

Community Visited: Deep River

Date of Visit: September 10th, 2015

Visit Completed by (community): Bancroft

VISITING TEAM PROFILE

Name: Lianne Sauter	Age: Under 35	Gender: Female
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Name: Mary Kavanagh	Age: Over 35	Gender: Female
Retired nurse and teacher, current Town Councillor.		

Name: Robin Tait	Age: Over 35	Gender: Female
Tourism Coordinator, Land Use Planning and Administration		

Name: Jody Didier	Age: Over 35	Gender: Female
Real Estate, Tourism, Bancroft Business Improvement Area past Chair and Consultant		

Name: Bill Kilpatrick	Age: Over 35	Gender: Male
Social Services, Education, current Town Councillor.		

Name: Amanda Brethour	Age: Under 35	Gender: Female
Artist, Tourism Coordinator		

Name: Johnathon Mackey	Age: Under 35	Gender: Male
Public Works/Parks and Recreation Employee		

BEFORE YOU VISITED THE COMMUNITY

What was your impression of the community before your visit? What were you expecting to see? Please comment on what you knew about this community.

None of the group knew much about Deep River. Common thread was proximity to Petawawa and its reputation as a science hub.

Find information about the community you are about to visit.

How easy was it to get information by internet, mail and telephone about the community you visited? Are you satisfied with the quality of information you received? Comment on the community's online materials and information.

- We found the Town website was well laid out and easy to navigate for most participants. We were unable to find an adequate map of the community with points of interest on it.
- We encountered some technical difficulties with a few of the links from the Town's website.
- Online resources helped create excitement about Deep River for our upcoming visit.

VISIT ATMOSPHERE

Date of Exchange: Thursday, September 10th, 2015

Weather during visit: Sunny, warm day.

Time spent in the community: 9am to 4pm.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

After taking a five-minute drive through the community without stopping, what was your first impression?

- Due to the highway construction the first entrance was difficult to navigate and the town sign was overshadowed by construction signs,
- Beautiful sculpture at the highway entrance was somewhat obscured by construction,
- There was an abandoned building in some disrepair on the street into town,
- Library, seniors residence, and school in the same area,
- New and impressive Town Office building in the centre of the business area,
- The view of the Ottawa River was breathtaking and the park area leading to the beach was very well maintained, litter free and inviting,
- Essential services not well-marked for first time visitors,
- Few sidewalks outside the down town core. Particularly noticeable in the older subdivisions to the south of the town centre.

ENTERING THE COMMUNITY

How favourable an impression of the community did the entrances provide?

Although here was construction on the highway there did seem to be an opportunity to highlight the beautiful sculpture at the entrance. It wasn't clear that we had entered or left a Deep River, because the gateway signage lacked impact.

Rating of community entrances as a whole:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
			x						
Needs Urgent Attention				Satisfactory				Excellent	

HOUSING AND RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Comment on the overall quality, affordability, and availability of housing in the community?

- Overall, homes in Deep River appear to be well-kept. Residents obviously take pride in their homes.
- Good mixture of housing, particularly in the north end.
- There are apartment buildings and they look well-kept. In discussion with residents about the rental market and rental properties available, all of the feedback was very positive.
- There did not appear to be significant new construction but we did observe housing

renovations occurring.

- One office that we visited told us not to buy a house in Deep River – but to go to other communities in the vicinity that offered better value or amenities.

Mix of housing to suit a variety of income levels:

Good variety of homes for sale at various price points.

Good stock of entry level housing available.

Apartment building for long term rental and Suites for short term rental

What were the most appealing features of the housing in this community and why:

Most residential areas were close to the commercial areas and community centres. Strong neighbourhood feel in most areas. Buildings were well maintained and showed pride of ownership.

What were the least appealing features of housing in the community and why:

Comment on the quality and availability of residential infrastructure (e.g. roads, sidewalks, lighting, public transportation, green space and indicators of environmentally conscious practices).

- Noticeable lack of sidewalks in the residential areas especially the area to the south of the business section,
- The homes to the south of the downtown core also had the distinct impression of being company house subdivisions and many of them were for sale
- Significant green space but underutilization of that space for small parks, gathering areas, art displays, etc.
- Good street light coverage in most areas
- There was little evidence of taxi service or public transit in town
- There were a few solar panels
-

EDUCATION

Comments about education services in the community:

- Great location for the public schools - beautiful, central. The Separate School was located on the highway with a walkway from the town centre
- All schools were easy to find.
- Community shares gym and pool – giving the community and students access to two services that are difficult to maintain independently.
- Well-behaved, pleasant, and friendly high school students were encountered during their lunch break.
- Students seemed well-informed and were proud to live in Deep River.

- Didn't see any students smoking.
- The blended elementary and high school seems to be working well.
- Appears to be great opportunities for educational enrichment at all ages, including the Deep River Science Academy/Summer Program

Availability and appearance of schools: Excellent

Ease of locating the school(s): Excellent

Programs or services that stand out: Recreational facilities and enrichment opportunities.

Comments: We understand from students that some extracurricular activities must be accessed in neighbouring communities but that there are significant opportunities locally as well.

HEALTH, SOCIAL AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

Healthcare Facilities

- Impressive new urgent care and long term care health facility including a helipad for ease of transport of critical patients
- We were told that there is an addition planned for the future.
- Good proximity to a larger regional hospital.
- Observed chiropractic and dentist offices as well as Naturopathic options for care.
- Medical labs central to other medical services.
- Walk-in clinic is a huge bonus for the community.
- Memorial area in front of the hospital – not clear what its purpose is.
- Long-term care attached to hospital – great proximity of services.
- Hospital was however not well-signed and difficult to find from the highway.
- Nursing home/Long Term Care near the library and close to downtown.
- Wide variety of natural foods/naturopathic options downtown.
- Bus was observed near Long Term Care – for residents only?
- Very positive personal experiences were relayed – residents take pride in their health care system.

Ease of locating these facilities: Needs improved signage especially for visitors in emergency situations especially those unfamiliar with town travelling from the highway.

Residents (young and old) thoughts about the quality and availability of healthcare facility and services: Excellent feedback regarding the quality and availability of healthcare facilities and services.

Social and Support Services

- Library, Long Term Care and school buildings are close together
- Family Enrichment Network online – couldn't find evidence of it in person during our visit..
- Food bank and Pregnancy care collections located in the municipal office.
- Observed two day care centres that looked well cared for with a large variety of outdoor toys in a safe fenced yard.
- Thrift store – volunteers/employees were friendly and very welcoming.
- Residents noted that they felt 'looked after.'
- No Chamber of Commerce
- Royal Canadian Legion was found and there were cars in the parking lot and some patrons arriving.

Emergency Services

- Common comment from people was that it is a 'safe' community, and it felt like a very safe place to be during our visit.
- Community has its own Police and Fire Departments that are located centrally. The EMS is also located in the Town Office
- Did not observe any emergency calls for service during our visit.

DOWNTOWN

- Good variety of shopping
- Highly walkable downtown core
- Excellent parking
- Lacks real browsing shops downtown
- Core business area surprisingly compact
- Sidewalks were wide and inviting
- Some stores took advantage and had their merchandise displayed on the sidewalk in front of their stores
- Convenience-oriented shopping – residents may do most of their shopping out of town
- Impressive to see a lot of locally made materials in the stores, including soap, food, teas
- Flowers were past their prime and flower baskets were hung too high
- Absence of benches and only a few garbage cans perhaps because of the time we visited
- Little art presence downtown except at the town office despite the online information
- Town Hall in the downtown core

Customer service: Excellent – every shop we visited had friendly, knowledgeable sales staff

Window displays: Potential for much more impact through the increasing use of window displays.

Signage: Needs improvement.

Variety and quality of merchandise: Good.

Quality and availability of parking: Excellent.

Quality (e.g., appearance, adequacy, etc.) of lighting: Inconsistent lighting, but we were not downtown during non-daylight hours to comment on adequacy.

Ease of locating the downtown area: Not well signed from highway

Potential for the downtown to play a greater role in tourism: Excellent potential – beautiful downtown with unique layout and impressive sidewalks, with close proximity to the waterfront.

Desirability to live downtown: High

Rating of the overall impression of the downtown:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
							x		
Needs Urgent Attention				Satisfactory				Excellent	

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

Retail

- Highway commercial area and downtown are key retail areas.
- Very few restaurants.
- Convenience-oriented services.
- Excellent customer service.
- A number of larger stores considering proximity to larger markets, such as Canadian Tire, Mark's Work Warehouse and Giant Tiger.
- Thrift store – for reuse of goods
- Major grocer downtown, seemed consistently busy while we were there.
- Home-based business signage observed, and one would suspect there are a significantly greater number of home-based businesses than those observed.
- Two pharmacies – good locations.
- Art Gallery on highway with Hunting/Fishing store – good mix of merchandise available and friendly service.

- Comment made by a few residents that “everyone is trying to get out of here” - appears to be very little opportunity for business growth based on the uncertainty of the AECL Plant
- Strip plaza feel to many of the retail areas.

Mix of retail shopping: Good

Overall appearance: Good

Variety of shopping and merchandizing: Good

Customer service: Excellent

Goods do local residents appear to need to travel to surrounding communities to buy?
Speciality items, most clothing, baby and kids products (although small consignment area in one downtown store as well as thrift store and Giant Tiger), pet supplies (other than Canadian Tire). Building and construction supplies

Stores or services were missing that you would expect to find?

More restaurants, gift shops, office supply, sports equipment store

Commercial and Professional Businesses

Convenience of bank and ATM locations: Good in downtown core – did not observe any along the highway.

Convenience of bank hours of service: Good for a small community, but working people might have difficulty assessing in-branch services.

Types of commercial businesses serve the local community (e.g., high-speed internet provider): We did not observe advertisements or find information during our visit on this. Would expect given the industry in Deep River that high speed internet would be readily available. All of our cell-phones had excellent service.

Availability of other professional services (e.g., accounting, legal, etc.): Noted one lawyer in the downtown area. Would expect that many professional services would be provided by home-based professionals.

Industry

AECL is overwhelmingly the dominant industry, upon which the community is dependent. . Major employers – AECL, CFB Petawawa, Local government, Boards of education, Health care and retail.

No obvious industrial park area.

Major industrial sectors in the community (e.g., manufacturing, construction, transportation):

Research and Development at AECL.

Major employers in the community: AECL, CFB Petawawa, Local government, Boards of Education, Retailers, Health Care Facilities

Noticeable dependence on any one type of industry: Yes, AECL

Community's desirability as a location for industrial development: Good. Excellent access to major market (Ottawa, Montreal), close proximity to major highways.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT INFORMATION

- The municipal office is the anchor in downtown core.
- Public Works department seemed busy while we were visiting.
- Front line staff at the municipal office were hesitant with some requested informative, but made every effort to find other staff who were more fully informed. Were very friendly and accommodating.
- Our participants were not approached or welcomed upon arrival in the foyer of the building but were immediately engaged once they approached the desk.
- DR does not appear to have a Deep River Business Improvement Area.
- Unable to locate tourist/visitor services outside the town offices.

Convenience of municipal office locations: Excellent.

Public Infrastructure and Municipal Services

Public Transportation: We did not observe any public transportation or taxi services, other than bus at Long Term Care home.

Sidewalks, Streets, Drinking Fountains, Benches, etc.: Streets were well maintained, litter free and clean. Inadequate number of benches in the downtown core. Sidewalks downtown were wide and well maintained, but there is a lack of sidewalks outside the downtown core.

Landscaping, Trees: Grass and trees were well maintained in the public parks

Public Restrooms, Pay Phones, Public Internet Access: - Did not note any payphones, public internet access at library, - Public washroom access seemed adequate, - Did not observe signage directing visitors to public washrooms - Inadequate washroom facilities at beach area.

Street Signage, Lighting: Street and direction signage could be unified to create a greater continuity - Street lighting seemed adequate, although this was difficult to assess since we were there only during daylight hours.

Conflicting land uses in the community (e.g., a residential subdivision next to a pulp mill): Land use seemed quite functional overall - Larger stores and businesses are located along the highway and away from the residential areas

Appropriate or inappropriate land-use (e.g., commercial, residential, green space, etc.): The downtown core is compact and well laid out. The large park bordering the river provides a beautiful vista from many locations in the town.

Traffic or pedestrian congestion: Not observed.

General accessibility of community facilities and infrastructure for individuals with disabilities: Did not observe significant accessibility barriers.

TOURISM, ENTERTAINMENT AND RECREATION

- Excellent recreations facilities including a yacht club, arena, golf course, bowling alley, beach trails, pool, auditorium.
- Kayaks and SUP for rent at beach.
- Trails are not well-defined for visitors but seem familiar to locals.
- The beach is the focal point for outdoor water and recreational activities.
- Well-maintained public washrooms.
- Stores sell a variety of sports equipment eg. archery equipment.
- Walk by river was highly recommended – very pleasant.
- Many people out jogging and cycling.
- Does not appear to be a real night-life for young people.
- Staff, supported by pamphlets and flyers speak to a variety of seasonal recreational activities in the area including: boating, skiing, hiking, ice fishing, snowmobiling, skating, hunting

Strength of tourism sector: Good but with the wonderful natural resources present the expansion of all season sports activities could be improved.

Community slogan/brand: Difficult to identify and if improved and coordinated would be a distinct asset in attracting visitors from the Trans Canada. It would give visitors the direction they need to take full advantage of all the attractions of Deep River.

Attractions, Events and Tourism:

- Summer fest information found online - Art activities were advertised at the Library
- Both the waterfront and the Ottawa River itself fulfill their potential for excellent all season events and festivals. The beach is a significant attraction in itself.
- We feel that information for visitors regarding the history of AECL and broad overview of their activities would be well received.
- The Clock Museum is located in a residential area a distance from the downtown core – not ideal for foot traffic

Services for Tourists

Visitor's Centre, Chamber of Commerce office, or other facility: The only location offering tourist services is the Town Office. There is no Chamber of Commerce or designated tourist information kiosks that were visible to the average tourist around town.

Tourism staff, facilities, location, signage, marketing material, maps, etc.:

Quality and availability of public restrooms: Good, although washrooms were locked at the beach when we visited.

Quality and appearance of existing tourist attractions: Waterfront is naturally beautiful but because of the timing of our visit appeared to be underused.

Tourism businesses (group tour operators, bus/rail tours, boat rentals etc.): Some rentals on the beach during the summer season, could likely be expanded to accommodate late visitors

Restaurants and Accommodations

Eateries, restaurants, etc. that could cater to tourists: Minimal. Several people told us to go outside of Deep River to eat or stay. More outdoor space for eating/drinking could be a draw for tourists (picnic areas as well as restaurant/bar patio space).

Facilities that can accommodate a conference and/or a large number of visitors: There were no facilities found. There was a conference centre near the marina that had signage indicating its presence but it was no longer in business when we found it.

Recommended places to stay or eat: We ate at Santa Fe – the service and food were both good. The Bear's Den and Long Shots were also recommended. We also stopped at Tim Horton's --- where the service was also very good.

PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

- Golf course private and appeared to be well maintained
- Ski clubs were advertised.
- Not many playgrounds for children and very few parks.
- Not much to do 'right now' (first week of September after Labour Day).
- Posters that were up were out-dated.
- It seemed as though there were significant service club activities.
- Few night-life options
- No movie theatre, but there is bowling, tennis, and water-based activities.

Public Recreation Facilities: Excellent

Private Recreation Facilities: Excellent

Parks: Good

Residents' thoughts regarding the availability of community events: Good, but seem to be focussed more on the peak of summer.

Rating of the overall suitability of facilities for each of the following groups:

overall suitability (rate 1 – 10)	
Children (13 and under)	9
Families	9
Teens	8
Singles, young adults	7
Senior citizens	9
Newcomers	7

CULTURE AND HERITAGE

- No real heritage buildings observed. There was a collection of well maintained log structures on the highway south of town
- Appears to be a very active Art community from the flyers at the library
- There is a symphony orchestra which we read about on the web site
- Several churches with different religions represented.
- There is a 70 year celebration of history of the Town on going this year.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

- Well advertised water conservation program in the local newsletter.
- Lots of solar panels on municipal buildings.
- Signs to indicate fire hazard levels for the surrounding forested areas
- Few recycling bins on street/few garbage cans observed on the street.
- Garbage and recycling by post office
- Recycling eye glasses and ink cartridges in the municipal office.
- 'Where can I bring my ?' fact sheet available in the municipal office.
- Thrift shop and swap shop for reusing goods.
- No taxis seen, limited public transportation.

WELCOMING COMMUNITY (NEWCOMERS ARE DEFINED AS INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES AND IMMIGRANTS WHO COME TO LIVE AND/OR WORK IN THE COMMUNITY).

- Employment services were very helpful and bilingual, but suggested to team members that they not buy a house in Deep River – esthetically the office was not very welcoming, and initial conversation was a little off-putting (focus on military or AELC employment opportunities only), but conversation warmed up and the employees became extremely helpful.
- Islamic Centre in the community.
- No evidence of services or businesses operated by newcomers.
- Community centre and arena seem to have very active programming for families.
- A Royal Canadian Legion Branch.
- Good stock of temporary housing.

WRAP-UP

Perception versus Impression

We had limited perceptions prior to our visit, but the impact and potential of the waterfront was surprisingly beautiful, as was the quietness of the community. We were told repeatedly that the area is much busier during the summer months. We expected to observe a more involved arts community given the information found online. We found the people of all age to be very helpful and friendly. We were consistently engaged and welcomed and as a result truly enjoyed our visit to Deep River.

Community Residents

Were community residents knowledgeable about their community? Yes, very.

Did they refer you to someone else who would help? If yes, who? Yes, the employment services centre referred us to other individuals and services for help in finding a job.

In general, did residents you spoke with have a positive or negative attitude toward their community? Why? Did you sense community pride? In general, everyone had a very positive attitude toward the community. We did sense community pride, particularly among the students from the high school and during a conversation with a resident sitting on a beach, who was perhaps Deep River's strongest advocate!

Did residents identify any particular issues to be of major concern (e.g., safety)?

- Lack of growth
- Uncertainty of future relative to the possible Plant closure or downsizing.
- Dependence on one or two main industries
- Proximity to other communities, which allows Deep River to serve as a bedroom community especially for service people at the base in Petawawa.

Senses

Taste

Was there any specialty food item, bakery, restaurant or candy store that you will remember? N/A

Smell

Is there a scent that characterizes the community? Fresh Air, Sand, Beachfront

Sight

Was there a colourful or striking feature that made an impression on you? The absolute beauty of the vista of the Ottawa River surrounded by the green expanses of forest was very memorable. Still able to conjure up that image. The rolling lawns down to the beach and waterfront is very inviting.

Sound

What sounds did you hear? Please comment on the level of noise in the community. Construction noise on the highway but level of noise in the community was minimal and not distracting.

Other

How would you describe the overall environmental health of the community (e.g., air quality, litter, noise pollution, etc.)? Excellent – appears to be a very healthy community from the environmental perspective. The town is clean, litter free, tidy, well-kept, with good air quality and spotless beaches.

What if anything, did you experience that had a strongly negative or positive impact on the way the community felt to you? Be specific.

Dated, aged and inadequate signage had a negative impact on our group.

About this Community

What is the most outstanding feature of this community? The amazingly friendly and positive people that we met combined with that amazing river and all it has to offer.

What will you remember most about this community six months from now (positive or negative)? The friendly people and the beautiful beaches.

What local restaurant, specialty shop or attraction would bring you back to this community in the near future? The possibility of exploring the area in the summer months to take advantage of all the activities offer by the water and the beaches.

Would you consider this a suitable location for:

A young family? Yes, there are many reasons to choose Deep River in which to raise a family.

A retired person? Yes, again a very active community oriented town.

Young, single adult? Only if a job opportunity brought them in. There seemed to be little opportunity to celebrate a night life for active young adults other than sports.

A tourist? Yes, there are many sports that could be enjoyed during a holiday here.

A new retail or service business? There seems to be several markets that could use new businesses (retail or service), but the attitude towards new businesses was poor. This is understandable given the recent and ongoing uncertainty of the Plant

A new manufacturing business? Yes, given the proximity to the TransCanada Highway and the closeness of potential markets.

A new immigrant? Yes, there is a solid education base, a supportive, active and positive community, and business opportunity in niche markets. These would be drawing cards, not just for new immigrants, but for young families generally.

Five-Ten positive things you observed about this community

1. Friendly and well informed citizens of all ages
2. Significant new health care facility with the ability to access larger hospitals close by which serves Urgent care and Long term care needs of the community.
3. Beautiful well developed waterfront and beaches
4. Abundant indoor and outdoor recreational facilities
5. Pride of ownership displayed in the well maintained homes and businesses in the downtown core.
6. Elementary and high school are well represented
7. New and impressive Town Offices that house both the Fire and Police services
8. Accessibility to the Trans Canada Highway
9. Well established and well laid out downtown core.
10. Ample parking downtown

Four potential opportunities available to the community:

1. Based on the amazing Ottawa River that is the eastern boarder of the town, there is great potential to tap into a more vibrant tourist industry.
2. There is opportunity to create niche businesses to address the needs of the active tourist and sports enthusiasts that will come as a result of a focussed marketing strategy
3. Art and History Projects can be used to attract the Diaspora. There are great numbers of people who have called Deep River home over the years and a waiting for an invitation to return for a visit.
4. Invite retirees to settle in Deep River. There are affordable homes available and a vibrant social and medical infrastructure already in place.

Five biggest obstacles/challenges facing this community:

1. Single industry dependency and recent uncertainty that area
2. The difficulty of attracting travellers on the Trans Canada to stop and visit the town core.
3. The ability to capitalise on the bedroom community/commutable community status that Deep River now holds. Businesses and services that will expand to meet the need of the community will create jobs in town.
4. Marketing the potential tourist trade for DR far beyond the borders. Creating visibility across Canada and the world.

Looking at tomorrow...

Which action would you recommend that this community take on right away (quick win)? New branded and coordinated signage to inform and draw people into the downtown core and create an consistent directional guide for new visitors.

Look forward three years...

What would you like to see changed in this community? or remain the same? The friendliness and helpfulness of the people is a definite asset and should be praised at every opportunity. This should remain and grow. A more coordinated aesthetic in the town relative to flower baskets, banners and event advertising would be appealing and helpful.

Turn inward and reflect on your own community

What have you learned here that has changed your impression of your own community? We are very fortunate in the way in which Bancroft has evolved over the years. Our major highways enter the town proper and as a result people travelling have to enter our town core. The Deep River website is very informative and positive personal interaction with visitors paramount.

Has this experience given you any new ideas about what is needed in your own community? We could improved visitor our services and information availability.

ONE idea that you would like to borrow for use in your own business/community and describe how you would start to implement it within the next 72 hours!

People usually get their first impression of a community on line. We could improve visitors website experience with more information on local attractions, an improved map, and more details about how to live, work and play in Bancroft!

Additional Comments: Deep River has an amazingly positive vibe! Your people are your greatest asset and coupled with the breathtaking vista of you Ottawa River it make one want to return again and again. Thank you all so much for your hospitality

Rating of overall experience as a volunteer visitor

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
					X				
Would not do it again				Satisfactory		Great fun! Lots of learning!			
Sign me up for the next one!									