

Case Study: Kleinburg

Kleinburg (fictional) is a small city of 50,000 residents in the Midwest. It was settled in the 1800s by German immigrants who built the city's cultural and social institutions. It absorbed waves of new (primarily European) immigrants and grew into a prosperous regional agricultural and manufacturing center. As manufacturing and farming declined, its economy slumped and demographic composition changed.

Economy

The local economy is now dominated by the **services sector**. The largest employers are a state **university** and a regional **hospital**. There is some small **manufacturing** and **distribution**. Many residents have **low-wage** service sector jobs. The **unemployment** rate is significantly above the state average. The **real estate market is in a slump** with declining property values and high vacancy rates.

Demographics

For many years, Kleinburg's residents were relatively racially and culturally homogenous: white, Christian, and conservative. The population remains 75% white. In recent years, significant numbers of **newcomers** have settled in the city, drawn primarily by affordable housing. These include many low-income **African Americans** and **Hispanic Americans**, as well as **recent immigrants** from the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The university is also transitioning from a commuter school for local residents to one that attracts a diverse and increasingly international **student** body. These newcomers bring **different cultural norms, values, religious practices, and practical needs**. As **young people** leave and **affluent workers** move to nearby towns, the population of **long-term residents** is **aging and becoming less affluent**.

Cultural resources

For a town its size, the city of Kleinburg has many cultural and recreational resources. The local **university** offers public cultural events. It has a thriving **local arts and music scene**. There is a **local newspaper** and two local **radio stations**. Its **library** is modern and well-resourced. There are multiple **faith communities**, many of whose leaders are keen to work together. It has a well-developed **park district** offering sports and recreational opportunities. However, as is true nationwide, participation in service groups such as the Jaycees and Rotary Club has declined dramatically in recent decades.

Local government

Local government decisions are made by an elected city council and mayor and implemented by an appointed city manager. **Declines in tax revenues** and **increased resident needs** have put a **strain on city services and budgets**. The **public school**, **health care**, **social services**, and **housing** systems must now meet the complex needs of many more immigrants, **people experiencing poverty**, and **elderly**. Consequently, **local economic development** is a key priority. **Public involvement** in local government is low with public meetings primarily attracting long-term residents (who tend to be older and white). The city has a **website** and a small **social media** presence.

Transportation

Kleinburg is well-connected to the highway system. However, it has **limited public transportation** consisting of a few bus lines. It has **no passenger rail** service and **limited long-distance bus** service.

Public safety

Kleinburg residents used to take pride in their “safe and friendly” community. However, alongside economic and demographic changes, the community has seen a **rise in property crime** and the appearance of **violent crime**. There have been a few incidents of **hate crime** related to race and religion. Many long-time residents and **parents of university students** are **afraid and angry** at the changes they see in Kleinburg. They feel that **community spirit is evaporating**.

WHO: Stakeholders

University	Long-term residents
Hospital	Newcomers
Services sector employers	African-Americans
Manufacturing and distribution	Hispanic Americans
Local government	Recent immigrants
Public schools	Students
Health care system	Young people
Social service providers	Affluent workers
Housing system	People experiencing poverty
	Elderly
	Parents of university students

WHY: Issues

Low-wage jobs	Different cultural norms, values, religious practices
High unemployment	Aging population
Slumping real estate market	Increasing poverty
Declining tax revenues	Afraid and angry residents (public safety)
Strained city services & budgets	Community spirit evaporating
Local economic development	Rising property crime
Limited public transportation	Violent crime incidents
Little public involvement in government	Hate crime incidents

HOW: Potential assets for D&D

University	Local newspaper
Local arts & music scene	Local radio stations
Public library	Faith communities
Park district	