicated that the experience provided new ideas about what is needed in their downtown, and the other six reported the experience did not give them any new ideas. Comments:

- We do a lot of events in Littleton, but people who just drive through often ask, "What's going on today?" We need better signage of events taking place and letting the public know that they're welcome. We need to keep our materials up to date.
- Make riverside more accessible. Like small map signs on Main Street at each cross street so people know what is farther down.
- Littleton needs a popular North Country anchor store within the present downtown setup - like Vermont Country outlet in NH. We need to keep our old looks, but we need to become a destination.
- More things to do.
- More signage for walking and bike paths, more bike racks, more water bowls for dogs, friendly and funny signs in store windows, all stores need hours of operation posted on door.
- Flag banners on a side street. Using picket fence as a movable barrier.
- It would be great if we capitalized more on the Community House front lawn.

Next Steps

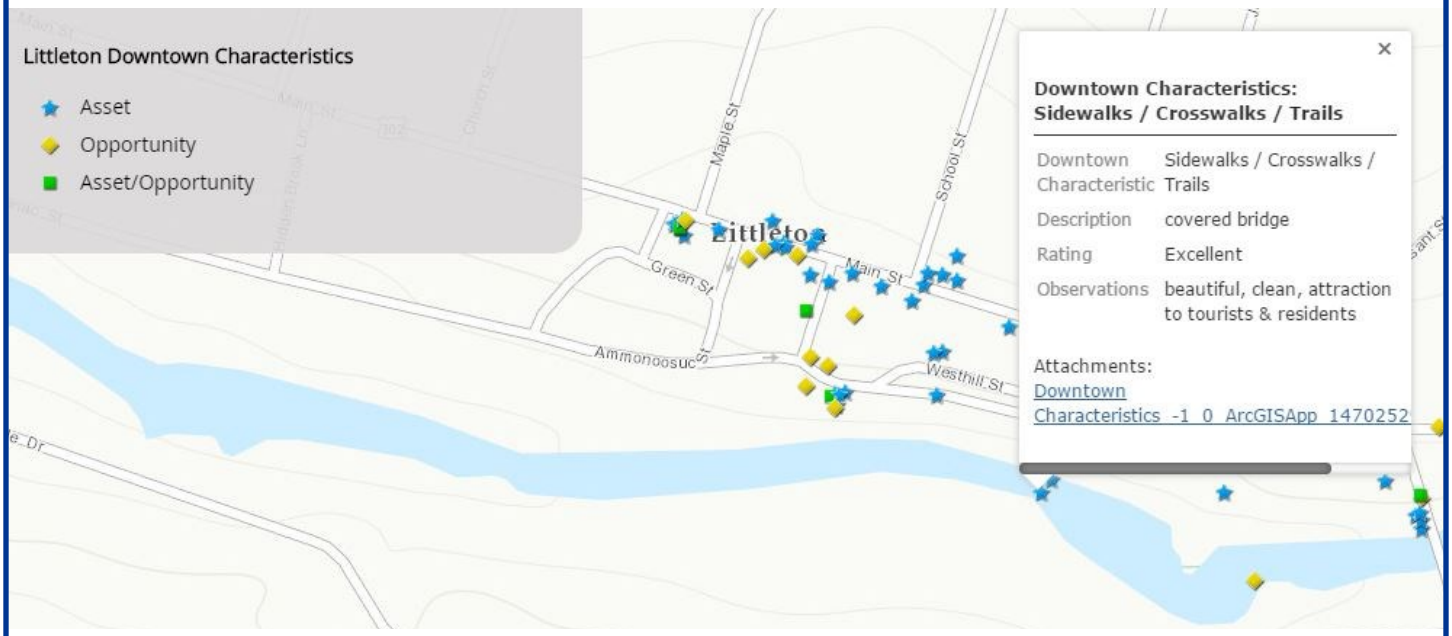
Joint Debrief Meeting

The joint debrief meeting between the Rochester Community Leadership Team and the Littleton Community Leadership Team is scheduled for Thursday, September 8th 9am – 11am at the Pines Community Center in Northfield, NH. This meeting provides an opportunity for both teams to get to know each other, network, as well as share their First Impressions assessment report.

Community Report Out Meetings

The Town of Littleton and The City of Rochester will both host Community Report Out Meetings during October 2016 to share results with community members. A representative from the other Community Leadership Team will present the findings and then community members will break into small groups for discussion and action planning.

To review all of the data points, visit the Littleton map at (link is case-sensitive): http://arcg.is/2bQEw2N



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