

**Visitor Assessment**

*(Customize this visitor assessment template/checklist and change all areas highlighted in yellow.)*

**River Town Review**

**Community VISIT GUIDE**

**Purpose**

The River Town Review Visitor Assessment utilizes a "fresh set of eyes" approach, with volunteers providing an objective view of a community’s existing recreation assets, as a visitor would see them, and in relation to outdoor recreation opportunities and the \_\_\_\_\_ River.

**Process**

The Visitor Assessment process outlined here is modeled after other trail and river town programs, many of which are referenced in Appendix A. A questionnaire is provided to guide volunteers through an assessment.

**Conducting your Community Visit Assessment**:

* Prior to visiting, become familiar enough with the community to develop a plan for your visit.
* Read the Desk Top Review that was done for the town. Look for connections to the river and to outdoor recreation and tourism opportunities.
* Develop a map outlining where you will conduct your assessment. Try to stay within a quarter mile of the river, looking mainly at the town and its river and outdoor recreation connections.
* Before the visit, review the Assessment Questionnaire on the following pages. The questions are meant to guide you through the process as you travel through town.
* Be prepared to take notes and pictures.
* Follow any current CDC Covid Guidelines for the location.
* Walk and/or bike different routes through town. Allow at least 2 hours.
* Talk with residents, business owners, and visitors. Tell them what you’re doing with the River Town Review. Ask for comments and suggestions.
* If working in teams, collect the information so that you can capture and analyze the group’s suggestions.
* Write an overall summary in addition to recording your specific findings and recommendations.

**Thanks for Volunteering &**

**Enjoy Your Visit!**

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**Community Visit Assessment Questionnaire**

**The following questions should provide a basic guide for your assessment.**

**Tourist Information**

\* Did you find a tourist office or visitor center? If so, please list and describe.

Did they provide information on outdoor recreation opportunities and the river?

Were local businesses providing information on outdoor recreation and the river?

**River Connections**

\* How easy is it to get to the river?

\* Is the riverfront welcoming and clean?

\* Are there signs on the riverfront identifying the town?

\* Are there scenic views of the river?

\* Are there public spaces near or on the river, like parks, benches, paths or trails, shelters/pavilions?

\* Are there any undeveloped natural areas?

\* Is access to the river ADA accessible?

\* Are there any businesses located directly on the river?

\* Is there signage describing/encouraging stewardship of the river?

\* Are there signs showing the way between the town and the river?

\* Does it seem easy for visitors to find and access downtown from the river?

\* Is there adequate parking?

\* Are there public restrooms?

\* Are there any sources of public drinking water?

\* Was there anything of particular interest regarding river connections you noticed during your visit?

Something done right?

Anything you would change?

# **River Access for Recreation**

\* Is there public boating access on the river?

\* Is there access for canoes and kayaks on the river?

\* Do access points appear welcoming and clean?

\* Are there signs indicating where to access the river?

\* Is there access for motorized/trailered boats? Are there launch ramps?

\* How many access sites are there, and about how far apart are they?

\* Are there any places offering boat, canoe, or kayak rentals?

\* Are there facilities offering temporary or long-term docking?

\* Are there any full-service marinas?

\* Was there any signage about boating/paddling safety?

\* Are boat launches or access points ADA accessible?

\* Are there signs directing visitors to the town?

\* Are there restrooms?

\* Are there sources of public drinking water.

\* Is there parking?

\*If you paddled or boated on the river, describe your experience.

\* Was there anything of particular interest that you noticed regarding river access during your visit?

Something done right?

Anything you would change?

# **Cycling Opportunities/Conditions**

\* Are there designated bike paths or multi-purpose trails? (If so, please list.)

\* Are there designated, marked bike lanes on roads?

\* Are there any businesses that offer bike rentals?

\* Are there any businesses that sell bicycles or equipment, or do repairs?

\* Is there a bike share program?

\* Are there any bike racks?

\* Are bike racks easy to find and well-placed? In front of or near businesses? In public spaces and parks?

\* Are there public bike repair stations available?

\* Are there any lockable storage facilities?

\* Does biking appear to be generally safe or unsafe?

Heavy traffic? High speeds?

Lack of shoulder? Poor road conditions?

\* Any signage for bikes?

\*If you cycled through town, describe your experience.

\* Was there anything of particular interest regarding cycling that you noticed during your visit?

Something done right?

Anything you would change?

# **The Town’s Walkability**

\* What is the community’s Walk Score? Find it at www.walkscore.com.

\* Are there sidewalks? If so, in general, what condition are they in?

\* Are there any streetscapes or street beautification projects?

\* Are there well marked crosswalks?

\* Are there pedestrian signals?

\* As a pedestrian, do you feel safe when walking through town?

\* Are the sidewalks ADA accessible?

\* Are the sidewalks wide enough to accommodate pedestrian traffic?

\* Do any restaurants offer sidewalk seating.

\* Is there wayfinding signage?

\* Is there signage telling you how many minutes to walk, or the mileage, to certain locations?

\* Was there anything of particular interest regarding walkability that you noticed during your visit?

Something done right?

Anything you would change?

# **Trails**

\* Are there connecting trails from outside the community into town? Are there any long-distance trails nearby? If so, please list.

\* Are there designated trails in town? Any loops? If so, please list.

\* Please answer the following questions regarding each of the trails listed above:

\* Are there any designated trailheads?

\* Is it paved for multi-purpose use, or natural surface?

\* Is it well maintained and in good condition?

\* Is there signage telling where the trails go and distances?

\* Is there parking?

\* Are there any public facilities – restrooms, drinking water, shelters?

\* Was there anything of particular interest regarding trails that you noticed during your visit?

Something done right?

Anything you would change?

# **Parks**

\* Please list and briefly describe any parks visited during your assessment. Regarding each park:

\* Is the park welcoming to visitors?

\* Are there sidewalks/paths that provide easy and clear access to the park?

\* Are there signs showing visitors how to get to the park?

\* Is the park well maintained?

\* Does the park appear to be ADA accessible?

\* Does the park have any significant or unique features/facilities?

\* Are there any undeveloped natural areas? Any interpretive signage?

\* Any programs or events being promoted?

\* Was there anything of particular interest regarding parks that you noticed during your visit?

Something done right?

Anything you would change?

### **Lodging and Camping**

\* Does there appear to be an adequate number of hotels, Airbnb’s, etc?

\*Is there RV camping available?

\*Is there primitive tent camping available.

### **Gateway**

A gateway is any welcoming element that lets visitors know when they have entered a River or Trail Town. It may include signage, landmarks, and public art.

\* Were there any gateways to town? If so, please list and describe.

**Signage**

Good signage guides visitors, provides a sense of place and shows pride, promotes local businesses, helps make connections between towns and their recreational amenities.

\* Were there signs welcoming visitors to the community?

\* Are there directional signs to let you know where to go?

\* Are signs easy to read? Are they well maintained?

\* Are there signs interpreting the community’s unique character/history, or natural features?

\* Are there areas of sign clutter?

\* Is there sufficient signage for visitors to find businesses and services?

\* Are there any informational kiosks or bulletin boards? What types of information do they include?

**Parking**

Is there sufficient on-street parking?

Are off-street parking lots identified?

Is there ample parking near the river and at parks and trails?

**Businesses**

\* Does it appear that businesses are promoting and embracing the river and outdoor recreation?

\* What outdoor recreation or tourism related businesses are present, and what types are missing?

\* Are there opportunities for outdoor recreation-related businesses?

\* Is there an adequate number, and wide variety, of stores and restaurants?

\* Are there empty storefronts? Blighted buildings?

\* Are business signs clearly visible and well-designed? Are hours of operation clearly indicated.

\* Were there any unique businesses found in and around town?

**Miscellaneous Observations**

\* Is there adequate streetlighting throughout town?

\* Are there trash receptacles?

\* Are there dog waste bags available?

\* Does there appear to be a recycling program?

\* Are there any outdoor spaces exhibiting public art?

\* Does the town appear to be preserving and promoting their historic buildings/districts?

\* Were public facilities and/or businesses offering Wi-Fi service?

\* Is there any public transportation?

\* Did you notice much graffiti?

\* Is there cell reception near river? In town?

**What Were Your General Impressions of the Community?**

\* Did you have any conversations with people or businesses in the town, along the river or on trails?

\* Did the town seem friendly?

\* Did the town seem clean?

\* Did the town appear to be doing well economically?

\* In general, does the town have good numbers of healthy, shade-providing trees?

\* Did you feel safe in the town?

\* Does the town embrace its outdoor recreation opportunities, its history, and its culture?

\* Did you come across any special/unique attractions to visit, activities to participate in, tours to take?

\* Does the town feel like it has a unique character?

\* Did you enjoy your visit to the town?

\* What was the high point of your visit?

\* What was the low point of your visit?

\* Overall, how can the community better promote and develop their outdoor recreation opportunities?

**Photos**

Think about the story you want to tell with your photos, and then consider what images you need to capture.  Some examples could include:

* The town from the river at varying distances.
* The town from on the river if possible.
* The river and any access points from multiple locations throughout the town.
* Recreation facilities and people using them.
* People on the river and trails.
* The Main Street and Business District.
* Individual and group shots of townspeople.
* Anything unique, historic, quirky, or interesting.
* Local businesses, particularly river or outdoor recreation related.

**Thanks for Volunteering**

**and Being an Integral Part**

**of our**

**River Town Review!**

(Insert your community logo here.)