



Assessment Findings and Suggestions Report

Burlington & Waterford, Wisconsin

July, 2018



Opportunity Assessment

INTRODUCTION

In June of 2018, an Opportunity Assessment of Burlington and Waterford, Wisconsin, was conducted, and the findings were presented in a two-and-a-half hour workshop. The assessment provides an unbiased overview of Burlington and Waterford and how they are seen by a visitor. It includes a review of local marketing efforts, signage, attractions, critical mass, retail mix, ease of getting around, customer service, visitor amenities such as parking and public restrooms, overall appeal, and the communities' ability to attract overnight visitors.

In performing the Opportunity Assessment, we looked at the area through the eyes of a first-time visitor. No prior research was facilitated, and no community representatives were contacted except to set up the project. The towns and surrounding area were "secretly shopped." Any person looking to relocate their business, industry, or residence will come to your communities as a visitor first. Tourism is the front door to all your economic development efforts.

Once potential visitors find information about your area, are the marketing materials good enough to close the sale? In the Marketing Assessment, we reviewed your visitor websites and print marketing materials.

A typical community has five opportunities to close the sale:

- 1) Personal contact (visitor information centers, trade shows, etc.)

- 2) Websites
- 3) Brochures and printed materials
- 4) Publicity (articles)
- 5) Word of mouth—the most effective means

We searched the internet for activities, requested and reviewed printed materials, and looked for articles and third-party information. As we prepared for travel to your communities, we searched both commercial and organizational websites promoting the area, tourism websites, and read travel articles and guidebooks.

The marketing assessment determined how effective the marketing was in convincing a potential visitor that the area would be worth a special trip, a stop, or an overnight stay. The key to the marketing assessment is to see if you have a primary lure that makes you worth a special trip of a one-hour drive—or from further away. The question on most visitors' minds is: What do you have that I can't get closer to home? What makes you worth a special trip?

Where most communities falter is when they merely provide "lists" of what the community has, whether it's truly "unique" or not. Nearly every community in North America promotes the usual list of diversions: local museums, shops and restaurants, plenty of lodging, golf, outdoor recreation, historic downtowns, scenic vistas, etc. Of course, nearly every visitor can do these things closer to home. So, what makes Burlington or Waterford worth the trip?

Always promote your primary lure first—what makes you worth that special trip. THEN, promote your diversionary, or "complementary" activities.

Would you go to Anaheim, California, if Disneyland wasn't there? Do you think that Universal Studios and Knotts Berry Farm mind that Disneyland gets all the glory? Of course not. Eighty percent of all tourism spending is with those secondary activities. Disney does the heavy lifting in terms of advertising and promotion, and the diversionary activities benefit.

In a nutshell, the Marketing Effectiveness Assessment looks for what makes your community worth a special trip, or a great place to live, or to do business. We look for details, details, details. Do you give a reason for visiting, and do you provide enough information to make it easy to plan a trip? Are the marketing materials good enough to close the sale?

The second part of the assessment process is the On-site Assessment. During this part of the assessment, we spent several days in the area, looking at enticements from the highways (signs, billboards, something that would get a visitor to stop), beautification and overall curb appeal, wayfinding (ease of getting around), visitor amenities (public restrooms, visitor information, parking), activities, overall appeal, retail mix (lodging, dining, shopping), critical mass, customer service, area attractions, pedestrian friendliness, gathering spaces, evening activities, and the availability of marketing materials and their effectiveness.

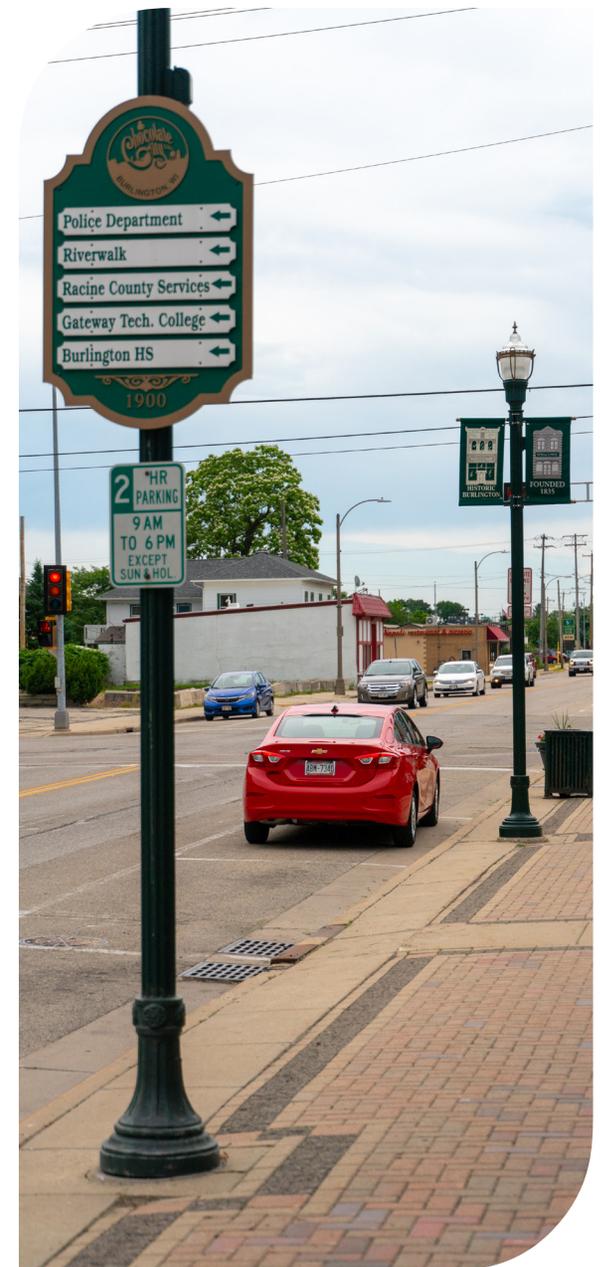
The area benefits from tourism when visitors spend money, and they do that in the local gift shops, restaurants, hotels, etc. Therefore, the On-site Assessment includes a candid look at private businesses as much as public spaces and amenities.

For every shortcoming or challenge we note during the assessment process, we provide a low-cost "suggestion," where possible, on how the challenge can be corrected or overcome. The suggestions are not termed "recommendations," as they were developed without consulting the community first about possible constraints, future plans, or reasons why the suggestions may not be appropriate. Hopefully this assessment process will open dialogue within the communities, leading people to adopt some or all of the suggestions, taking them from suggestions to recommendations.

It's important to note that to increase the towns' tourism industries, fulfilling one or two of the suggestions may have little impact, but implementing a number of them, if not all, can have a profoundly successful impact on the towns' abilities to tap into the tourism industry.

Implementation of these suggestions must be a region-wide effort, involving both privately owned businesses as well as local, county, and state agencies, where appropriate. Every local organization plays a role in tourism, downtown revitalization, or economic development efforts. A Destination Marketing Organization (DMO, CVB, Chamber, TPA, etc.) will not be successful if the tourism effort is not region-wide.

In many cases, issues may come up that you are already aware of and are already working on. In that case, the assessment validates those efforts. But more often than not, the assessment will point out things that you are aware of but can't mention or bring up without paying a political price. Local politics can be a killer of the tourism industry.



While marketing efforts are important, product development is the most important factor of a successful tourism industry. Visitors want activities, not just things to look at. How much time can a visitor spend enjoying activities—that cater to their interests—in your area? Do your communities have truly unique attractions the visitor can't get closer to home? You must be able to deliver on your marketing promises—otherwise visitors might come once, but they won't come back. It's much more cost effective to bring people back, than to always go out and entice new visitors into town. "Been there, done that" communities eventually run out of visitors and find they don't have a sustainable tourism industry, or they simply become pit stops or gateways on the way to somewhere else.

After spending several days reviewing marketing materials and assessing the communities, we have looked at all of these issues, and have developed some suggestions and ideas that each community can discuss and possibly implement to help increase tourism spending locally.

SUCCESSFUL TOURISM TRANSLATES TO CASH

Tourism is successful when a community imports more cash than it exports. When residents spend their hard-earned money outside the community, the community is exporting cash—often referred to as "leakage." Tourism helps fill that gap, importing cash into the local economy without the necessity of having to provide extended social and other services. Visitors come, spend money, then go home. When you import more cash than you export, you have a positive "balance of trade." Communities with successful tourism

programs easily see that the industry subsidizes the community, whereas other communities find that they subsidize visitors—providing services visitors use without them leaving enough money behind to cover the cost of those services.

The primary goal of the tourism industry is to bring more cash into the local economy. This doesn't happen when visitors come into the community, get out of their cars, and take photographs. And it doesn't happen when visitors go swimming in the lake at your park all day, sunning, and eating the lunch they brought from home. And it doesn't happen when visitors hike down your trails, enjoy your interpretive centers, or stroll through your lovely arboretums. These are all great things to do, and, of course, you do want your visitors to do these—but, you also want to entice them into your shops, your cafes, espresso stands, restaurants, galleries, B&Bs, and hotels, ultimately opening their wallets to make purchases. That is what helps your local economy, your small merchants, your hoteliers, and your tax coffers.

To entice visitors to spend money in your community, you need to have places for them to spend it—you need to have the right mix of shops, restaurants, entertainment, and lodging facilities, all in an attractive setting, as well as attractions that make them want to visit you in the first place.



THE THREE TYPES OF TOURISM

1. Visiting friends and family

The number one reason people travel is to visit friends and/or family. If you did nothing to promote tourism, you would still have tourism in your community. However, when friends and family come to visit, do your residents take them out to eat, shop, dine locally? Or do they head to a neighboring community? Do your locals even know what you have to offer? An effective tourism marketing effort also includes educating locals as to what you have and how to find it through effective wayfinding signage, gateways and advertising.

2. Business travel

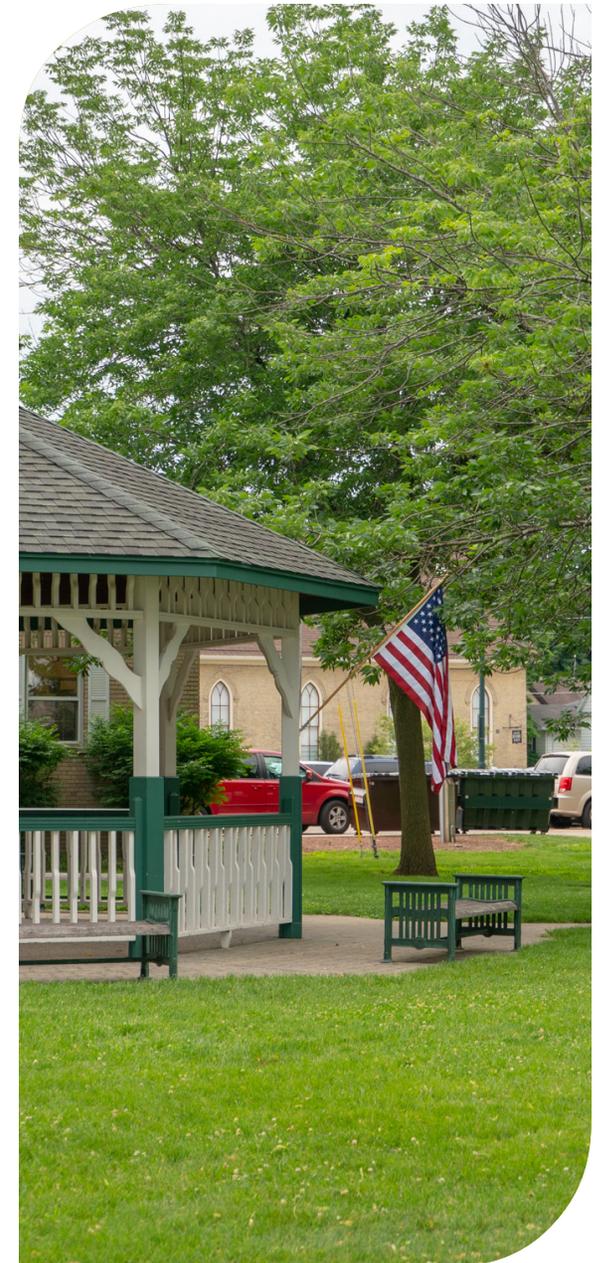
The second most popular reason for travel is business. Included in this category is educational travel: colleges and universities, as well as conventions and meetings, corporate travel, vendor travel, etc. Like leisure travelers, this group is looking for things to do “after hours” while in the area. The most successful convention and trade show towns are the result of their secondary activities or “diversions,” not simply because of their convention and exhibition facilities. Think Disneyworld, Disneyland, San Antonio’s River Walk, and Banff, to name a few.

3. Leisure travel

The third, and most lucrative of all types of visitors, is the leisure traveler. They have no personal connections to the community, but are coming purely to enjoy themselves. They stay in commercial lodging establishments, eat virtually all their meals in local restaurants, and their top diversionary

activity is shopping and dining in a pedestrian-friendly setting.

The average leisure visitor is active 14 hours a day, yet typically only spends four to six hours with the primary lure. They then spend eight to ten hours with diversionary activities—things they could do closer to home, but will do while in the area. A good example of this is Branson, Missouri, the “live music-theater capital of the world.” This town of 6,500 residents hosts 7.5 million visitors a year. The primary “lure” is the 49 music theaters. The average visitor attends two shows a day over about





four hours. During the other hours of the day, the visitor will shop in local outlet malls, head to the water parks, theme parks, and other attractions, play a round of golf, hike, bike, fish, do some bird watching, and participate in any number of other activities they could do closer to home, but will do while visiting Branson.

THE THREE STAGES OF TOURISM

1. Status quo

If you take no action to develop the tourism industry, you will still have an element of tourism, simply because some travelers will pull off local highways or freeways for gas, food, or lodging, as well as the fact that the number one reason for travel is to visit friends or family. If you have residents, you will have some tourism.

2. Getting people to stop

The first priority of developing a successful tourism industry is getting people to stop. Imagine how successful businesses in the community would be if just 50% of the vehicles traveling through pulled off the highway and spent just 30 minutes in your community—buying gas, an ice cream cone, a sandwich, a gift or souvenir?

If there's a strong pull, imagine the money spent if visitors stayed two hours in the community, which nearly always translates to additional spending.

The first goal is to get those travelers to stop.

3. Becoming the destination

To become a destination community you must have attractions and supporting amenities that convince visitors to spend the night. And those attractions

must be different from what the visitor can get closer to home.

Overnight visitors spend three times that of day visitors, and nearly ten times that of visitors using your community as a pit stop on the way to somewhere else.

THE FOUR-TIMES RULE

Visitors will make a point of stopping or staying in a community if it has enough activities that appeal specifically to them and will keep them busy four times longer than it took them to get there.

In other words, if a person has to drive 15 minutes to visit you, do you have enough for them to do to keep them busy for an hour? (4 times 15 minutes) If a visitor has to drive an hour, do you have the activities and amenities to keep them busy for four hours?

The more you have to offer, collectively, the further visitors will come, and the longer they will stay, and of course, the more they will spend. This is why it is so important for communities to market more than just their immediate geographic areas. By marketing nearby activities and attractions, you present much more for a visitor to do, and you make the visit worth the trip.

Visitors don't care about city limits or county lines—so market the broader package and you'll be able to keep people in the area long enough to translate to another meal, some more shopping, and hopefully, an overnight stay.

SELL THE EXPERIENCE, NOT GEOGRAPHY

Nearly every destination marketing organization is charged with promoting a geographic area, yet visitors couldn't care less about those boundaries. They are looking for activities that cater to their interests, and location is second to the experience. ALWAYS promote the primary lure first, then the location. People by the millions head to Disneyland, Disneyworld, Dollywood and other attractions. They are not going to Anaheim, Orlando or Pigeon Forge.

Always sell the activity—the experience—THEN the location.

LURES, DIVERSIONS AND AMBIANCE

Too often communities promote the list of diversions that nearly every community has. The primary lure is the activity that a visitor can't find closer to home.

Always promote your primary lure, then the diversions. Do not try to be all things to all people. Have you ever gone anywhere because they had "something for everyone?" Of course not—you go there because they have something specific for you. Find your niche and promote it like crazy.

Historic downtowns provide ambiance—they are not attractions, diversions, nor are they a primary lure. It's what's in the buildings that makes a downtown a destination.

The same can be said for scenery. Unless your vista is a world-class scene, such as Niagara Falls or the Grand Canyon, scenic vistas create wonderful ambiance, but don't translate to spending, and they only last a few minutes. Then what?

All too often communities promote their heritage as a primary draw. How far would you travel to visit a mining museum? A timber museum? An agricultural center? A county historical museum? Heritage must be outstanding and pervasive throughout the community to be a primary lure, such as Plimoth Plantation or Salem, Massachusetts.

Thousands of communities are the "capital" of something. For instance, in California, Borrego Springs is the grapefruit capital of the world. Gilroy is the garlic capital. Modesto is the tomato capital. Gridley is the kiwi capital. Oxnard is the strawberry capital. Fallbrook is the avocado capital. But here's the question: Have you ever gone anywhere because it was the capital of a fruit or vegetable?

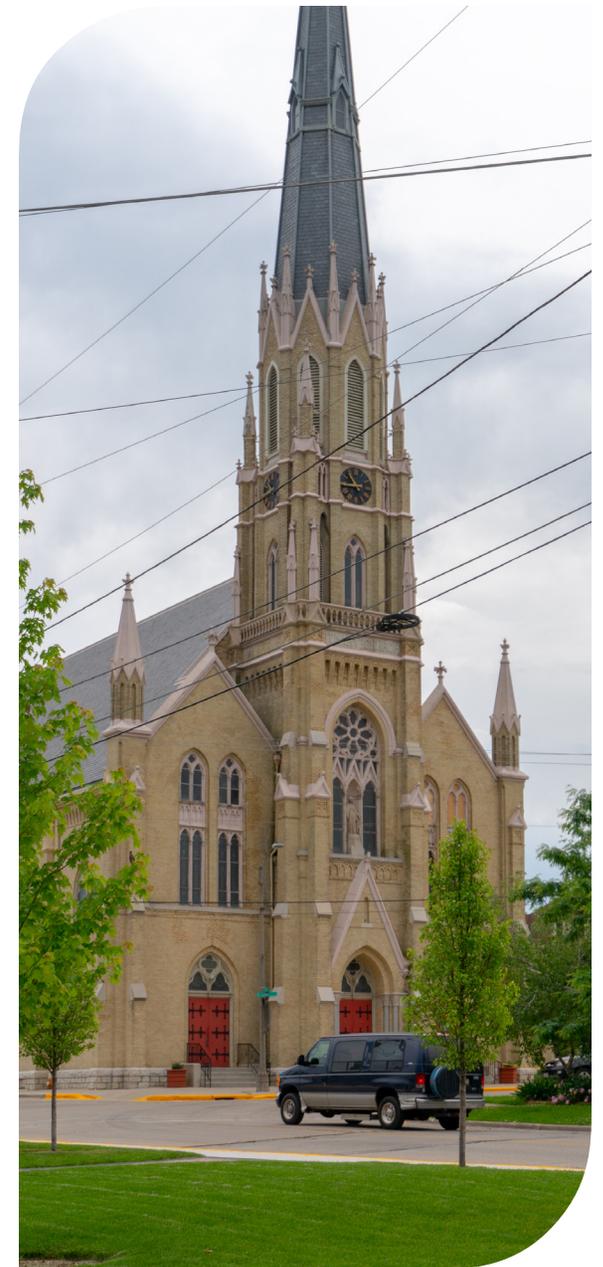
Your local heritage is important to the community and can set the ambiance, even becoming a diversionary activity. For local heritage to be a major attraction, it needs to combine activities with ambiance, and it needs to be pervasive throughout the area.

BE DIFFERENT OR THE BEST

Why should a visitor come to your communities if they can enjoy the same activities closer to home? Too many communities promote "outdoor recreation" as their primary draw. Unfortunately, that is the same attraction promoted by nearly every community in North America.

If you are different, then you have a reason for travelers to choose to visit you. If you are the best, then visitors will generally flock to your doors.

If you have great hiking trails, then market their unique qualities. Be specific and paint the image





of how wonderful they are in the minds of your potential visitors. If you have one fantastic restaurant in town, let people know about it—a unique dining experience is something many people will travel far to enjoy.

Ashland, Oregon, previously a depressed timber town, began its Shakespeare Festival, which now runs nine months of the year and draws hundreds of thousands of visitors who spend an average of six nights in the community. The Shakespeare Festival made Ashland different from any other community.

Leavenworth, Washington, another dying timber town, adopted a Bavarian architectural theme and produces dozens of Bavarian events every year. Some now say the town looks more genuinely Bavarian than towns in Bavaria. It is now one of the primary tourist destinations in Washington state, hosting more than 2.5 million visitors annually. They offer a different experience, an experience that is pervasive throughout town.

Okanogan County, Washington is an outdoor recreational paradise—just like 37 of the 38 other counties in Washington. So why go to the Okanogan? Because they are the best. They researched guidebooks, newspaper and magazine articles, and pulled quotes they could use in their advertising efforts. Like, “Pinch yourself, you’re in Okanogan Country with perhaps the best cross country skiing on the continent.” This, and other quotes like it, make it worth the drive to visit Okanogan Country. The third-party endorsements show that they are the best.

Set yourself apart from everyone else, and you’ll see that by being unique, you’ll be a greater attraction.



CRITICAL MASS MEANS CASH

Although it may not be the primary reason why visitors come to your community, shopping and dining in a pedestrian setting is the number one activity of visitors. Besides lodging, it is also how visitors spend the most amount of money.

Do you have a pedestrian-friendly shopping district? If not, can you create one? Many communities have been highly successful with the development of a two or three block long pedestrian “village” including visitor-oriented retail shops, dining, visitor information, restrooms, etc., all in an attractive, landscaped setting.

The general rule of thumb in those two or three blocks (not spread out all over town) is 10+10+10: Ten destination retail shops, which includes galleries, antiques, collectibles, home accents and furnishings, artists in action, book stores, logo gear (clothing), souvenirs, outfitters, tour operators, activity shops such as kites, jewelry, wine or tobacco shops, and other specialties. The second ten is for food: ice cream, fudge and candy stores, soda fountains, sit-down dining, coffee shops, cafes, bistros, delis, etc. And the final ten are businesses open after 6:00 pm. This includes entertainment: bars, dance clubs, theaters (movies and performing arts), retail shops with activities (piano bar in a wine shop), etc.

The important point is to group these businesses together to create the “critical mass” in a pedestrian-friendly setting. This will attract visitors as well as locals, and make it worth their while to stop and shop. People are always drawn to the

critical mass—the opportunity to have multiple choices, multiple experiences, all in a convenient and attractive setting.

TOURISM IS AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

The goal of successful tourism is for people to come into the community, spend money, and go home. Tourism is nearly a \$947 billion dollar industry in the U.S., nearly \$82 billion in Canada, and supports millions of jobs. Ninety percent of tourism industry businesses are small businesses of which 90% have less than 15 employees. Tourism provides the opportunity for entrepreneurs to get started, for small family-run businesses to thrive, for artisans and craftspeople to find a market, and creates a basis for unique niche-retail environment including wineries, artists, crafts, etc. Tourism provides a diverse market within the community, expanding its potential. Enhancing the community through beautification efforts creates an attractive setting for both locals and visitors, key in revitalizing a community's downtown. And a tourism-friendly town will attract non-tourism industries faster than others—new businesses will see the community as a visitor before they make a final determination about the community. Tourism is the front door to your economic development efforts.

The benefits of a healthy tourism industry can rejuvenate a town, foster community pride, encourage economic diversity, and lead the way to a vital, successful community.



NEXT STEPS

The findings and suggestions in this report will provide many ideas, strategies, and goals to reach for. We hope that it fosters dialogue and becomes a springboard for the communities in enhancing the tourism industry and other economic development efforts, leading to greater prosperity, rejuvenation, and enjoyment by all the citizens.

This report offers a first step in reaching that goal. To fully realize the benefits of this assessment, the community should take these findings and suggestions, discuss them and evaluate them, and develop a plan for implementation.

A detailed branding plan could help to build on the results of this assessment, adding in-depth research, evaluation, and local input to develop a unique brand and implementation program. The assessment process essentially provides a look at where you are today. RBI's BrandCamp program would help build your branding plan from the ground up—with local input, brainstorming, research, and creative planning. We can work with you to guide you through the process, helping create a plan that has local champions and community buy-in.

The next step in the planning process would be to provide public outreach and review past and current planning efforts. This would determine your goals as a region.

The third step would involve research, feasibility and market analysis, and determining your brand—what you are or hope to be known for.

Then comes the “development” portion of the plan

or the “how to get there” program: determining what product development initiatives need to be undertaken to reinforce and grow the brand. This also includes defining the roles of the various local organizations. Brand-building involves a whole community—everyone pulling in the same direction, each with their own “to do list.”

Finally, there's the detailed marketing plan: how and when you will tell the world who you are and what makes you special—the place to live, work and play.

The branding plan should be an “action plan” as opposed to a “strategic plan.” You want a to do list, by organization, not just general strategies, goals and objectives.

The recommendations should provide all the necessary steps for your towns to be successful in attaining their goals of a more diverse economy with an enhanced tourism industry and to become more attractive and enjoyable for both visitors and citizens.

A good plan will provide a program to get local residents and the business community pulling together, building the towns' unique images in the minds of visitors and residents alike. The result of your efforts will be a prosperous, enjoyable environment in which to live, work, and visit.





Findings & Suggestions

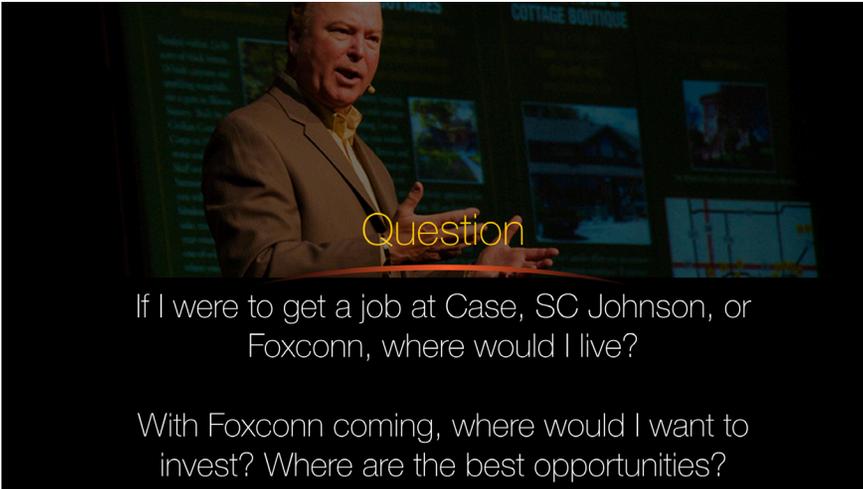


Burlington & Waterford
Assessment Findings & Suggestions



Three hats

As a place to live and raise a family
As a place to work, invest in, or bring a business
As a place to visit - for more than a day trip



Question

If I were to get a job at Case, SC Johnson, or Foxconn, where would I live?

With Foxconn coming, where would I want to invest? Where are the best opportunities?



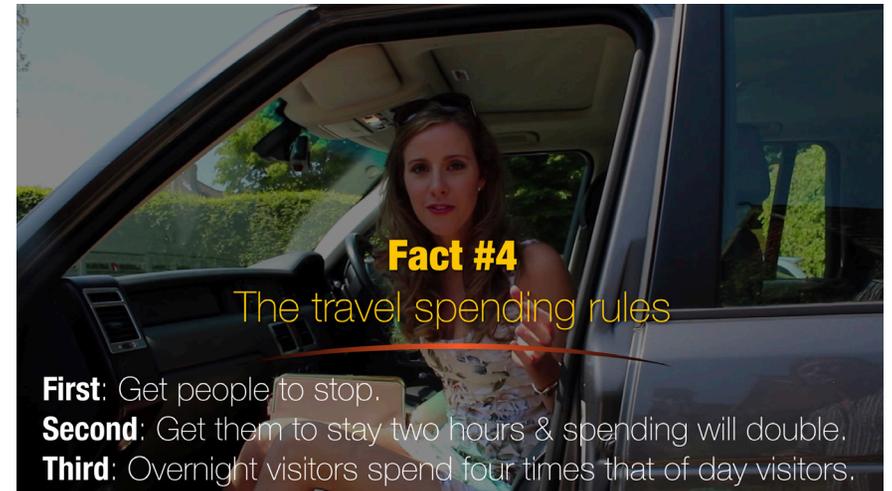
A new reality

Community development is leading economic & tourism development.

Welcome to the age of
PlaceMaking

Our assessment process included reviewing Burlington and Waterford's marketing materials, plus looking at your online presences, reviews on TripAdvisor and other information sites, as well as performing the "secret-shopping" on-site assessments. We looked at signage and wayfinding (how easy was it to find your attractions and amenities?), appeal, critical mass (were there places in the county to spend money?), your attractions, amenities, customer service, and more. We have a list of 60 key elements we review, and so far, we have assessed more than 1,500 communities in 45 states, across Canada, Western Europe, and Scandinavia.

You've been secret shopped! We received no prior input, no interviews and no prior visits to your communities. We did request printed materials before we arrived and we looked at Burlington and Waterford's marketing effectiveness as: 1.) places to live and raise a family, 2.) places to work, invest in, or bring a business, and 3.) places to visit. However, our focus has been the On-site Assessment over the week and a half we were in your communities. We looked at signage, gateways, overall appeal, critical mass, amenities, attractions and customer service. Based on the news that Foxconn is coming to the county, we wanted to see where newcomers might decide to live and why. Our focus has been making sure you are a place people want to live as well as work and visit.



Community Development is now leading economic and tourism development. PlaceMaking is the new focus.

Tourism is the front door to non-tourism economic development and is the purest form of economic development. People come, spend money, and go home. Tourism showcases the quality of life in Burlington and Waterford, and it is the fastest growing industry in Wisconsin.

The key to getting travelers to spend money in your communities is:

1. Get people to stop.
2. Get them to stay two hours and spending will double.
3. Get them to stay the night. Overnight visitors spend four times that of day visitors.

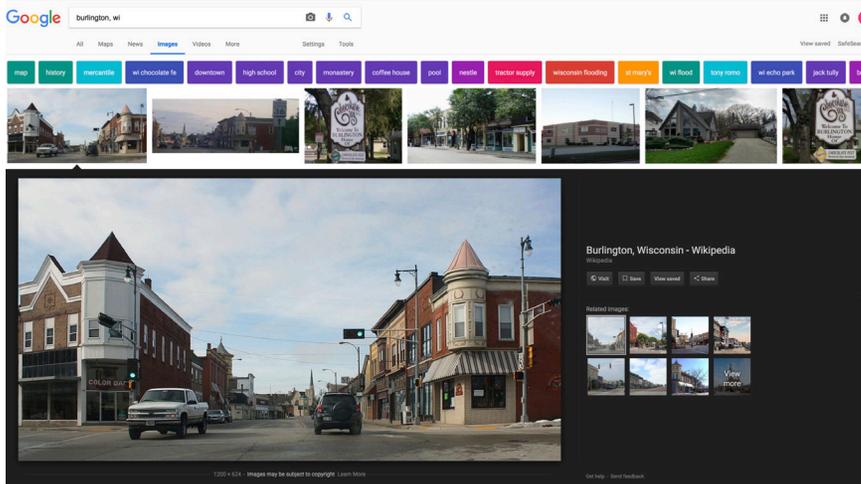
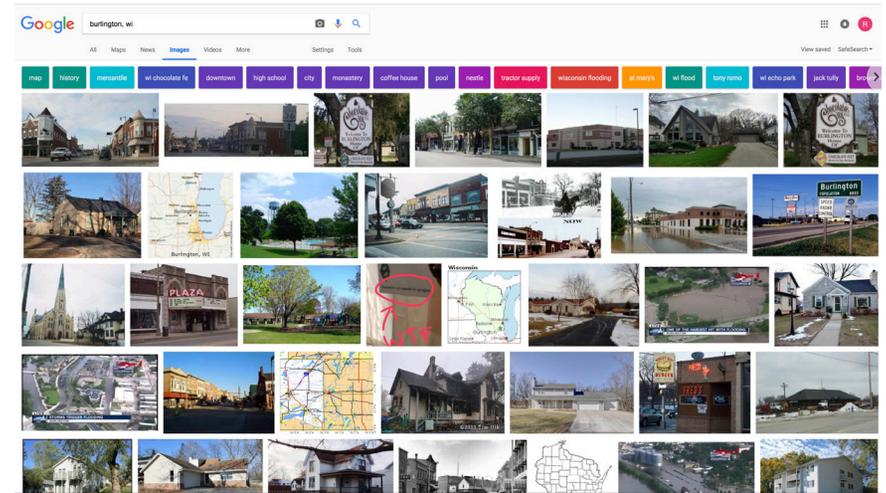
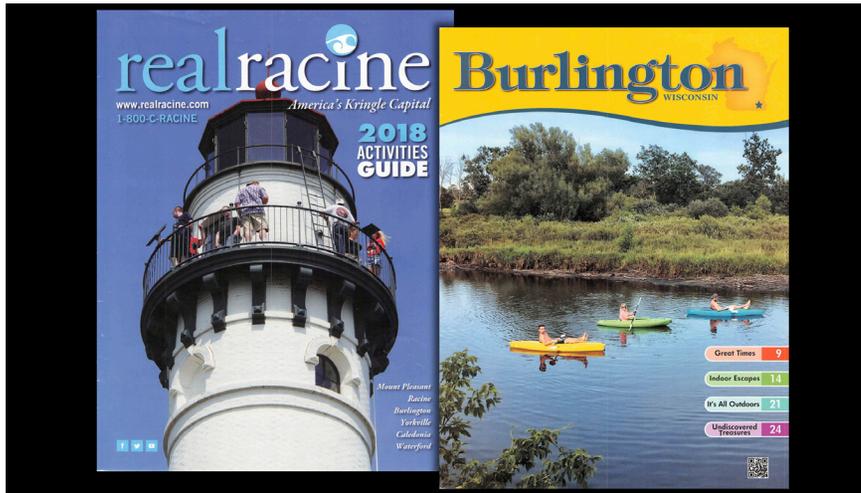


Regardless of the reason visitors come, their top activities once they are here is shopping, dining and entertainment in a pedestrian-friendly, intimate setting. This accounts for 80% of all non-lodging visitor spending. We would rather see you get half the visitors spending twice as much money and time.

If visitors come into either town and spend the night: Do you have shopping, dining and entertainment in a pedestrian-friendly, intimate setting? Disney built "Downtown Disney" with shops and restaurants just outside the parks to provide this amenity for his visitors, and capture this 80% of spending.

Seventy percent of ALL consumer retail spending happens after 6:00 pm! This statistic was determined by the National Retail Federation, which includes big box retailers like CVS and Walmart, who are all open late. You need to be open after 6:00 pm.

Promote your anchor tenants. "Anchor tenants" are those businesses and activities that people will drive a distance to enjoy specifically. Promote these businesses by name. Success breeds success, and all merchants will prosper even if just a few bring the visitors into town. Promote your private businesses.

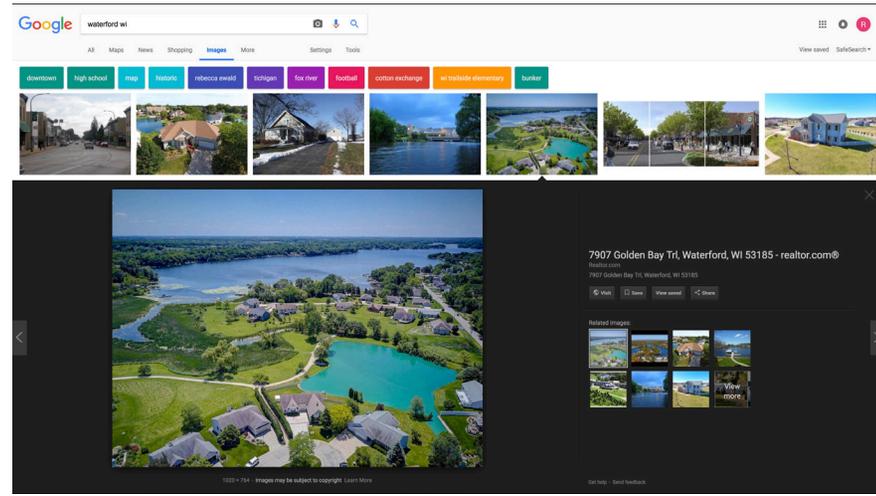
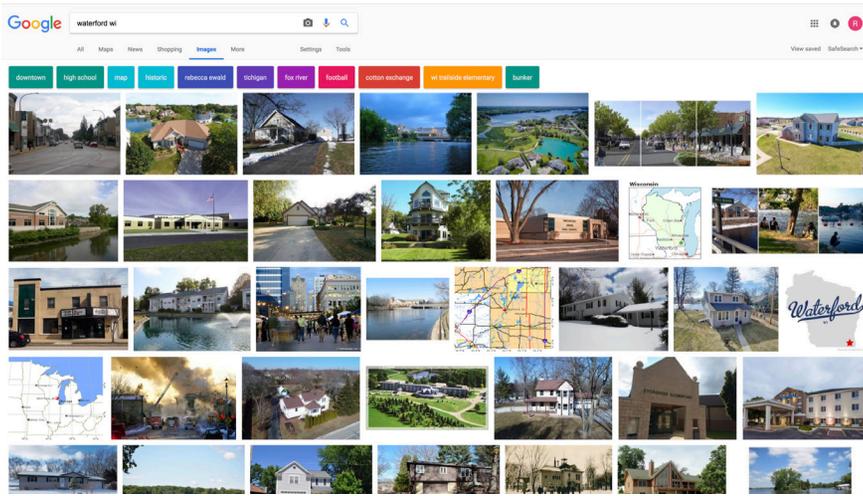


We got to know your area via digital media as well as print. We saw the realracine Activities Guide (top left) and used it once we arrived. We also found the Burlington guide when we first got here, so we used that too.

Most people who are looking for a place to live, work or invest will first go to Google and just type in the name of your town (top right for Burlington). A search like this can bring up a variety of pictures and maps that they will then look through to get a quick snapshot of your community.

Suggestion: As you populate your websites, social media (Instagram particularly) with great photos, you need to make sure they are tagged (so that they will appear in this kind of search). Examples of tags for this set of photos: #BurlingtonWI #WaterfordWI @BurlingtonWI @WaterfordWI.

Tagging your photos will make sure Google finds them for particular online search words. And, by the way, in order to reach Millennials you need to make sure to use Instagram.

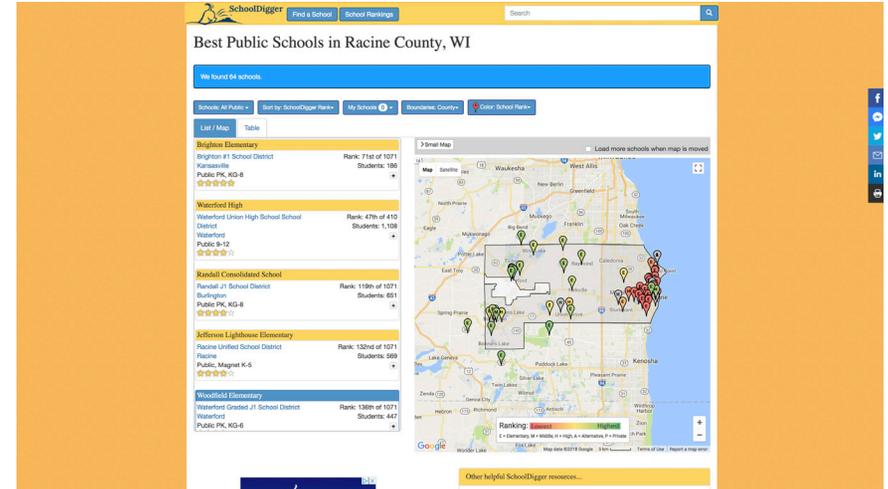
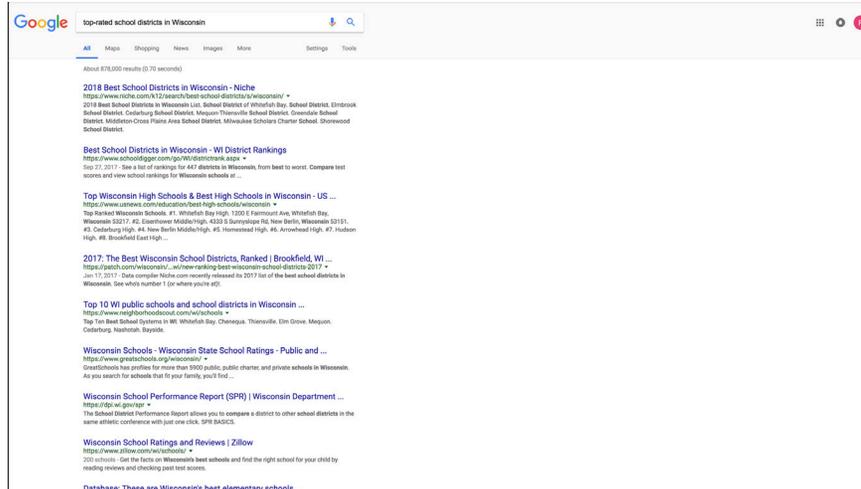
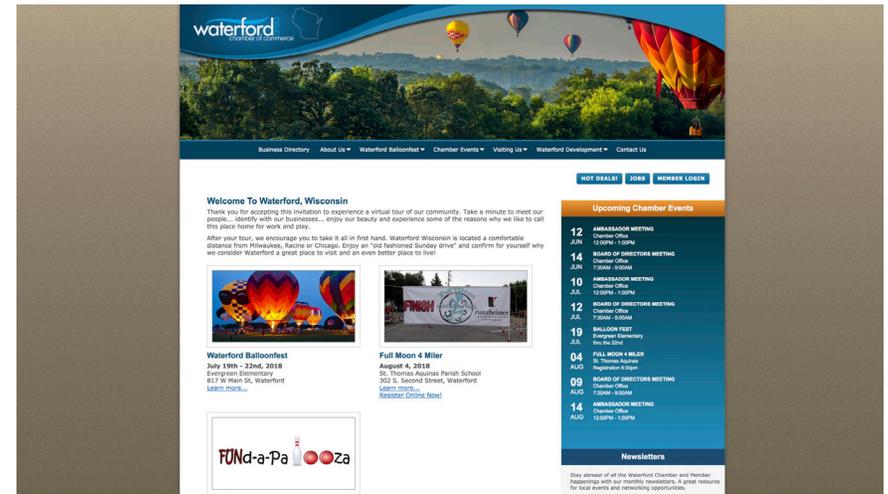


Here are a set of photos that came up from a Google search for Waterford (top left). We were particularly impressed by this panoramic view from Realtor.com and zoomed in for a closer look (top right).

We found the city website for Burlington (bottom left). It looked great.

We also found Burlington's Chamber of Commerce site (bottom right) that gave us some useful lists. Well done!

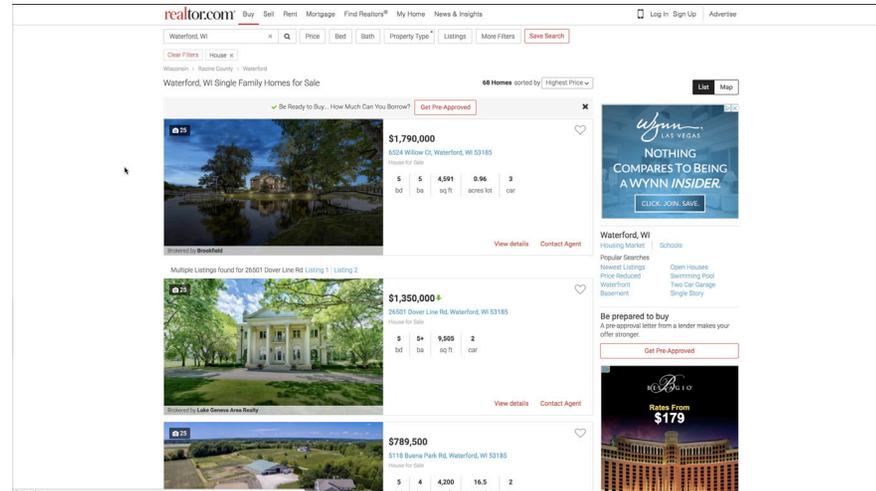
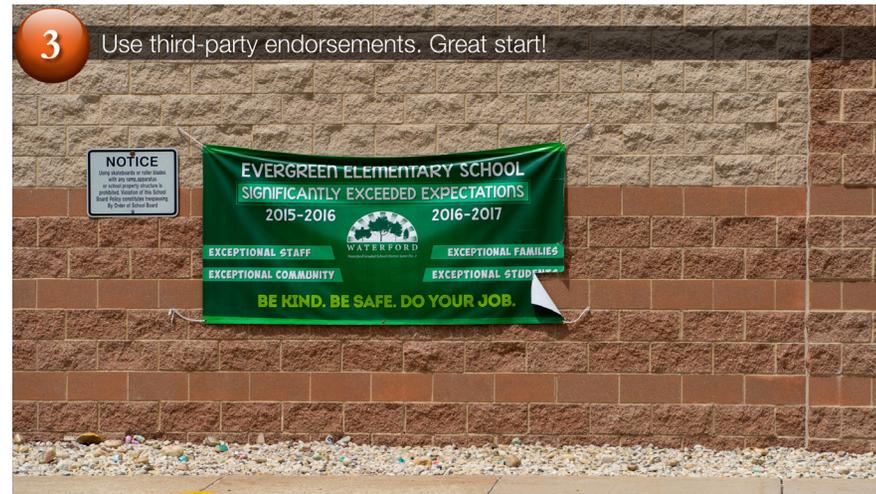
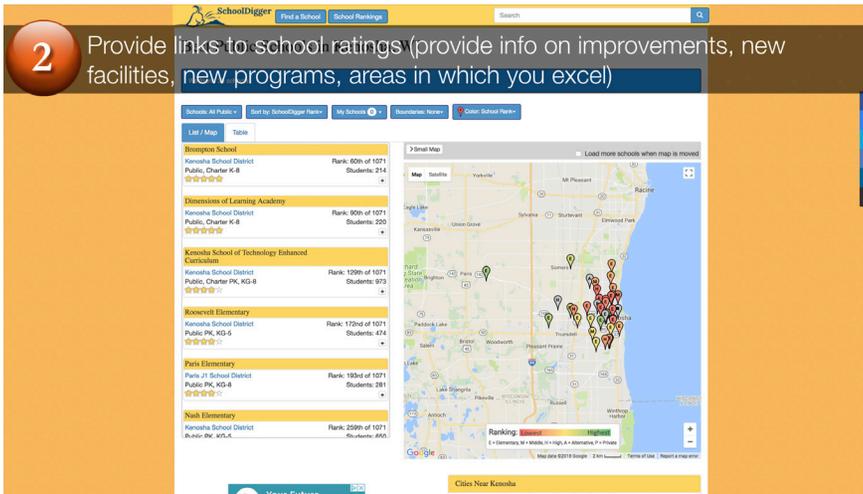
Potential visitors or residents will look at all of these kinds of sites to determine if your town is worth the trip.



We have several people who secret shopped your marketing materials online to get an idea of what we can expect from your communities. The virtual tour of your community on the Waterford Chamber site was great (top right). This page made us want to come back in July for the Balloon Fest.

Then, we did a search for schools online because this will be of particular interest to young families thinking of moving to your area. We started by typing in "Top rated school districts in Wisconsin." Knowing that schools will be of interest to potential residents is why it is so important to showcase your schools on your websites.

You can easily promote your schools on the west side of Highway 94, because they typically outperform those on the east side of Highway 94 (bottom right). That is why it is important to show where these highly rated schools are located.

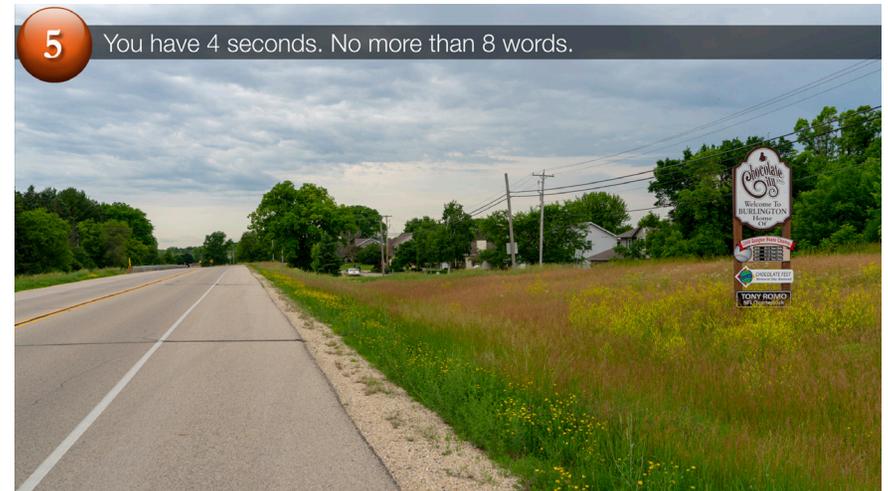
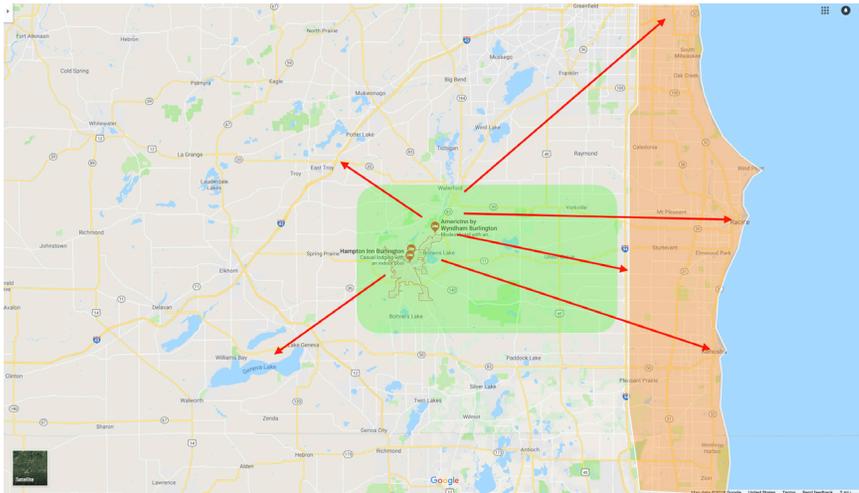


To highlight your school district, provide links to school ratings and info on improvements, facilities and new programs for your communities' children. Also, make sure to show diversity with your photos and statistics.

When we were at the elementary school in Waterford, it was fabulous to see this banner that showed that it had "significantly exceeded expectations" for a number of years (top right). If the above text in quotes is an actual third party endorsement, it would it would be even better to see that noted and attributed on the sign. We weren't sure if that was the case or if this was entirely a self endorsement. Either way, great sign!

The top motivating factors for families to move to your communities (in order of importance) are: job & business opportunities, schools (K-12), housing (quality neighborhoods, affordability, amenities), recreation/shopping/downtowns, and diversity (Millennials are the most diverse generation).

When trying to get a feel for an area like Waterford, people will go to sites like Realtor.com (bottom right) and just scroll through the pictures of listings to see what housing is like, in all price ranges.



Getting to Know You (in person)

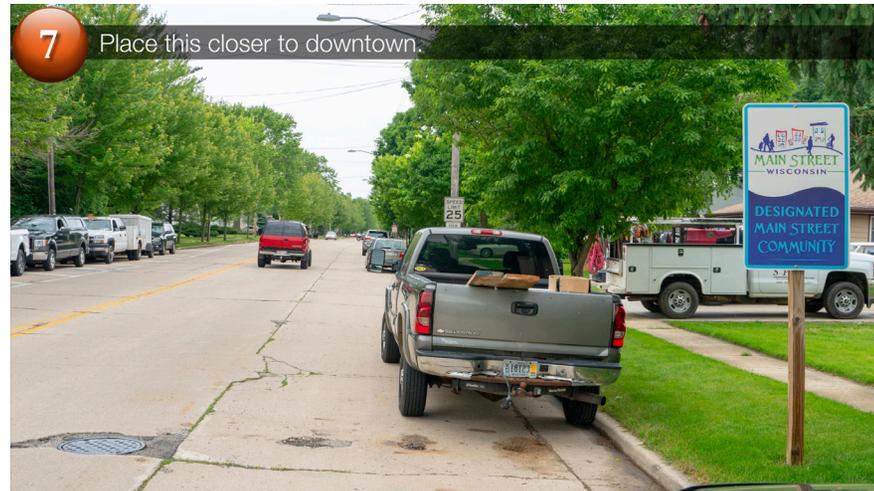
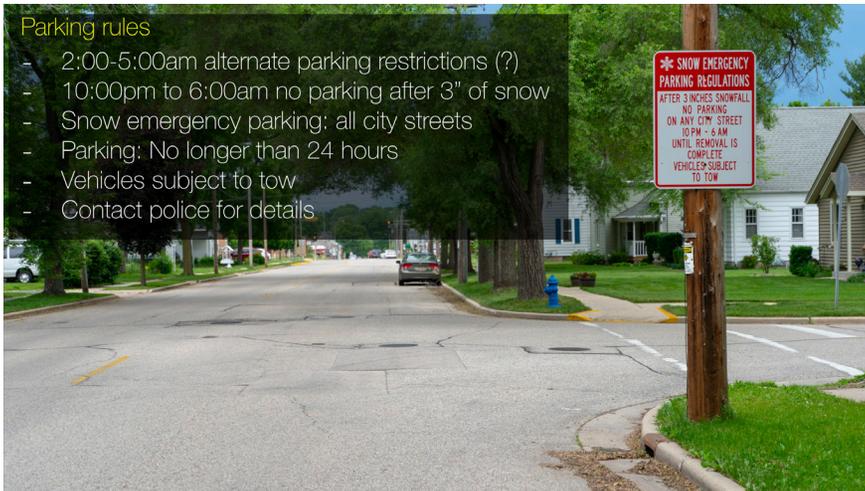
Those thinking of moving to your area will also look online at maps like this (top left). The orange shows areas with urban population densities. The arrows show that drives to and from Burlington and Waterford to surrounding metropolitan areas are a straight shot. We felt that one way you can market your area is 'country living' because of the lovely landscapes and more relaxed pace of life as you head west from Highway 94.

We did stay in Racine (top right), at the DoubleTree, in order to use it as our base camp while assessing both Burlington and Waterford.

5 You have 4 seconds. No more than 8 words.

Suggestion: Don't market accolades that are more than three years old. This sign includes the dates that Burlington's little league have been state champions (bottom left), but they are not recent. When you have these older accolades posted, people will think, "They used to be good."

When we saw the Chocolate City sign (bottom right), we couldn't wait to find it. But remember that drivers have no more than 4 seconds to read roadside signs like this. There's not enough time to read all this text. Suggestion: Reduce the amount of information on highway signs to no more than 8 words.

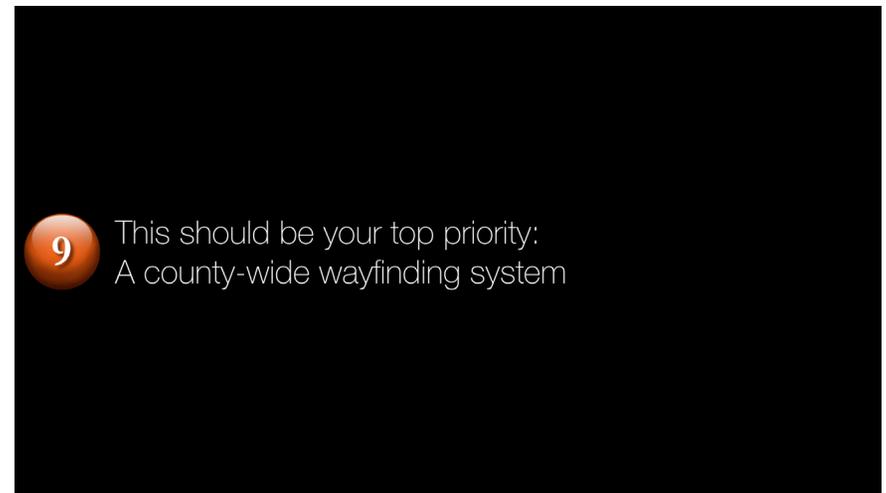
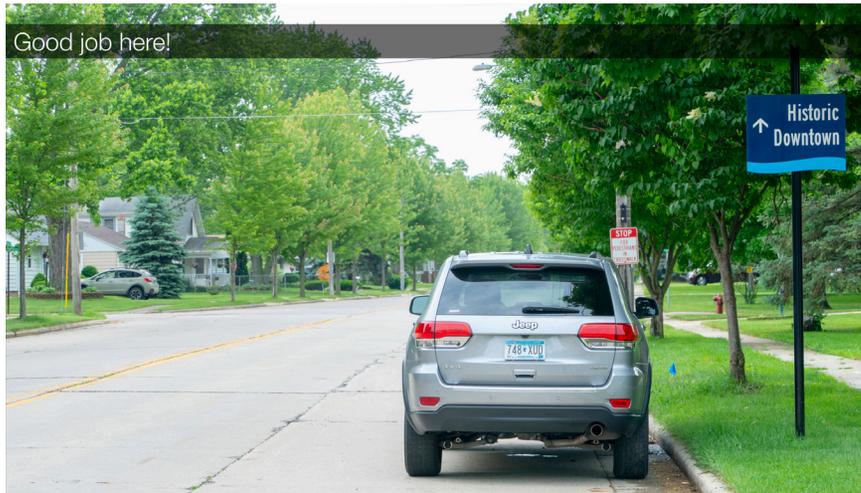


When entering Burlington, there is also a sign at the exit that gives people a full list of parking rules and regulations (top left). Suggestion: Put parking-related signs in parking areas, not at your gateways. There is no way drivers can read 40 words while taking this exit. The current sign is not a great welcome to the city either.

If that sign weren't enough, when entering town we were met with even more signs about rules and regulations (top right), including one with a red warning banner. The first two signs have 55 words, the welcome sign has 28 words, and the next sign is 24 words. To read these, drivers would have to stop their cars.

We had to stop at this sign (bottom left) and write down the parking regulations to make sure we stayed in compliance and didn't get a ticket. This is the only town we have seen rules like these winter parking restriction signs, and we work all over. This seems a little over the top, and would be better handled by sending everyone a mailer in October reminding them of winter parking restrictions.

Waterford had a very nice welcome sign (bottom right). Suggestion: Move this sign to a location closer to downtown instead of in this residential zone.



The sign to Historic Downtown in Waterford was easy to read and well done (top left). Burlington should make their signs more like these, and easier to read from a car, with larger lettering.

Suggestion: Move your “Stop for Pedestrians” sign (top right) closer to the actual crosswalks.

For Burlington, you need to start over with your wayfinding (bottom left). Suggestion: Make sure you are using a sans serif font and larger type for your wayfinding. If you want to keep these, you can move them down on the poles for pedestrians.

Wayfinding was a problem throughout the county. In fact, Racine was one of the counties where it was extremely difficult to find anything, of all the 1,500 assessments we have done over the years. At least we found some wayfinding here, even if it was hard to read.

Suggestion: Make creating a county-wide wayfinding system highest on your priority list. This includes: amenity signage; attractions & activities; boat launches & public access points; trail markers & access points; visitor information kiosks; pedestrian wayfinding; and pole banners.



Wayfinding is an investment, not an expense

- Plays a role in your branding efforts
- A major component in your marketing efforts
- Reinforces a positive experience
- Increases spending locally
- Educates visitors and locals about what you have and where it's located
- Builds community pride
- Is as much a science as an art

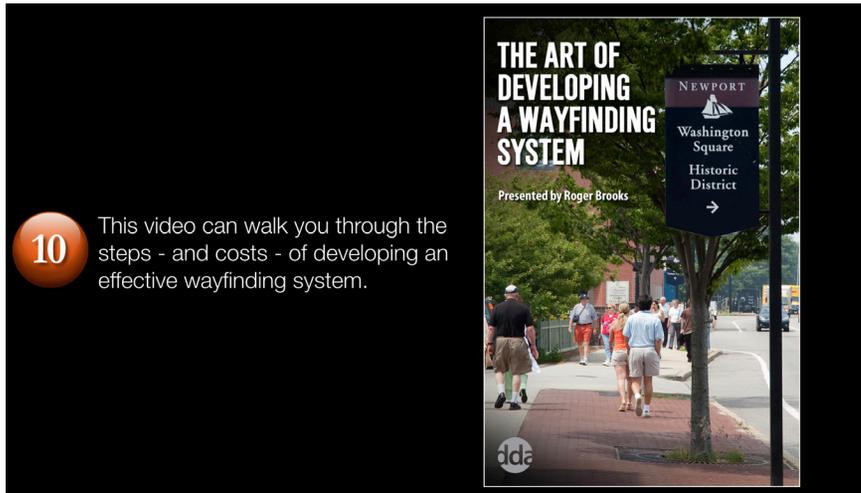
Your wayfinding should be decorative, easy to read, and comprehensive. This example of a good wayfinding sign is from Modesto, CA (top left), with letters increased one inch for every thirty feet of viewing distance. The letters on Burlington's wayfinding need to be about 4 times as big as they are now. Also, never use more than 5 items on a sign (bottom left).

The signage should be decorative to fit your ambiance and easy to read, such as these examples from Woodlands, TX (top right), and Appleton, WI (bottom left). These signs in Appleton have aqueous coatings, stainless steel hardware and are mounted on existing power poles.

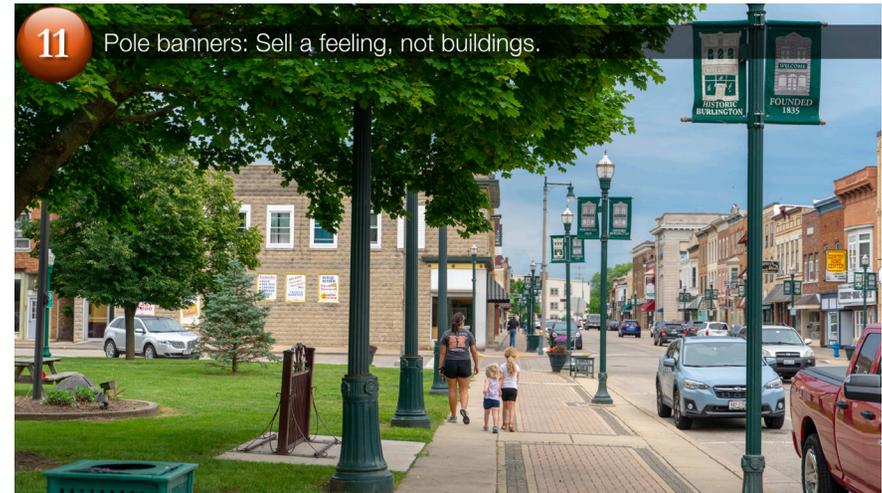
Modesto put up eighteen signs like these (top left), and their retail sales went up more than ten percent.

Wayfinding is an investment and not an expense (bottom right). Your previous signs may not have been designed by a company that specifically does wayfinding. Using a specific wayfinding maker is important to find.

The bottom line is that wayfinding will increase retail sales and services between 14% and 28%. Navigation systems are NOT a substitute for wayfinding. They only find things you already know exist.



10 This video can walk you through the steps - and costs - of developing an effective wayfinding system.



11 Pole banners: Sell a feeling, not buildings.



Suggestion: Take a look at our video about how to develop a new, effective wayfinding system (top left).

Suggestion: Don't use pictures of historic buildings on pole banners (top right). We are already downtown and can see the actual buildings. Suggestion: Instead, use these banners to sell the feeling you want to portray.

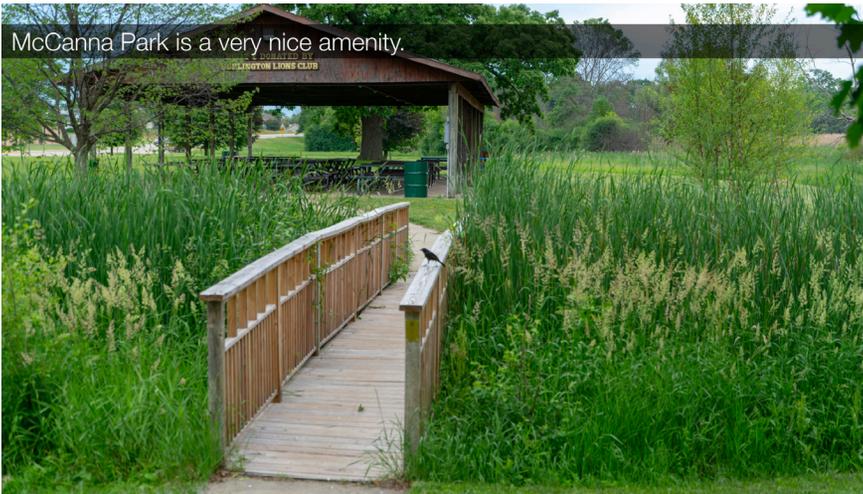
These are great examples of effective pole banners (bottom left). Appleton's pole banners promote the celebratory feeling of "showtime," and Allegheny's banners portray the ambiance of classic comfort and enjoyment. Both of these



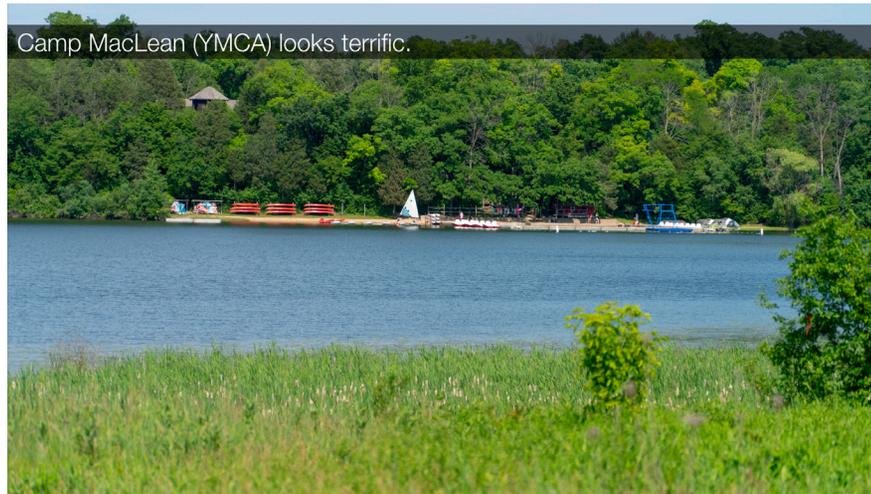
12 Eliminate this sign (did something go out of business?)

examples sell a feeling.

Suggestions: Once you have a wayfinding signage system, you don't need signs like this (bottom right). Take down this sign that is half blank. Your wayfinding signage should be coordinated and decorative.



McCanna Park is a very nice amenity.



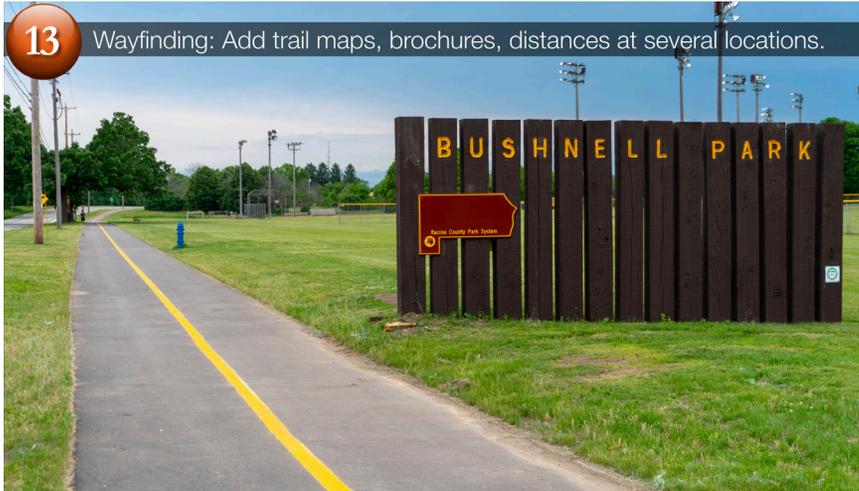
Camp MacLean (YMCA) looks terrific.



Exploring Burlington & Waterford

When we first came into Burlington we saw McCanna Park, which is a very nice amenity (top left). As we continued on our way, we turned and went up the street to see the Aurora Wellness Center and the YMCA across the lake (top right) which looks very nice. We also saw the great facilities at the Gateway Technical College (bottom left), as well as the Burlington High School (bottom right).

These are all the types of things that potential residents will be interested in, and we would give these all a thumbs up. We were impressed by what Burlington has to offer residents as far as recreation and education.

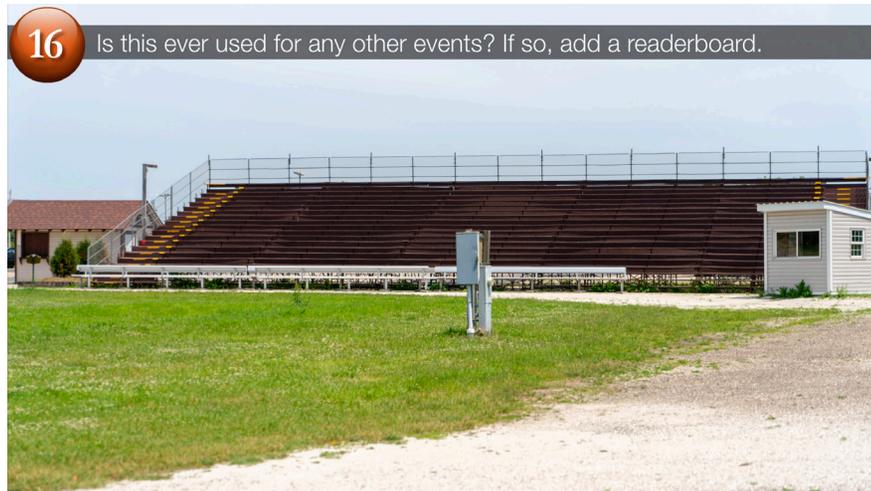


Suggestion: We loved the trail system at Bushnell Park (top left) but there needs to be more information here. Add trail maps, brochures and distances to the park's attractions. We couldn't find any kind of signage for the trail system.

This sign in Shawano (top right) is a good example of an effective trail sign, even though it is a little worn. Shawano's signage is good because it includes maps, lengths of trails, terrain, and types of trails. Plus, on the left of the sign, there is a brochure holder where you can pick up a trail map to take with you.

We were impressed that you have lighted sports fields (bottom left), which is great, especially for a rural area. This is a very nice facility.

Across from Bushnell Park, we saw this trail and bridge (bottom right), but there wasn't any information posted about it. Let people know where it goes, what the attractions along the way are, and the distances to each.



The only sign next to the trail bridge was this one for Chocolate City (top left), that listed your events. It gave information about the Memorial Day weekend festival, but we wondered what you did for the remaining 362 days of the year.

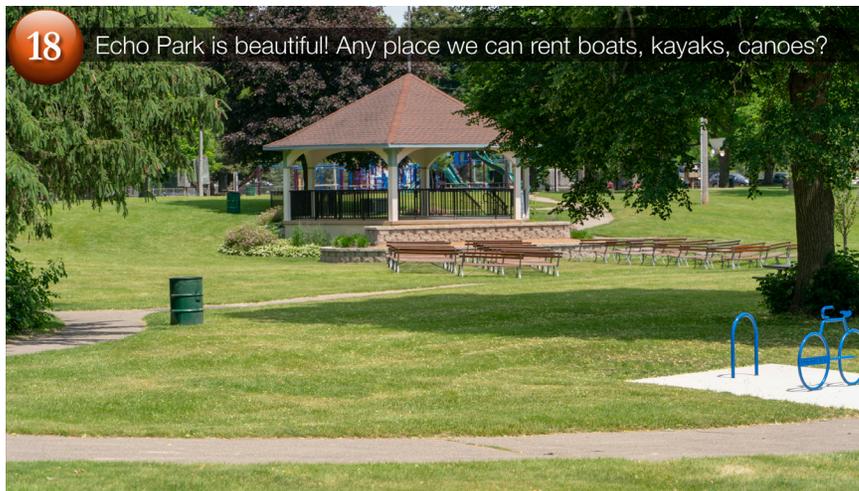
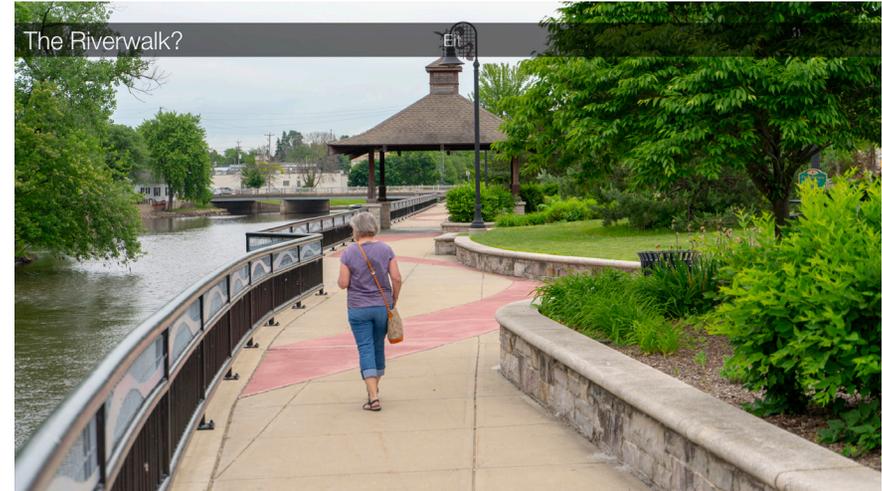
If you want to really own the Chocolate City brand, you would need to add additional chocolate related events and products (top right) to make this happen.

We saw this Chocolate Fest entrance (bottom left) but couldn't see that it is ever used for any other events. Suggestion: If there are other events held here, add a readerboard to let people know about them. Invite us back.

You could continue with the chocolate brand, even without Nestle there. Or, you may need to ask, "What's next?"

Chocolate may not be a reason anyone would move to Burlington or Waterford, but you could continue with this theme if you add much more to it. It would involve getting your retailers and businesses on board, making the chocolate theme pervasive throughout the town and holding more events. Burlington would need to have **at least** one superb chocolate shop.

Suggestion: If this field and bleacher area (bottom right) is ever used for events, add a readerboard. Invite people back.



To keep the Chocolate City brand, you are definitely going to need to do more than you are now. One weekend is not enough to own this brand.

Suggestion: Instead of listing only the Memorial Day weekend event on this sign (top left), consider listing your "Top Five Things to See and Do in Burlington," instead.

We loved the riverside trail in Burlington and wondered if there is any place to rent boats or rafts or go fishing? Suggestion: To monetize your tourism, it would be great if there were places to rent kayaks and boats in Burlington.

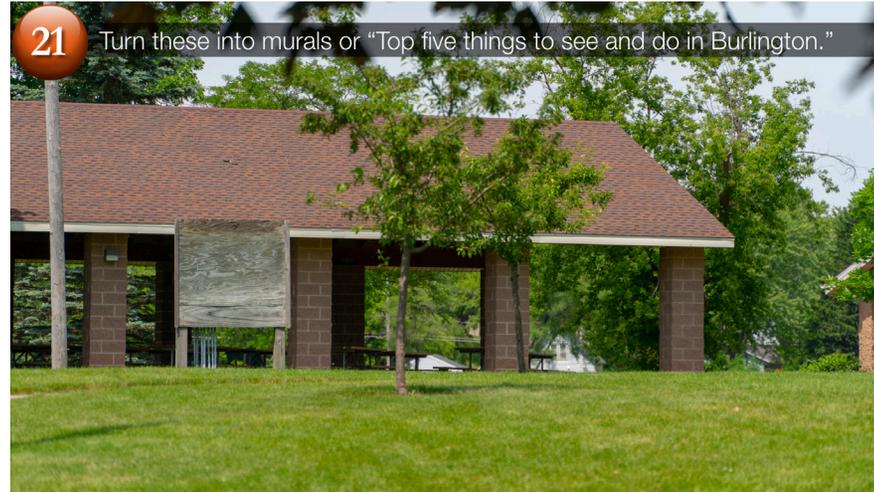
The Riverwalk (top right) is absolutely fantastic. Although we know that is what you call it now, we didn't see any signs to confirm that is what it is officially called.

Suggestion: Have vendors by the river renting fishing gear and boats (bottom right). Monetize this location.

Also, give people information. Let them know what kinds of fish they can catch. Add signs that tell people where they can get a fishing license and/or fishing gear.



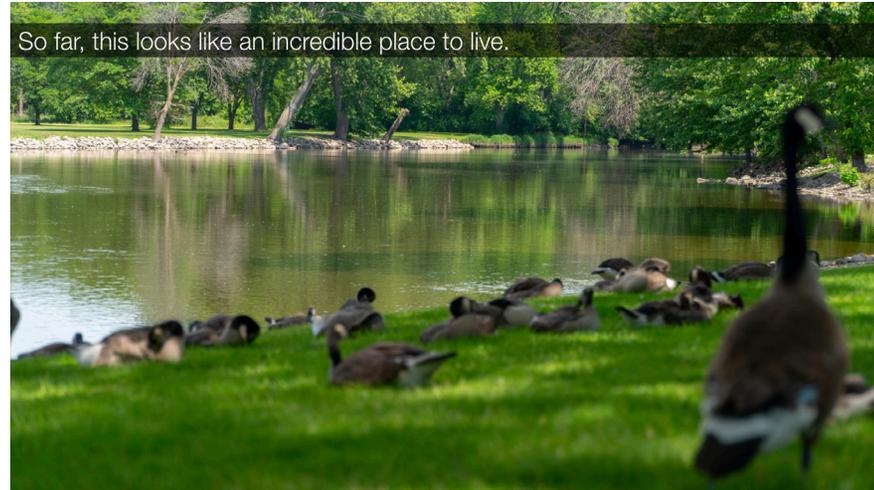
20 Open this up. Add warning signage, explain undertows.



21 Turn these into murals or "Top five things to see and do in Burlington."



22 Remove the lower structure, move the sign to pedestrian viewing height.



So far, this looks like an incredible place to live.

At Echo Park we saw this pier that was closed to the public (top left). This would be a great spot for people to view the lake. Suggestion: You could open it up with signs warning of any dangers, like undertow, which might be the reason it is now closed to the public.

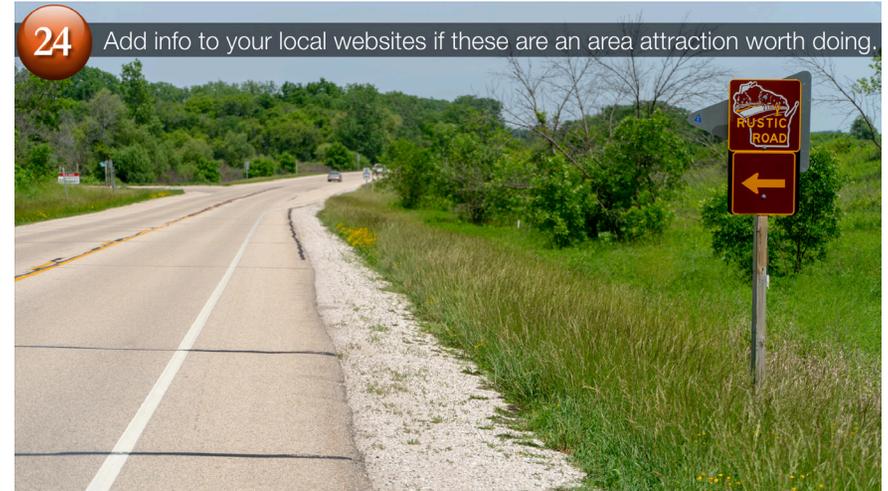
Suggestion: This square wood sign (top right), which may be the back of a power box, would be a good place to list the "Top five things to see and do in Burlington."

Suggestion: Change this sign to say Public Parking instead of Municipal Parking (bottom left), because the term Municipal Parking is confusing to visitors—we weren't sure if it was available to the public or reserved for municipal employees. Also, remove the empty wooden structure underneath, and lower the nicely done parking rules sign to a pedestrian level so that people can actually read it.

The Wehmhoff Jucker Park was lovely (bottom right). Amenities like this contribute to making this a beautiful area to live.



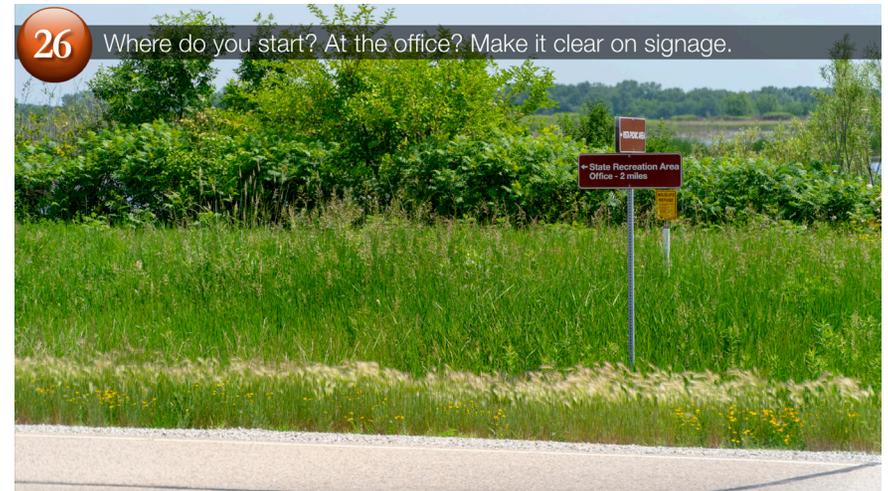
23 Why should we go down these roads? Number them, add info!



24 Add info to your local websites if these are an area attraction worth doing.



25 What is the top activity here? Why should we visit?



26 Where do you start? At the office? Make it clear on signage.

There are a number of brown signs for Rustic Roads (top left), but we couldn't find any information about why any of them are designated as rustic, or if there was anything special to see on these "rustic roads." We drove down a few of these roads, but we didn't see anything different than what we could find on your main roads.

Suggestion: If you want to promote these Rustic Roads, you might number them and add information on your web site about why they are a local attraction.

We wondered if there were any activities at the Richard Bong State Recreation Area (bottom left). Suggestion: Promote the top activity and let us know why we should visit. We also don't know what "Wisconsin's Largest Managed Prairie" means. Let us know if you can cross country ski here in the winter or if there is hiking. Promote activities here.

It was also unclear what the "State Recreation Area Office" sign meant (bottom right). Instead, let people know what the activity is at this prairie site. When we saw this sign we also didn't know if you had to start at the office or if you could turn down the road to the left. These are all things visitors will want to know.



27 The county should start replacing these with decorative signs.



28 9 or 18? Open to the public? Pro-shop? Restaurant? Instruction? Cart and club rentals? Cross country skiing in winter?



Aha! Here it is!



29 Boat rentals? Paddle boards? Kayaks? Canoes? Business opportunity?

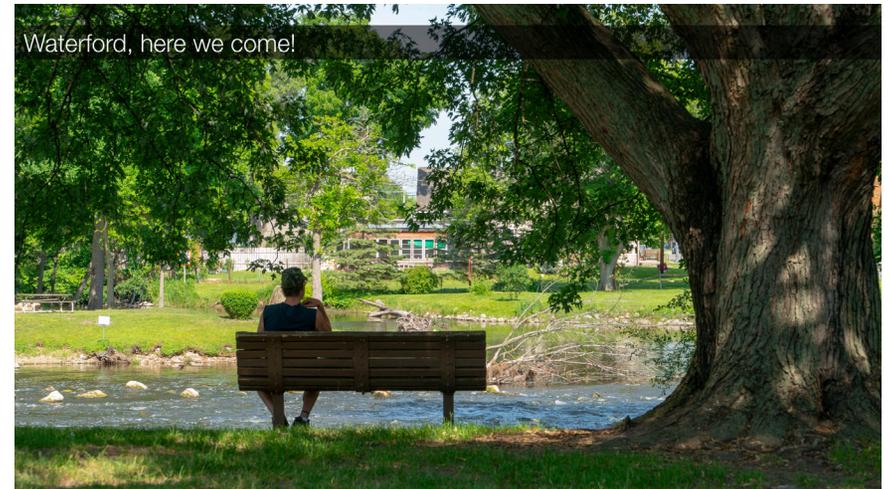
These big brown plank signs are used at the various parks (top left), and they have a shape of the county placed on them (which is not important to visitors). These signs look dated and aren't very attractive. Suggestion: Consider replacing these with more decorative signs. The sign just doesn't do Browns Lake Golf Course justice. It is a beautiful course.

When we arrived at the course there was no information posted about it (top right). Suggestion: Put up a sign at the golf course that states "We are open for public play," list a URL for tee times, let people know they can rent clubs and carts and that there is a snack bar. All you need here is a sign.

Visitors who arrive at the golf course and can't determine any of these things will say, "Next!," and move on.

After reading about the Aquaducks, we finally found where their shows are held (bottom left). Without wayfinding, even if people come to see these shows, they wouldn't know how to find them.

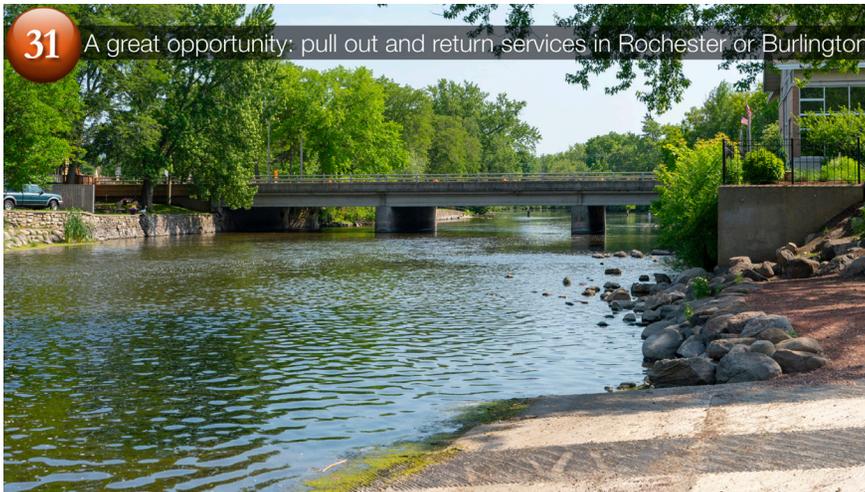
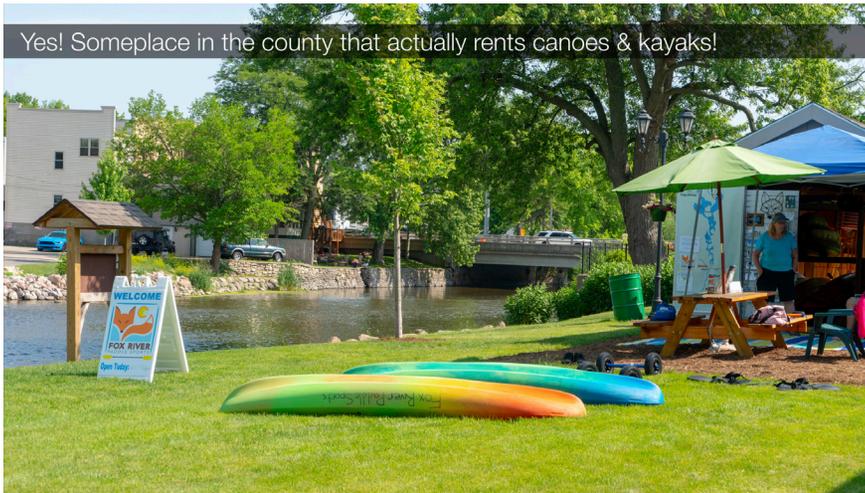
When we saw this mom and daughter stand-up paddle boarding (bottom right) we thought that a great business opportunity at the lake would be renting paddle boards, boats, kayaks and canoes. Monetize this location.



When we had supposedly found Petrie's Marina (top left) we drove on past a private residence to find the marina with a "no swimming" sign posted (top right) and nowhere to walk either. But there were no boat rentals. This is a missed opportunity. Is Petrie's still in operation? We were very confused.

There was a similar lack of information when we arrived at the airport (bottom left). They need a sign to tell visitors if they have hangars, a restaurant, charter flights, fuel, tie-downs or flight instruction. Without this information posted, you are turning away business and not giving people a reason to stay longer, spend money or move to Burlington.

Next, we arrived in Waterford! (bottom right)

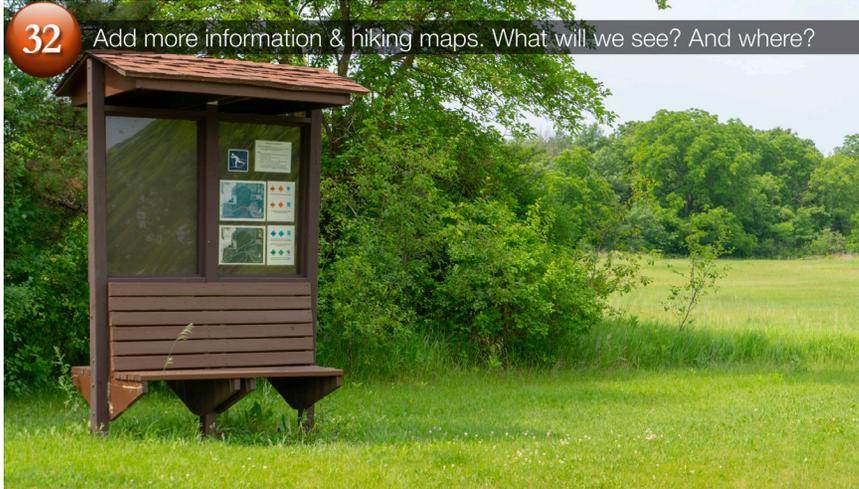


When we saw these canoes out on the grass in a park by Fox River (top left), we thought, “Yes! Finally a place in the county where you can rent canoes and kayaks!” This little place was great. They had canoe rentals, instruction and tours (and a sign that let you know these things). We couldn’t even find rentals like this in Racine.

We asked the guy working at this rental place if where he would recommend we kayak. He said that this area (top right) was not his favorite because it was used by motorized watercraft as well, that he preferred kayaking on the river instead. It would be perfect for people who want to kayak down the river for

a couple hours to Rochester or Burlington, if they were able to get a ride back to the shop. We would have been willing to pay more for a service like that, and because it wasn’t an option we didn’t kayak that day. Suggestion: Offer pull-out and return services. You can keep it simple by offering this at the same time every day at one location, maybe at 5:00 pm.

Huening Park is fabulous! We loved the photo op provided by these oversized chairs (bottom right). Suggestion: Add a sign with a hash tag here for Instagram postings. Maybe use one of these: #Waterford, #WaterfordWI, or #Waterfordwaterfront. That way, Waterford will be promoted.



32 Add more information & hiking maps. What will we see? And where?



33 Add more maps. Add more detail to the trail map: distances, etc.



34 Pro-shop? Restaurant? Cart & club rentals?



We also found the Wadewitz Nature Camp (top left). Suggestion: Use the left side of this kiosk (top left) to tell visitors what they will see, provide hiking maps, and let people know what else they should see while they are in Waterford. This can all be done with a sign inside this kiosk.

The sign that shows some lines for the trails (top right) needs to provide more information. Suggestion: Add more maps, make the trail maps more detailed, and provide distances for the various trails/sections of trails. This is an example of one of the little things that you can fix very inexpensively. Unfortunately this map is not very helpful.

We appreciated that the Rivermoor Golf Club sign (bottom left) added the word “Scenic” and that they let you know that it was an 18-hole course. But, again, there needs to be more information here.

Suggestion: This sign already has a blank space for this information, just have it amended similarly to this mocked-up example (bottom right). Even though it will take people more than 4 seconds to read this, they will have no problem stopping along the road at this spot to do so. People need to know if there are club and cart rentals, a pro shop, a restaurant, golf instruction, and if walk-ins are welcome.



35 Any bike maps? Website link? Provide information! X-country in winter?



36 This is really, really sad to see. Get rid of this! We almost left.

On the Saturday we visited Rivermoor, there was a golf tournament in progress. The ‘peanut gallery’ (top left) sitting on the outside deck were enjoying giving everyone on the course a bad time. It was a great course, and people there were having a lot of fun.

After we came across the Racine County Bicycle Trail (top right) we got online and couldn’t find anything about it. The sign did not say how long the trail was, where it went, or where you could find those details. Now we know it is named the Seven Waters Trail. Suggestion: Change the sign from the Racine County trail to the Seven Waters Trail. This is confusing for visitors.

Country Living at Its Finest

After we arrived at the Bear Den Zoo (bottom left) and saw this sign at the entrance (bottom right) with warnings from the state, we thought maybe we should have brought our attorney to review these notices. We had never seen this done at any other zoo! And, this sign screams at you in all caps! Suggestion: Get rid of this sign, and post a reduced version if it has to be there.



The zoo was quite fun. And they did a great job posting facts about the various animals (top left). We thought the petting area for the kids was great, letting them see country living at its finest.

People who are thinking of moving to Waterford will drive by your schools and decide whether they are of good quality or not just by their exterior. So we took a look at your school facilities just to see them from that perspective.

All of your schools look very nice.

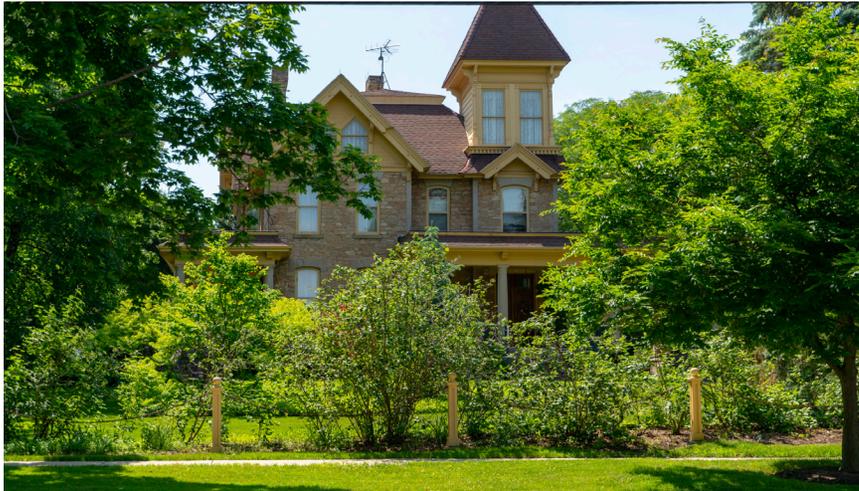


The Aurora Memorial Hospital in Burlington (top left) was impressive. All the facilities that prospective residents would look at are in great shape, making the community look like a very good place to live.

In both of these cities we thought it was great that you could live in a very nice housing sub-division and be right across the street from a hay field (top right). You really do have country living at its finest.

The gateway sign and the houses in Waterford Landing were spectacular. We drove around the neighborhood thinking that we would love to live in any of these houses (bottom left and right). Residents in Wisconsin and in your communities take very good care of their homes—they are immaculate.

All of these things give any visitors a very good impression of your community.



The historic homes were gorgeous and even the smaller homes had nicely kept lawns and fresh paint; they all reflect well on your community.

Fast Fact #1
Downtowns are critical to your success

The heart and soul of any community - besides its people - is its downtown.

If you don't hang out in your downtown, neither will visitors.

Fast Fact #1: Downtowns are critical to your success

Downtown should be Priority #1 for your communities. Your downtown should be the heart and soul of your community, and its health shows the health of the entire community. If people who live in Burlington and Waterford don't spend time in their downtowns, visitors won't either.

Fast Fact #2

Downtowns are back!

And in a big way.

Fast Fact #3

The future of downtowns

Downtowns are where we go after work and on weekends.



Fast Fact #4

In economic development, tourism, and community development there is absolutely, positively **NOTHING** that's more important than your downtown.

Fast Fact #2: Downtowns are back! In a BIG way.

You need to bring your downtowns to life. Malls are no longer succeeding, and people are wanting to spend time in a downtown setting, as long as it is vibrant, intimate, and has things to do and specialty shops to visit.

Fast Fact #3: The future of downtowns

Downtowns are where we go after work and on weekends. You need to be open during those times. Your businesses would be better off opening later in the day and staying open later, or taking a mid-day break to stay open late. We are moving to a more European standard, where people are shopping and dining later in the evening.

Fast Fact #4: In economic development, tourism, and community development there is absolutely NOTHING more important than your downtown. The future of downtowns is to be the place people spend their time after work and on weekends—their “Third Place.” The First Place is where we live—our homes. The Second Place is where we work. The Third Place is where we go to socialize and spend our leisure time. Ever since our cities started being built around the automobile, people have been missing their pedestrian-friendly downtowns and plazas, where they can gather, relax, and socialize. When downtowns are the heart of a shopping and dining district, they are monetized, and merchants and customers all benefit.

Fast Fact #5
 The business mix rules

Thinking that beautification and facade improvements will “fix” a downtown.
 It’s what’s **IN** the buildings that makes you a draw.

37
 Watch this video series to see why downtowns are important and how they are changing.



Fast Fact #5: The business mix rules

Beautification and facade improvements will not “fix” a downtown. It’s what’s IN the buildings that makes you a draw. The business mix is the most important factor in a successful downtown.

Suggestion: Watch our video series The Resurgence of Downtowns (top right). These videos will show you how to help make your downtowns more successful for businesses and become more enjoyable places for residents and visitors to spend their time and money.



Burlington has some truly amazing architecture (bottom right). It was sad to hear that this particular restaurant is now out of business, because the building is so iconic.

This gateway into downtown Burlington (bottom left) is gorgeous.



38 Signs should always be perpendicular to traffic.



39 If you redo the signs, "Public parking."



40 Signs like this should be lower, and on a post, not so "regulatory."



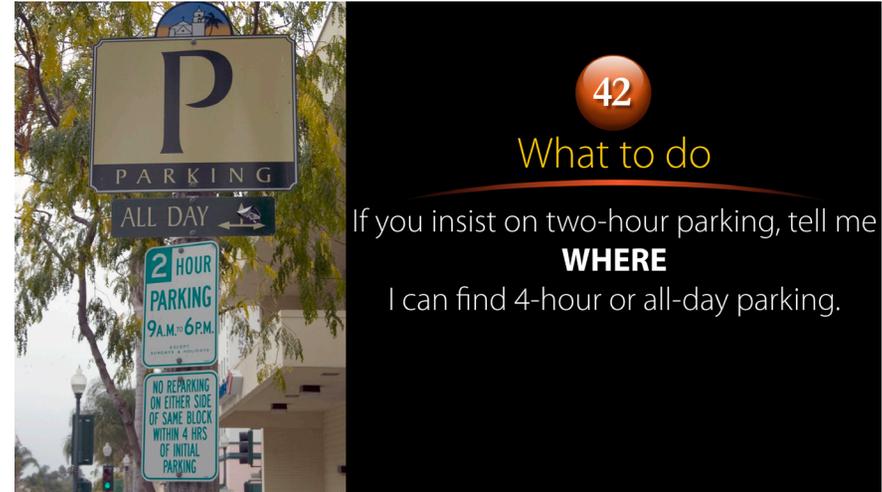
41 Once again, 4' lower, on a small post. Combine the signs. Say "welcome."

Suggestion: Signs should always be placed perpendicular to traffic. The green sign in this photo for parking (top left) is totally unreadable to people driving down the street. It needs to be turned sideways and be double sided.

Once again, we would suggest changing this sign from "Municipal Parking" to Public Parking (top right). Also, you may want to place this sign actually in the parking lot, in which case it will be okay as a one sided sign.

Suggestion: Signs with parking rules like this one (bottom left) should be lowered to pedestrian eye level, which is four feet or lower (not eight feet high). Signs like this are more effective and friendly if they are decorative instead of so "regulatory."

This photo shows how far above eye level some signs are placed (bottom right). Suggestion: Lower these signs as well to four feet or lower. Put them on a shorter post and make sure to say "Welcome" first.



The Parking Dilemma

Two-hour parking is a good way to kill a downtown (top left). When people are worried that their parking is about to expire they spend less time and less money, which is not what you want them to do in your downtown. Two-hour parking dramatically reduces spending and repeat visits.

If people want to spend time shopping and have a bite to eat, that will take more than two hours. When people accidentally let their parking expire and receive a ticket, they will write your town off even though they are at fault.

Suggestion: If you insist on two-hour parking, you need to tell visitors where they can find four-hour parking or all-day parking (top right).

Operating Hours

Downtown Burlington has some great historic attractions. It is perfect that the cabin (bottom left) clearly posts their open hours.

And these small signs that tell you more about the plants in the bed (bottom right) were very nicely done. Great job!



The Burlington History Museum also has clearly posted open hours, just to the left of the door (top left).

We weren't sure when the Top Museum was open (top right). It also contains the Logic Puzzle Museum, which has its own hours (bottom left).

Then, there is the Chocolate Museum (bottom right) which has its own different set of operating hours which unfortunately don't coincide with these other attractions. The Chocolate Museum was open while we were there, so we were able to enjoy it, and it is fun, although small.

When is a good time to visit?

Monday - Friday
9:00 - 5:00 Chocolate Museum

Thursday
3:00 - 7:00 The cabin

Saturday
10:30 - 12:00 Logic Puzzle Museum (call ahead)
10:00 - 2:00 Chocolate Museum
1:00 - 4:00 Cabin
1:30 - 3:00 Logic Puzzle Museum (call ahead)
2:00 - 4:30 Spinning Top Museum (call ahead)

Sunday
1:00 - 4:00 Burlington History Museum
2:00 - 4:30 Spinning Top Museum (call ahead)

Saturday
10:00-10:20 Chocolate Museum
10:30-12:00 Logic Puzzle Museum
12:10-1:10 Lunch
1:20-1:50 The cabin
2:00-3:00 Spinning Top Museum
3:00-5:00 Visiting shops
Sorry, can't visit the History Museum

May, June, Nov., Dec. - Saturday 11:00-4:00 Sunday 12:00-4:00
July & August - Friday 12:00-5:00 Sat. 10:00-5:00 Sunday 12:00-5:00
Sept. & Oct. - Wed., Thurs., Fri. 12:00-5:00 Sat. 10-5 Sun. 12-5



We had to do some calculations to figure out the best time to come visit Burlington (top left) based on when attractions are open. Unfortunately, all places noted with "(call ahead)" require appointments, which most visitors won't do.

We did come up with a plan for Saturday in which we could visit most attractions, except for the History Museum because they are not open on Saturdays. We knew that we would have to arrive on time to places where we had appointments, and this schedule does not allow for any breaks.

Then we checked the open hours for the AppelTreow winery (top right). It is impossible to see Burlington's attractions on the same day, because all the



open hours are on various different days.

Suggestion: Orchestrate operating hours among all your attractions. Perhaps everyone could have open hours on Saturday 10:00 am to 4:00 pm? Right now, you make it almost impossible for anyone to truly enjoy the history and the culture you have in Burlington. The same goes for your businesses.

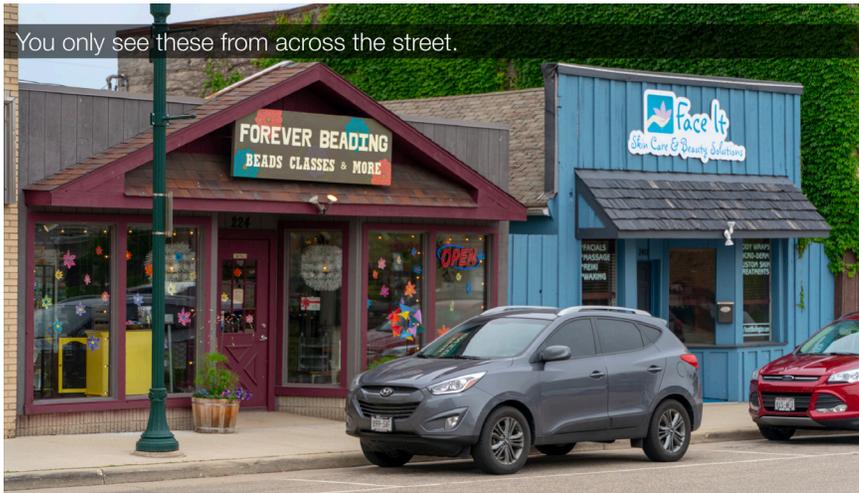
This downtown park is beautiful (bottom right). Now we know that you hold a farmer's market here every Thursday afternoon, but there is no information about it posted in the park. Suggestion: Add a readerboard to let people know when the farmers market occurs, and invite us back.



Suggestion: Post a Burlington calendar of events for the whole year in this kiosk (top left). You could list events by month. A rule for postings in a window, which also applies to this kiosk, is that when you have more than four posters, people tend to ignore them all.

If you are on the sidewalk here (top right and bottom left), you can't tell what shops are in these buildings. Walking down the sidewalk or driving by, it's impossible to determine what stores are there and if they are open, or what they sell (except for 'FOOD'). Blade signs would solve this problem. Even the couple sandwich boards are not viewable from the sidewalk or street.

The storefront sign of the fabulous shop Allison Wonderland (bottom right) is only readable if you are across the street. Adding a small blade sign under the facade extension would help a lot.



You only see these from across the street.



In downtown Waterford



Both of these businesses: Great job!

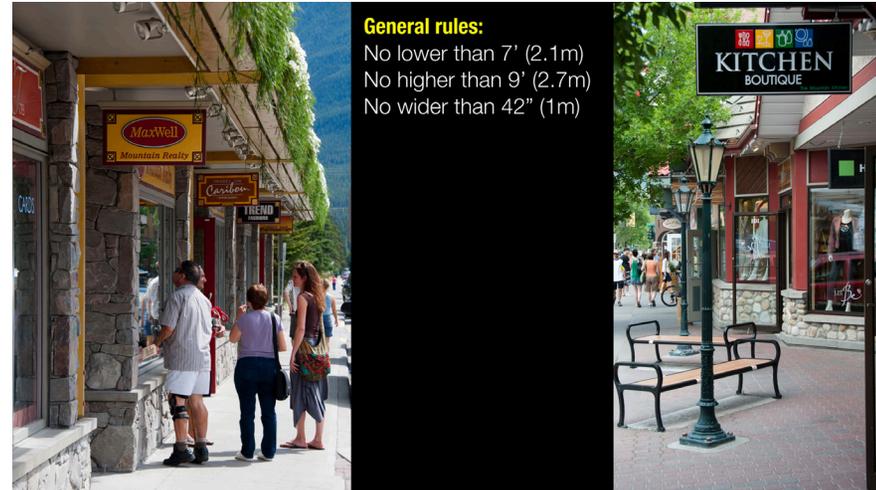
The same goes for Forever Beading (top left); their sign is only readable from across the street.

Downtown Waterford also needs blade signs. On this street (top right), if you are walking down the sidewalk, the only store you know is coming up is the Rendezvous Jewelers because they have a blade sign.

46

Create a blade-sign buying co-op

Suggestion: We would love to see your merchants come together and create a blade sign co-op to get them installed for everyone. Often a sign maker will give a discount if you are having a number of signs created at the same time.



These signs in Leavenworth, WA (top left) are excellent examples of effective blade signs for: chocolate, collectables, trains, and a restaurant. It's easy to see what kind of stores these are.

Nantucket, Massachusetts (top right) also uses very good blade signs.

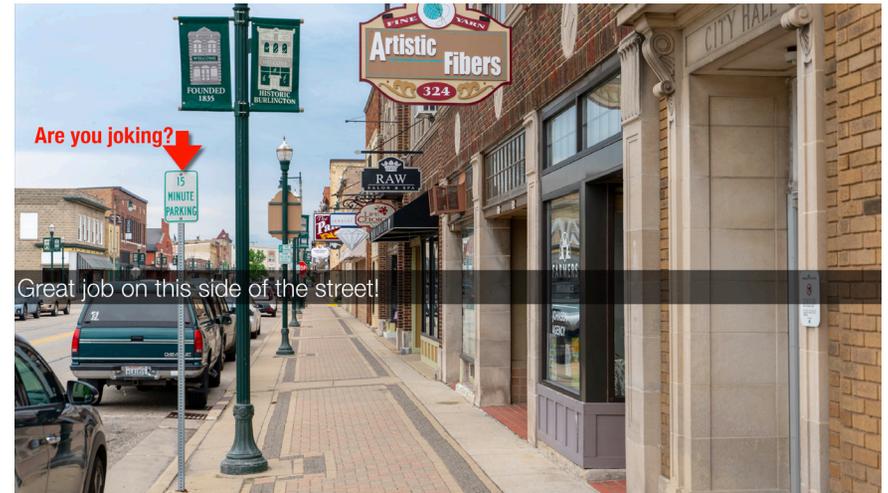
Here are some blade signs in Carmel, California (bottom left). Most successful downtowns have blade signs.

They should be consistent height and size (general size rules, bottom right), and they should be decorative. They should also promote what it is you're selling first, before the name of the store. They don't have to be cookie-cutter, but the best towns have blade signs.

All shops in Canmore, Alberta, use blade signs (bottom right). They make it easy to see what stores are available, and they entice you to continue down the street with the promise of more interesting shops.



Confusing: Taco shop or CPA? Or lunch while your taxes are prepared?



Are you joking?

Great job on this side of the street!



47 Always promote the lure before the name of the shop.



48 Bridal shop & women's fashions? If so, say that on the signage.

When we came across this store (top left) the combination of a restaurant sign and a sign above the awning for an accountant left us confused about what kind of shop this was (top left).

This side street does a good job with using blade signs (top right). Artistic Fibers should add 'fine yarn' to their sign in bigger letters to let people know what they are selling. Always promote what you are selling (the lure) before the name of the store, because that is what will pull people in. However, change the 15-minute parking spot to a longer time limit.

We weren't sure what the Mercantile sold when we walked by (bottom left and right). There was a bridal dress in a couple of the street floor windows, and the 2nd floor windows displayed women's fashions. However, the word 'mercantile' would generally mean they sell all kinds of goods.

When we walked in it didn't seem like they sold anything on the ground floor, which was also confusing. Now that we know it is a bridal and women's clothing store, having the word 'mercantile' on the front is doing this store a disservice. We were told that it is also an event venue, but no one would be able to know that without signage. Change the sign here. Make it obvious.



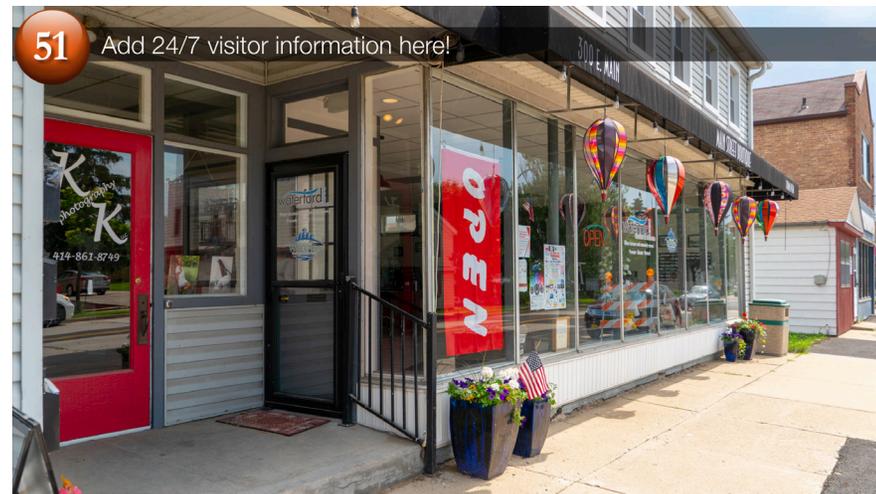
Retirement home for veterans? Veterans club?



49 We could not find a boutique here. If closed, take down the open sign.



50 We love these! Where can we get some? Sell them locally!



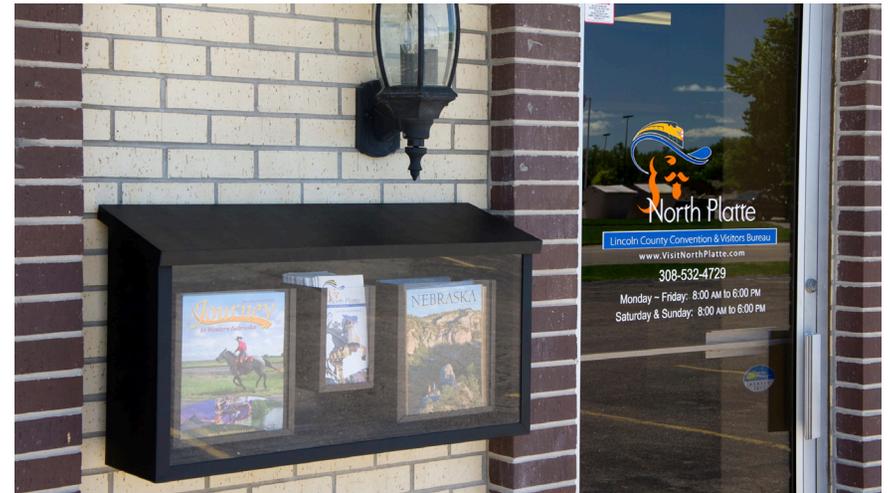
51 Add 24/7 visitor information here!

The Veterans Terrace is a beautiful building, but we had no idea what it was (top left). We assumed it was retirement living and didn't realize at first that it is a beautiful venue for events.

We tried to visit the Main Street Boutique on Saturday, and even though it had a huge OPEN sign in the window (top and bottom right), it appears to be shut down. The balloons they had hanging under the awning were lovely, so it is good to know that the flower shop in Waterford has these for sale. Suggestion: Add a sign in the window that says, "If you like the balloons, go one shop down to the flower shop."

Apparently the Chamber of Commerce is also in this building (bottom right). Suggestion: Add a sign that says, "24/7 Visitor Information here!"

The Bruce Peninsula



Great job at the Burlington Chamber of Commerce.



FAST FACT

Curb appeal can account for up to **70% of first-time sales** at restaurants, golf courses, wineries, retail shops and lodging facilities.

We could find no printed visitor information for Waterford. We found out that there is a little brochure for Waterford in Village Hall, but it is not accessible on the weekend, because the Village Hall is closed.

Suggestion: Add 24/7 visitor information with an inexpensive holder like this one in the Bruce Peninsula, Ontario (top left) in an outdoor covered area, or in a weather-proof brochure holder at your Chamber office. Visitors don't just travel during business hours, so it's important to have brochures and information available around the clock.

Another option is this anodized aluminum holder for multiple brochures in North Platte, Nebraska (top right). You could use this for the state guide, the county guide and your city guide. North Platte had this custom made for a few hundred dollars. Place visitor information all around town—make it easy for your visitors to learn what you have to offer.

Curb appeal can account for up to 70% of first-time sales at restaurants, golf courses, wineries, retail shops and lodging facilities.



52

General rule: No more than four posters in windows. Three or less is best.



53

Great job; Extend window displays to exterior space. No to clothes racks.



Fantastic job here! Blade signs, not as much need for sandwich boards.

This store front in Burlington is gorgeous (top left)! People gravitate towards these cheerful little displays.

Suggestion: As a general rule, have no more than three or four flyers or posters in store windows (top right). Otherwise, people will disregard them all. They look cluttered and are just too much for people to focus on.

Outdoor decorative displays of merchandise should be similar to what you would do as a window display. It shouldn't be clothes racks or tables piled with stuff.

Great job putting a window display in an exterior space here (bottom left). Except for the clothes racks. Suggestion: You would never put a clothes rack in your window, so don't put it outside either. The mannequins look great. Their display tells visitors that they are open for business.

Wonderful job of putting out flower pots and a small table with chairs here (bottom right). These types of displays add life, color, and say, "Welcome".



54 Would love to see tables, chairs, umbrellas here as well.



55 Add pots every 3' all the way around the building. Use the readerboard!

The picnic tables are a good start, but pretty uninviting looking, overall.

Adrian's Frozen Custard shop in Burlington (top left) is a busy place, and having tables and chairs out front only draws more people to stop by when they see others enjoying custard here. We loved their colorful chairs and flower pots.

Suggestion: Adrian's can add some tables, chairs and umbrellas to their space in the back (top right), and draw even more people. We'd love to see you use this space.

In contrast, Waterford's ice cream shop (bottom left and right) was not as inviting, and it didn't look like it was very busy. We weren't even sure it was open.

Suggestion: Add flower pots all the way around the building, and add specials to the readerboard. Even though they had a couple benches in front, they were just in front of parking spaces in a space without any curb appeal. This building is very cute, but it loses a lot of appeal because there are no flowers. The one picnic table just isn't enough. Add tables and chairs, and LOTS of flower pots.



This little coffee shop (top left and right) does a great job of curb appeal with their striped awning and colorful yellow chairs out front. When you walk in, you can tell that this is where people like to hang out.

This is the type of exterior display that works (bottom left). The open sign is easy to see, and they extend window displays to exterior spaces. Besides promoting what you sell, this adds beautification and makes your shop welcoming. This shop owner sets up this display of their decorative merchandise every morning and takes it back down every evening.

Restaurants should display their menus in an attractive setting, like this one in Banff, Alberta (bottom right). This entices hungry visitors inside.



Shops in Canmore, Alberta (top left) make creative displays outside to attract shoppers. This shop owner sets up a beautiful display every morning, and she says that it saved her business by attracting more customers.

When you have some stores that are closed, this kind of display tells us that a shop is definitely open. Like these great displays (top right), also in Canmore. We love the bicycles.

Bright green pots add to the beautification at this shop in Luverne, MN (bottom left). Something like this is not that expensive to accomplish. A little table and chairs make a place seem welcoming. This display (bottom right) is fantastic.



The ingredients of outstanding curb appeal include:

- Extensions of window displays to exterior spaces
- Blade signs
- Benches & beautification: pots, hanging baskets, etc.
- Facade appeal
- Window displays
- Sidewalk dining & umbrellas

Merchants should be able to use about 24 to 30 inches of the sidewalk against the building facade for benches, displays, and pots. If there's a city ordinance preventing the storefront space, it needs to be changed.

Neenah, Wisconsin did a downtown makeover (before: top left, and after: top right). Retail sales in the block with the beautification increased by 35% of the sales in the non-beautified street. Merchants should be responsible for beautification at the building facades, and the city is responsible for beautification curbside.

Beautification is a great investment, and one way to help merchants make it more affordable is to organize a buying co-op. You could implement a beautification program similar to that of Fredericksburg, Texas (bottom left and right). The merchants pooled their funds and purchased a large supply of pots at the end of the season at a discount. They distributed the pots, and each merchant filled them with plants of their choice, usually evergreens.



57 Plan on 20 benches in three blocks, each flanked with pots.



58 ALL benches should be against the facade, flanked with pots/planters.



This is in Port Elgin, Ontario, December. No excuses!

Think benches! Suggestion: Add 20 benches in three blocks and flank them with pots (top right and left).

Since women account for 80% of all consumer spending, make sure downtown and the shops there appeal to women: with beautification, safety, well-lit at night, and with places to relax, especially for their partners. Benches are important! Benches should always be at the building facade, facing out, flanked by pots on either side.

Suggestion: This flower pot and the bench on the corner by Zumpano's (bottom left) should be moved to the restaurant's facade. Move these against the building to give Zumpano's curb appeal. No one likes to sit on a bench next to traffic. The city has done a great job adding the flower pots at the street side, but the merchants need to add their own curb appeal as well.

Even with harsh winters, you can have pots are filled with evergreen shrubs and boughs (bottom right)—then in the warmer months you can plant flowers. Plus, you can stick colorful pinwheels, ribbons or bows into the pots for added interest.



This is the little town of Erin, Ontario (top left and right), during the winter. They've used evergreen boughs, ribbons and colorful branches in their decorative pots for the holiday season. These pots look great, even though they may have to shovel snow around them some days of the year. There is no excuse not to have curb appeal that will pull customers in your door.

Beautification is so important because 70% of first time sales comes from curb appeal. The city is doing a good job beautifying downtown. Some of the merchants do a fine job, most don't.

These pots are creatively decorated to look like women's dresses (bottom right)—very appropriate for a women's clothing store!

Have you ever said, "That looks like a nice place to eat"? That's the power of curb appeal.



When we see rows of shops like this with just two tiny pots out front (top left), it is just not enough. Suggestion: Add blade signs and four benches at the building facade flanked with pots on this street.

Forever Beading has some wonderful pots at their entry (top right). And they did a great job even adding a colorful flag to one of the pots. But wouldn't it be great if they added a few more pots for a wow factor?

The Welders Supply Company (bottom left) was doing even better than most of your retailers, with their row of flower pots at the facade. Fantastic job!

The Floral Shoppe (bottom right) is painted a colorful yellow, they have an eye-catching facade with their bold awning and fun gardens all around the corner of the building. Painting a building something other than brown or grey is another way to add to its curb appeal. Great job!



60 Is this still an operating business? If so, bring it to life! ANYTHING!

After we first saw this cafe (top left) in Burlington we made a special trip back out from Racine just to eat here. The owner does a fabulous job of adding curb appeal. She had all these little tables with chairs and umbrellas out front. And the seating extends around the side of the cafe (top right) in addition to a bench and flower pots.

This shop (bottom left) also had fabulous curb appeal. It may not be as easy for Waterford because so much of their town is under construction, and it does take some effort to create these beautiful displays.

We thought that the business occupying this plain building (bottom right) must have gone out of business. There is nothing about this storefront that tells visitors that it is operating. Suggestion: Add beautification to the facade, give it some life—some pots and a bench, as well as a decorative blade sign.



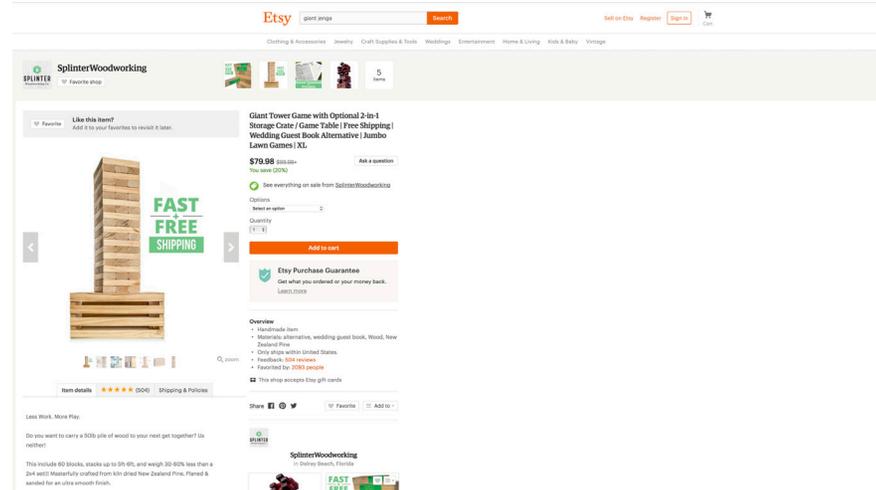
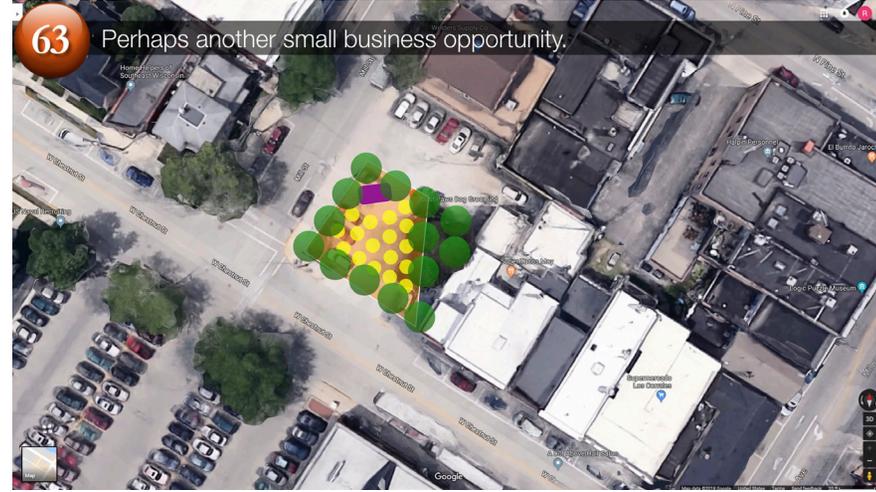
After taking the bridge over the river, we came to this street that has no blade signs or beautification (top left). There is nothing about this street that will encourage visitors to stop. It looks very stark.

We loved 'The Loop' (top right and bottom left) in Burlington with its gorgeous shops and wide sidewalks. Suggestion: Turn this area into Burlington's signature showpiece.

Suggestion: Turn 'The Loop' into a pedestrian-only plaza after 10:00 am each morning (bottom right). Take out the asphalt here and put in paver stones. You

can even add bollards at either end that can be put down each morning to allow delivery access, or emergency access when needed. Add street trees (the green dots) to either side, that you can light up in the winter. Then add tables with Catalina umbrellas (yellow dots) and vendor booths (white squares).

People thrive in pedestrian-friendly, intimate downtowns. Seventy percent of Millennials do not even have a drivers license. The average age for Millennials to get a drivers license is in their 20s, which is one reason American downtowns are moving to the European model of having a central pedestrian gathering place.



Suggestion: Create a downtown plaza in Burlington. Another option for a plaza space (besides, or in addition to, The Loop) would be the lot in front of Just Paws (top left). You could line this square with trees, add tables with umbrellas and a small stage on one end (top right).

A pedestrian-only plaza area needs to be programmed with activities year-round, so there is always something going on. Plazas MUST be programmed, and they should always be commerce-driven, meaning they should be a place for vendors, performers, art shows, concerts, restaurants, food trucks, exhibitions, etc. They are “activity spaces” (bottom left).

When the vendor booths are not in place, your plaza can include musicians, giant chess boards and pieces, and activities like ping pong. You can even get some giant Jenga (bottom right) kits that are about \$80. each. Just make sure the space is activated.



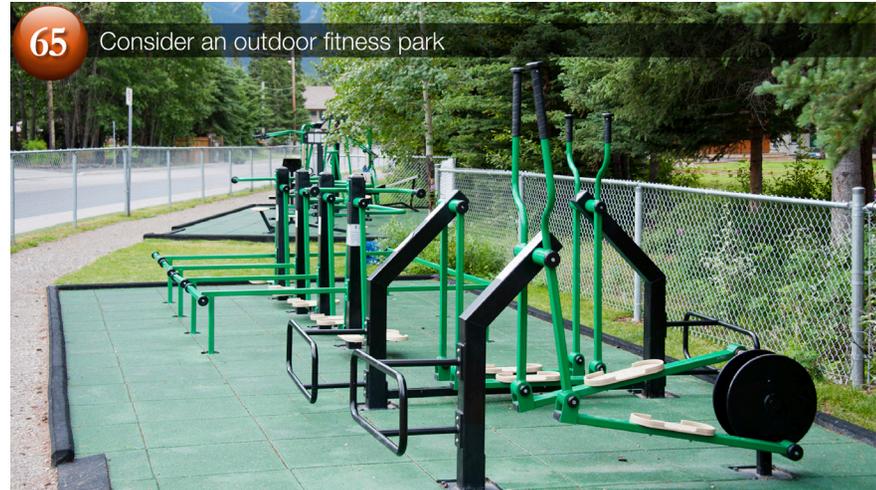
There are so many different options for activities for a plaza space. You could add some more permanent type of chess tables (top left) like they do in Asheville, NC, or foosball, checkers (top right), and bocci ball (bottom left).

With activities in the plaza, you activate the shops on the perimeter of this space. The plaza should be ringed with eateries and specialty shops.

Your plaza space can also host food trucks. And, you could invite a vendor to put up a climbing wall (bottom right) where they might charge people a small fee to climb the wall.



ImaginationPlayground.com
105 piece set: \$4,975
Storage cart: \$1,200
Lid for cart: \$600



65 Consider an outdoor fitness park

Wouldn't it be cool, if in The Loop, you could have large blocks like these blue ones from Imagination Playground (top left and right)? You could have a couple sets of these foam blocks to set up play areas for kids.

You can even get some of these handy storage bins (bottom left) for the blocks so that at the end of the day you can just pack them up.

Suggestion: Your area could go with a healthy living theme because of your trail system and the river. Consider putting in an outdoor fitness park too (bottom right).



When you activate a space, don't worry about losing parking slots. This lot (top right) had parking for an auto dealership and a Shoppers Drug Mart. There was some grumbling when they transformed the space into a plaza (bottom left), eliminating the parking, but it has been so popular more people come than ever before, so the businesses aren't complaining.

They even use this space for an ice rink in the winter. The businesses did not lose sales because they and the plaza are worth walking a block or two for.

You have a stunning boardwalk (bottom right) that is already a great space to have activities like the chess games and giant Jenga, or even flower and garden shows. Activate spaces like this that are currently underutilized.



66 Restaurants should have sidewalk cafe dining.



67 Add tables, chairs, umbrellas, or benches and pots - anything!



Suggestion: Your restaurants should have sidewalk cafe dining. Outdoor dining is an excellent way to help enliven your downtown and encourage people to spend more time there. The cigarette disposal and the bench at this eatery in Burlington are not reasons people will want to eat at this location (top left).

In Canmore, Alberta (bottom left) they allow merchants to add dining outside their restaurants. Even having simple little spaces with just a few tables for dining (bottom right) is helpful, and these pots of flowers and shrubs add to the appeal.

Suggestion: Add tables and chairs outside Flippy's (top right). They should have the option to dine out front in the warmer months. When people see others dining outside, it makes them want to do so as well.



When this little ice cream shop (top left) has people sitting at the tables out front enjoying their ice cream, their sales skyrocket. At one shop, there were some kids sitting at the tables in the front, and I commented to the owner that she should give them some ice cream and let them sit out there all day. She told me, "That's what I do. I give them each one ice cream cone a day, and when they are sitting at the tables in front, a line of customers forms out the door."

Adding outdoor dining, like these areas (top right and bottom left), are simple things you can do for curb appeal and to attract more customers.

This little seating area in Salem, Massachusetts, used silk flowers in their plant pots in April (bottom right).



Wolfville, Nova Scotia



Wolfville, Nova Scotia



Wolfville, Nova Scotia



In Wolfville, Nova Scotia (top right and left, and bottom left), the city allow restaurants to take up some parking spaces to allow for outdoor dining. The restaurants build an enclosed path that routes pedestrians around the outside of that area.

These pedestrian walkways were built with a non-slip surface that fits ADA requirements. For shops that don't feel they have enough room in front, the cities should allow them to take up a parking space or two to add dining, and route pedestrians around the outside like these in Wolfville, Nova Scotia (top left and right, bottom left). Some even add a raised surface for the tables and

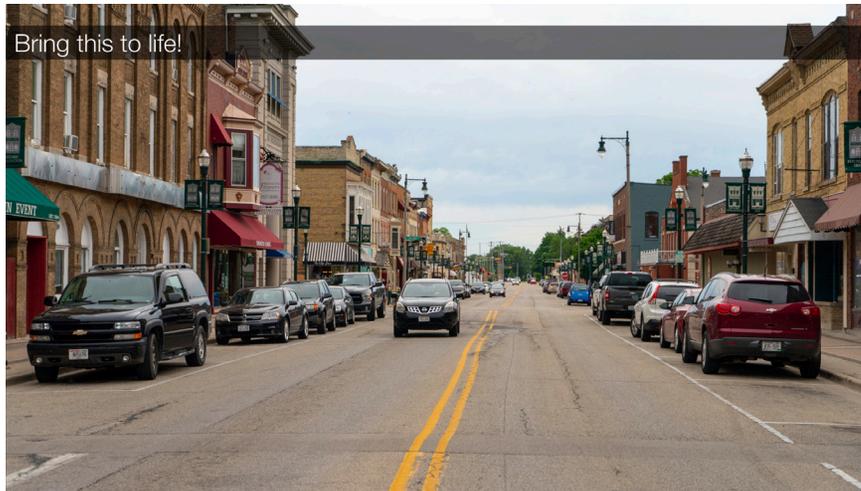
chairs so that they are level with the sidewalk. In the winter they store these areas, and bring them out in the warmer months.

The British Arms in Barrie, Ontario (bottom right) added reflectors and plant boxes on the outside of their eating area. Isn't this beautiful?



68

Incentivize businesses to add sidewalk cafes downtown.



Bring this to life!



69

Instead of just chairs, add tables and umbrellas, a couple of pots.

This close-up of the external pedestrian route shows how they added a raised surface over the parking spaces to extend the dining area over the sidewalk (top left and right).

Burlington has a beautiful downtown (bottom left), bring it to life! Outdoor seating would be great June through September.

At this brewpub on the corner (bottom right) they had a whole row of chairs with only one little table. Although it's a good start, this arrangement doesn't make any sense. Suggestion: Instead, add tables for every two chairs plus umbrellas, plus a couple pots. Catalina umbrellas are great for adding color and an intimate ambiance.

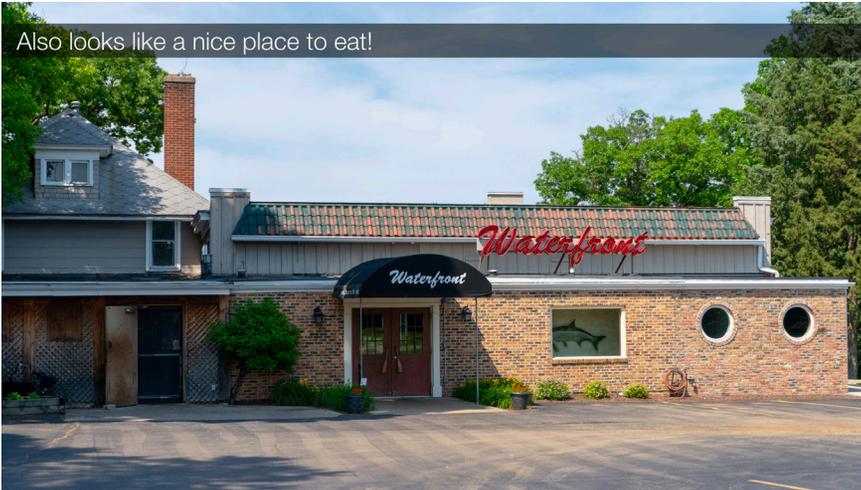
Great restaurant, zero curb appeal on any side.



70 Would love to see this downtown! Bike rentals?



Also looks like a nice place to eat!



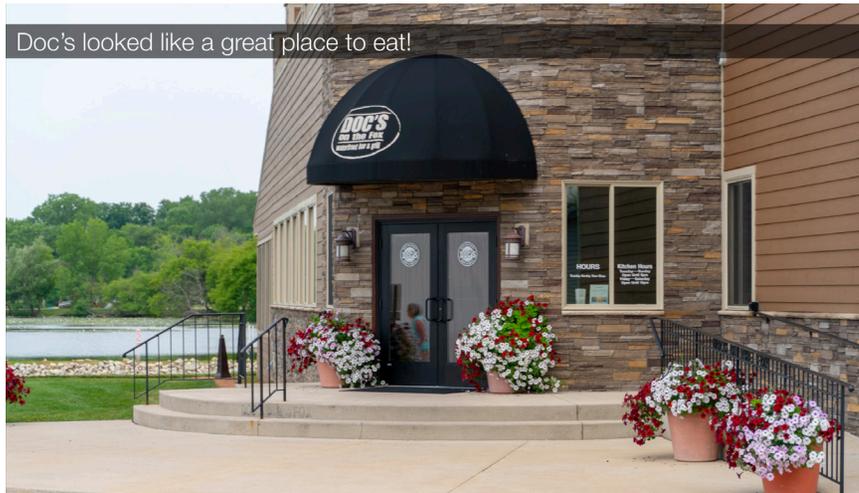
We ate at the Napoli Restaurant & Pizzeria (top left), which has great food. However, it doesn't have a stitch of curb appeal, on any side of the building! We chose to eat at the Napoli based on TripAdvisor reviews, because we couldn't rely on the curb appeal to make that decision. Add curb appeal to show what a very good restaurant you are. Soften the transition between building facade and sidewalk with pots and chairs and tables. This would create a much more inviting entrance to the restaurant.

Suggestion: Recruit a bike rental shop downtown (top right). It would be

fantastic to have bikes downtown so that people could take advantage of the trail system.

When we saw the Waterfront restaurant (bottom left) we knew that it was in business just from its exterior and the flower pots by the walkway. When a restaurant or shop takes care of their exterior, people will know they are in business.

Marty's Restaurant looks like a great place (bottom right). The evergreen pyramidalis shrubs at the storefront are very nice.



We also saw Doc's (top left). Their potted flowers around the door were quite beautiful. They make a welcoming and beautiful entrance.

Hearts Desire Glassworks (top right) is a shop that we wish was in downtown Waterford. Once again, they had a beautiful sign, and we loved the pots by the front door. This is a great shop.

Waterford (bottom left) seems to be the only town in the county where a visitor could rent boats. Way to go Waterford! This is something we couldn't find in Burlington.

Both Burlington and Waterford were fantastic towns. They are perfect examples of the country lifestyle that is available in Racine County. Both towns offer an authentic, intimate setting. Wouldn't you love to live along the river and this trail system? (bottom right)



71

What next?

Find your Unique Selling Proposition.

Why should I move to your community?
Why should I invest here?
Why should I visit you?

What sets you apart from the other 593 cities and towns in Wisconsin?



*"The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago.
The second best time is today."*



Here's to putting Burlington & Waterford front and center as THE places to live, invest in, and visit!

RealCountryLiving!

ROGER BROOKS

The Malt House Theatre (top left) looks like a fantastic, organic place to spend time. Both Burlington and Waterford have a lot to offer.

Suggestion: Find your Unique Selling Proposition. Figure out what sets your town apart from all the other towns in Racine County, as well as the state of Wisconsin. Determine your brand (remember a brand is not a logo), that is what people think of you.

Answer these questions: Why should I move to your community? Why should I invest here? Why should I visit you?

What sets you apart from the other 593 cities and towns in Wisconsin? Think about why someone who just got a job at Foxconn would choose your town when they think about moving to the area.

Suggestion: While you are working on your Unique Selling Proposition, create an Assessment Team. Other than wayfinding and deciding whether you want to add paver stones to The Loop, you can probably complete all these suggestions for around \$30,000. Hand out assignments. Turn suggestions into recommendations. Give people in Racine a reason to come out to Burlington and Waterford to spend time and money. The effort is 100% about making something happen.



Burlington & Waterford Marketing Assessment

The following pages contain an assessment by our secret shoppers, who researched the area from a distance, reviewing marketing materials to see if they could find the area, and if the materials were convincing enough to make them want to visit.

I found this website for the county: <http://racinecounty.com/visiting>

I ordered Visitors Guide via realracine.com.

I called the County Convention and Visitors Bureau, and the representative said she would mail a visitor's guide brochure to me in the next couple days. I received it within a week.

There is a Things To Do section on this website, which is handy in seeing what the county has to offer visitors.

Burlington:

Over time the city was also known as Lower Forks and Foxville. They also have a sign that says 'Chocolate City USA'.

<https://burlingtonchamber.org/visitors>

I found it a little hard to request a Visitor Guide from their site; I could easily look at a pdf version but I had to go to the Contact page to type in my request for a brochure.

Spoke to a representative who said they didn't need a Visitors Guide (when I asked her about one). She passed me on to another representative when I asked her what things I might like to do in town.

The brochure:

<http://specialsections.communityshoppers.com/BurlingtonChamber/app.php?RelId=6.4.7.3>

- Received the brochure along with:
 - 1.) Save The Date – Chocolatefest 2018 postcard (May 25-28)
 - 2.) Map of White River State Trail and Seven Waters Bike Trail

- 3.) AeppelTreow Winery & Distillery brochure
- 4.) Tall Tales Trail brochure
- 5.) Historic Burlington Walking Tour brochure
- 6.) Map of Burlington
- 7.) Burlington travel guide

I was given these suggestions:

- 1.) The Nestle Plant (that was big in town) is now closed but you can do a Chocolate tour at the Chamber and see their small 'Chocolate Museum' instead.

These sites were not really interesting to me, even though they are an important part of Burlington's history. It feels like they are part of the past, without anything really to see or do left.

- 2.) There is a Riverwalk with bike trails.

I found the best description of the Riverwalk on the Hampton Inn site. I'd love to ride the bike trails, but the information provided about them is pretty scant. Not sure if they could develop more to do in association with these trails, more information about what there is to do and where you can stop along the way, and I don't know how often you come to locations where you can lock up a bike along the way (that might be info you would get if you rent a bike—assuming you CAN rent a bike).

- 3.) Rugan's Bar

<http://www.rugans.com/>

This place is a 'gastropub-craft beer-wine-craft cocktails' place. Again, it would be nice if their address was on the home page of their website (they also have a location in IL). If you click on Locations and then Burlington their website takes you to a map of their location in google maps, which seemed handy. If you clicked on Menu, you could choose which of the two locations, and then see a copy of their actual menu. All of their food items sounded great. I would stop to eat here!

The only thing that wasn't good about their site is that there were no pictures of the exterior or people in the restaurant, mainly just a shot of bottles behind the bar. Also the Events calendar needed lines to separate the day squares to make it easier to read with the picture background.

- 4.) Summer concerts in the park.

<https://burlingtonchamber.org/event/concert-park-0>

This page on the chamber website was pretty dull, and not at all inspiring. Even if they do not yet have the dates/artists lined up for summer, they should note when people can check back to find out. The fact that this page said 6/22/2013 – 7:00pm for the last info that was entered (and still appeared) made it seem like this was not an important event or even something they were still doing.

To get people excited about this event this page definitely needs to show pictures of past concerts, maybe list the parks where they will occur, say if they are free, if they easily accommodate people with wheelchairs, etc. Even pictures of instruments and music notes on this page would 'jazz' it up a bit.

- 5.) There is a Farmers Market in town on Thursdays from 3-7 pm, May-October in the Wehmhoff Square Park in Downtown Burlington.

<https://burlingtonchamber.org/event/farmers-market-burlington-wehmhoff-square>

<http://www.burlingtonwifarmersmarket.com/>

This is a great little website. All of the vendors need to make sure they have pictures associated with their pages if they don't link back to their own sites. The market sounds fun, but there is more opportunity to show pictures of the vendor stalls and flowers/food/people.

- 6.) A coffee house downtown has live music

I'm not sure if she meant this one:

<http://www.burlingtoncoffeehouse.com>

They have an open mic night on Thursdays. The menu looks very good. I would stop here for coffee and lunch. There is a space for a video at the bottom of each of their pages but nothing there (must be because they are using a website template), maybe they could take those out or post videos. The Happenings page tells what musical events are coming. They have quite a lineup of local artists.

TripAdvisor had their own list of things to do in Burlington, WI:

Those that were highest rated were:

- AeppelTreow Winery & Distillery (reviewers liked the owners being available for visits, the Apple Champagne, Brown Dog Whiskey, and the tastings)
- Tristan Crist Magic Theatre
- Brighton Woods Orchard. People liked the large treehouse for the kids to

play in, and they have apple cider and juice.

- Logic Puzzle Museum.

Visitor's Guide:

<http://specialsections.communityshoppers.com/BurlingtonChamber/app.php?Relld=6.4.7.3>

For the most part, I thought the guide was very good. I liked the bold color at the top of pages, and the photo of people canoeing on the first page was good. However, I thought it might be nice to hyperlink specific attractions (for the online version of this guide) to either take people directly to the page within the guide with the description, or to another site with more details. Page 3 of the guide mentioned 'something for everyone' in the first sentence. Maybe they could re-word that to say 'there are even outdoor activity options for every season with Burlington's wealth of rivers, lakes, streams, parks and woodlands.'

Page 4 has a handy town map. Since the Chamber refers people to this online version of their guide, it would be nice if they gave an option to print the map in a version that was printer-friendly (black and white with minimal blocks of grey, maybe just with the streets outlined).

Page 5 has an advertisement for the Chocolate Fest on Memorial Day Weekend (May 25-28, 2018) as well as an email address: chocolatefest.com. And, this festival has the tag line 'We Have Something Fun For Everyone!' I think a list of things you can do and chocolate you can try at the fest would be better. The ad also does not say exactly where the fest takes place. I assume downtown Burlington, but it would be good just to note that. The ad could even say, please visit our website for full event details, ticket prices, daily schedules, entertainment options and to print an application for ChocolateFest Character Award nominations. The fest looks to be actually a full on fair with carnival rides and food.

Page 6 was great, with information about how to get to Burlington from a variety of locations. And, the map on this page was good, would be perfect for a printable version.

Page 8 gave many more details about Chocolate Fest, than the ad did, which is good.

I would like to have seen more photos of street views. It is hard to get a real idea of what being in the downtown is like without some street views, and photos of people doing things downtown. Also, if they have an antiques

district, it would be nice to see a grouping of those store fronts (maybe with merchandise outside on display). I would have also like to have seen photos of any their lake marinas, beaches/restaurants at the lakes, quaint shopping areas, as well as the storefronts where you rent bikes/canoes.

Photos really are worth a thousand words!

The Chamber has a mini Chocolate Museum, with free admission. It is listed under Attractions & Recreation on the site. However, the page for the museum does not actually say that it is part of the Chamber of Commerce. I think they should mention this and maybe say to stop by the chamber for advice on other things to see as well as information. I saw one review that said the museum is not really worth visiting.

Their picture for the AepplTreow Winery (and Brightonwoods Orchard) is sad. Absolutely nothing about that page makes me want to visit the winery. The website for the winery was much better: <http://aeppltreow.com>.

All of the pages for Attractions could be better done with larger pictures of people at each place as well as what you can do when you get there.

The printed version of the Visitor's Guide

There really wasn't a lot of information in the Visitor's Guide that made Burlington look interesting to me. If I could tell that there were hubs for things like antique shopping or lake activities that might have been more of a draw. I also think that even if they were designated as Chocolate City so long ago, without a conglomeration of chocolate vendors (with their big chocolate producer gone) like a 'chocolate square' block of town (forgive the pun), they should let that go. I think the festival is okay to keep because it has to do with their history, but there isn't a lot to back up the title otherwise in the current day.

The Liar's Club didn't appeal to me, I'm not familiar with that type of humor. There might be an opportunity here to branch out with other types of comedy.

Printed fold-out Map of Burlington

This was a really handy piece, and great for visitors. I didn't see that lake access was marked on any of the lakes. There were ads for a couple of places

that I might want to try if I were to visit: Napoli Italian restaurant and Adrian's Frozen Custard.

Map of White River State Trail and Seven Waters Bike Trail

This map piqued my interest in doing a bike ride in Burlington. It was nice to see a route; this made it seem more do-able. Might also be nice to add to this where you can get drinking water along the way and if there are any restrooms at the parks.

The White River State Trail I assume is for walking, but it would be nice to note how easy it is and if it is also for dirt bikes and horses. Good that they noted parking, restrooms and food sites.

Tall Tales Trail brochure

This is about the Burlington Liars Club (which is also housed in the Chamber of Commerce building). I'm not sure I understand what exactly the list of buildings is on the back, if it's where they've held the contest on New Year's Eve yearly?

Their website, <http://burlingtonliarsclub.com>, just talked about the 2017 winners with several website links at the bottom. The link for Mark Twain Entertainment was not working. They should also post on this page when the entries are due for 2018, and what the rules for entries are.

The chamber's website:

<https://burlingtonchamber.org/community/listing/shopping>

It was nice that there was a specific section here for Visitors. The Community section had a page for Employment (with a list of business websites), Education, Church, and Economic Development (all important to those thinking of moving here).

Historic Burlington Walking Tour brochure

I thought this was a great brochure, and something I'd like to try if I was in town. It would have been nice to have the distance and average walking time of the trail noted, and whether it was easy (mostly level) walking (plus ADA info). Also would like to see the usual noted on the map: restrooms, parking, dining, water fountains.

Waterford

http://www.waterford-wi.org/chamber_information.html They only had a 2017 visitors guide on their site. Again, looking at the pdf was easy, figuring out how to order a printed copy was more difficult. Had to go to the Contact page to type in my request for information.

I called the chamber office and spoke with a representative. She said they did not have an official guide at the moment, but probably would at some later date. The reason had something to do with them merging with Absolutely Waterford. Her recommendations of things to do and see:

- 1.) Waterford Balloon Fest in July is their big event. She said it includes Women Nationalists and Hobbieist Balloonists.
- 2.) The Cotton Exchange restaurant for their fish fry.
- 3.) Kayaking on the Box River and Lake Tishigan that run together
- 4.) Rivermore Golf Course
- 5.) Doc's
- 6.) Waterford Antique Market and weekend Flea Market

chamber@waterford-wi.org

I did not find their website very appealing. The first page has a picture of the Chamber building, and under the drop down menu for Visiting Us, I chose Play and it was just a list of 5 uninspiring places (one of them was a restaurant and one of them was the school district). You couldn't see reviews or pictures of the places either, just a map link and phone number.

On TripAdvisor

The Green Meadows Petting Farm rated very highly (people said it was perfect for all ages, with animals, lots of grassy areas and hay rides). This looked fun, especially if you were taking kids.

As did Bonnie & Clyde's Hideaway (this rated Very Good across the board. It is a cozy bar on the edge of Waterford). If visiting, I would definitely try this.

And the Waterford Unique Antique Market. They also sell soaps, candles, other items, and books.

Websites helpful and motivating for planning a trip:

Travelocity had 5 recommendations of things to do in Waterford:

1. Green Meadows Petting Farm

Great reviews and lots of them.

2. Bear Den Zoo & Petting Farm

People say that this is fun for couples and for families.

3. Ela Orchard

<https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=ela%20orchard>

This is an apple orchard, they also grow pears and have fresh honey.

4. Waterford Unique Antique Market <https://www.facebook.com/waterfordantiquemall/>

People said that there is always something new here. They particularly liked the kids' items, good prices, book selection.

5. Fox River Paddle Sports

Virtually no information for this on Travelocity. Only that they have 4-hour equipment rentals. And their web site was very sad: <http://foxriverpaddlesports.com>.

Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/WaterfordWIChamber/>

The opening picture for their chamber of commerce Facebook page has a great picture of colorful hot air balloons at the top. And, it looks like it is well kept up and that they respond quickly to people who leave messages for them here (it said, typically replies in 1 hour). This looks like a good resource to find out what is happening.

There was also a specific page for their Balloon Festival: <https://www.facebook.com/WaterfordBalloonfest/>

This page is also well kept and had recent entries.

<http://www.waterfordwi.org>

This website has a section for Visitors, but it is pretty uninspiring and not very helpful for planning a visit. The Recreation section had more information, and had helpful links.

My Impressions -

Now that I've done this research, do their printed and online marketing materials make me want to go there?

- IF these cities were located two hours from my house, would I make a special trip there based on what I saw, read and learned?

Yes, there seems to be enough to do to make a special trip if it was fairly close. I would probably want to stay over a weekend to see a number of places.

Did their marketing materials inspire me, how do they close the sale, make it easy to plan a trip and do they give me enough information?

I think the marketing materials and what I could find online could be much better, especially since I couldn't get guides for two of the cities. Overall, they need to gear more of their info about things to do, to the visitor (who may not know anything about the area).

What do I think of the area?

I did not get a good idea about what it would be like to live there. They might need to put more pictures of neighborhoods out there for people to get an idea of the area (especially for those who are thinking about moving for work, etc).

Note: One specific thought I had was about Chocolate Fest in Burlington. I wonder if the history of having a Nestle Plant is built up too much, especially since it does not exist anymore. I think the area might be better off going a whole new direction (since it is not like Chocolate is natural resource that is critical to the history of the land) and getting away from the whole chocolate theme. I think this event could be re-named to even just Burlington City Fair, Foxville Fair, or something (seems like another name with the word fair would draw more visitors). (I know Union Grove already had the Racine County Fair.) They could even use the Fair title plus 'featuring Chocolate Fest' to include those vendors and activities as still an essential part of the event.

Would this be a place that I would now consider living?

Not necessarily. I didn't have a good idea of distances between cities, how easy it was to get from one to the other or things that residents do. Might be good just to see interviews with residents about the top things they recommend or where they like to hang out.

If not, was it the lack of information? Nothing really worth the drive? What could they do better?

They could make sure that businesses have their pictures and info updated online, in the various places people might find them when looking for visitors' info. Would be great to see more pictures with people in them doing usual things (like having coffee, shopping or walking their dog).

Lack of specific information was a big factor. It would be hard to plan my own itineraries without having a lot more detail about where everything is and how long I should allow for each activity. Itineraries would be very helpful.



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