

First Impression Community Exchange (FICE)**Bancroft**

Community Tool Provided By OMAFRA



Visiting Team

- Two visits
- Saturday and Wednesday in August
- Weekend – young couple with family
- Weekday
 - 26 year old, 40+, two 60+
 - Business owner, real estate agent, recreation worker, retiree

Before the Visit

- None of the team had much knowledge of Bancroft prior to the visit except from driving through the community.
- It was perceived as a busy summer/cottage community.
- No impression of winter season in Bancroft.

Entering Bancroft



- Overall impression was welcoming and open.
- Busy atmosphere at 10 am
- Business appeared to be booming already
- Vibrant with lots of people shopping, walking, young families, seniors, tourists.

Entering Bancroft

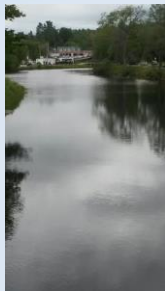
- Impression that people care for their properties
- Viewed entrances from 3 directions
- Beautiful welcome sign easy to see



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Entering Bancroft

- Flower displays throughout town were very colourful and well tended
- Signage in town to points of interest all over town very clear and attractive



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Housing and Residential Areas

- Good mix of housing throughout
- Excellent mix of sizes and ages of homes to appeal to most buyers
- Wide range from \$89,900 up to \$500,000 on lakes
- Houses look well cared for

Housing and Residential Areas

- Nice geared-to-income apartments near the river.
- A few older houses a little tired looking
- Neat, attractive gardens

Education in Bancroft

- Difficult to assess in summer because schools are closed
- Schools were attractive and easy to find
- Did not locate Loyalist College Campus
- One negative comment about high school “bad reputation” and police visits

Programs for Kids



- Summer Program offered at York River Public School had lots of positive feedback from students and parents.
- Lots of art galleries in the area but saw no evidence of children's art programs.

Programs for Kids



- Range of activities posted on billboards in town but could not find notices of organized activities for kids
- Found a busy sports camp for youth at the Senior Club

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Healthcare in Bancroft

- For a small town there is an excellent range of easily accessible health care



Healthcare in Bancroft

- Excellent range of healthcare
 - North Hastings District Hospital
 - 6-bed primary care
 - 24 hour emergency
 - 6 chair dialysis unit
 - CCAC

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Healthcare in Bancroft

- Excellent range of healthcare
 - Telemedicine
 - physio
 - X-ray
 - Ultrasound
 - Family health team
 - 6 doctors in FHT + at least 2 others practicing on their own

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Healthcare in Bancroft

- Excellent range of healthcare
 - 3 dentists with offices in downtown core
 - 110-bed LTC facility
 - Hastings Centennial Manor attached to hospital
 - 3 chiropractors
 - 1 optometrist
 - 5 registered massage therapists (at least)

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Social & Support Services in Bancroft

- Seniors Centre centrally located
- Hastings Housing Resource Centre – for young adults
 - Addictions Centre



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Emergency Services in Bancroft

- Volunteer Firefighter Force with full time chief and training officer
- Ambulance – Bancroft one of 5 bases in Hastings County
- Loyalist College also offers Paramedic Diploma Program
- Police – OPP with office on Monk St

Local Economy & Retail - Downtown

- Positive, vibrant environment
- No empty storefronts
- Variety and quality of merchandise



Local Economy & Retail - Downtown

- Store staff friendly and willing to answer questions about the town
- Information given was consistent
- Obvious pride in their community



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Local Economy & Retail - Downtown

- Plenty of free parking downtown
- Beautiful flower displays and landscaping
- Welcoming BBIA benches
- Good wheelchair accessibility throughout



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Local Economy & Retail - Downtown

- Shaded sitting area attractive
- Good proximity of Playhouse to arts store complex
- Found one internet café



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Local Economy & Retail - Downtown

- Lots of evidence of community engagement – lists of sponsors for town improvements everywhere
- Were impressed that you have bus service



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Local Economy & Retail - Downtown

- Noted office space available downtown to rent for short-term for small businesses
- Plenty of commercial offices downtown
- Banks available and accessible



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Local Economy & Retail - Downtown

- Did not see stores with lower-range pricing (e.g. Joe Fresh/Walmart/Giant Tiger)
- Where do you buy linens/household goods?

Local Economy & Retail - Downtown

- Potential for downtown to play greater role in tourism
 - Not much evidence of outdoors stores or information on tourism activities in stores (unless you visit the Visitors Centre)
 - Example – saw people climbing cliff but could find no info on how WE could do it

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Industries in Bancroft

- These were not assessed as they were not apparent on a one-day visit.
- The tourism industry is evident and looks to be thriving

Local Government Information



- Not easy to find/poor signage
- Information provided to visitors was limited

Tourism in Bancroft

- Obviously a welcoming tourist town
- Visitors Centre staff were helpful and had lots of maps and brochures



Tourism in Bancroft

- Museum had little tourist information and no map of the downtown
- Two museums were attractive and well located with lots of other activities for families close by



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Tourism in Bancroft

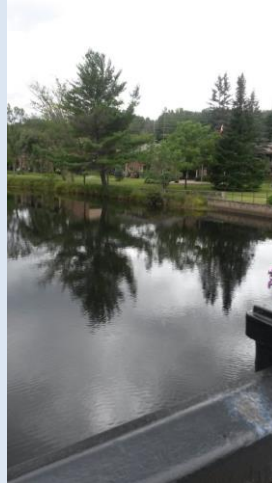
- Lots of restrooms, well signed but not always clean – no baby changing in some
- Great tourist signage throughout



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Tourism in Bancroft

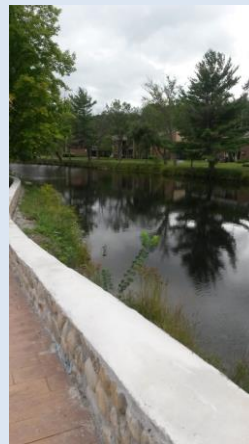
- Parks well maintained
- Plenty of greenspace
- Good variety of restaurants and hotels



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Tourism in Bancroft

- Nice walkway by the river but surrounding grass fouled either by dogs or geese – not inviting for people to walk on, especially children



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Tourism in Bancroft

- One central business had two large and unfriendly signs telling tourists they could not use their washrooms



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Tourism in Bancroft

- We were unable to find any signage to the nearest beach or pool which would have been useful for a young family

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Recreation

- Beautiful parks, band shell and playgrounds
- Arena, tennis courts, curling rink, water vehicle rentals all accessible
- Team did not see a ballfield



Recreation

- Excellent range of water activities, kayak rentals etc near Visitors Centre
- Lots of activities going on



Public Infrastructure

- Downtown core excellent
- Rec facilities well promoted with good signage
- Library was small and rather uninviting
- Ongoing upkeep of downtown evident



Public Infrastructure

- Sidewalks excellent downtown but deteriorated immediately outside the core.

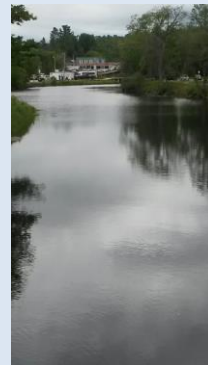


Culture and Heritage

- The station was beautifully restored
- Heritage homes in town were well maintained
- Lots of art galleries
- Well-run playhouse and summer theatre program big draw for visitors
- We liked the 50th banners in town but could not find out what they were celebrating

Environmental Sustainability

- Your sustainability program on the town website is impressive and proactive
- Difficult to locate garbage and recycling bins downtown



Bancroft is a Welcoming Community!

- We all enjoyed our visit to your cheerful, vibrant town
- Bancroft's many parks are strong highlight of community
- Well maintained and located across the community making easy access to residents and visitors
- Appreciated dog park - good addition

The most outstanding features of Bancroft

- Lively main street
- Interesting shops
- Positive townspeople
- Well-kept flower boxes downtown
- Tidy homes and gardens



The most outstanding features of Bancroft

- Pride in the community
- Great signage
- Excellent greenspace
- Plenty of places to eat



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Five Positive Things About Bancroft

1. Friendly people and strong community spirit
2. Busy downtown core
3. Well kept homes
4. Excellent green space
5. Good places to eat
6. Great signage
7. Lots of washrooms
8. Beautiful flower displays



Five biggest challenges facing Bancroft

1. Town staff seemed not to have tools or resources to provide general information to visitors and potential new residents
2. Insufficient signage for visitors to easily find municipal building
3. No signage to nearest beach or water activities
4. Recreation information for visitors hard to find
5. Nothing evident in town to attract minorities

Potential opportunities available to Bancroft

1. Provide town staff with more tools to provide information to visitors/public
2. Put up signage to nearest waterfront or pool
3. Post more information on recreation activities for residents and visitors
4. Look at other communities and how they attract residents or tourists from minority groups, particularly with your proximity to the Toronto market

Thank you Bancroft!

We were honoured to participate in the First Impressions Community Exchange in your beautiful community !



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