



Conversations about the Future
TRAFALGAR, PRINCE'S LAKES, NINEVEH
2013 Community Interviews

I. Johnson County Community Profile

Community Name: Trafalgar

Date: April 2013

Researchers: Todd Jones, Vickie Lee, Annemarie Wallace, Laura Harris

Demographics

- A. Population as of 2011: 1,010 within township limits
- B. Estimated Rate of Growth for the next 10 years: small increase
- C. Growth Indicators in past five years:
 - New businesses: McDonald's, CVS, small strip mall on State Road 135
 - New housing divisions on Pleasant Street and more houses in existing neighborhoods
 - Three new churches established

Residential Development Projects in Planning or Consideration

No new residential development projects are in the process or plans.

Commercial Development Projects in Planning or Consideration

The Nineveh Hensley Jackson school system is planning a remodel and addition to the former town hall building. Space will be used to house Ivy Tech classrooms.

Community Bonds - History and Trajectory

- A. Town of Trafalgar Water Works Revenue Bonds, 1999 – Construction of water tower.
- B. Sewage Works Revenue Bonds, \$1,910,000.00, 2001 – Wastewater collection and treatment improvements project.
- C. Town of Trafalgar Sewage Works Revenue Bonds, 2008 – Upgrade on current waste water treatment plant facilities.
- D. Trafalgar Municipal Facilities Building Corporation First Mortgage Bonds, 2009 – Town Hall building.

Community Tax Levies- History and Trajectory

Upcoming – The state of Indiana is mandating that each county has one centralized 911 dispatch center for the entire county. Town officials are expecting a tax increase to fund the new center.

Roads and Highway Assessment

Town officials are currently seeking grant money to pay for sidewalks and drainage work.

Indicators of Commitment to Quality of Life

A. Education

- Preschools include Fairhaven and Trafalgar Christian Church
- Preschool/Daycare: Small World
- K-12: Indian Creek Elementary, Intermediate, Middle, and High School
- Planned addition next to the Nineveh Hensley Jackson administration building to house a Ivy Tech classroom for students

B. Parks and Recreation

- Johnson County Park
- Indian Springs and Tameka Woods golf courses
- Playground and baseball diamond behind Indian Creek Elementary
- Playground and football field behind Indian Creek Intermediate School
- Tennis courts and pavilion in front of Indian Creek Middle School
- Little League teams
- Bantam football and cheerleading

C. Cultural Venues

- None listed

D. Public Gathering Spaces

- Trafalgar Branch Library
- Churches
- Appleworks
- School grounds
- Restaurants and bars

- FFA Center
- Senior Center at Nineveh
- Area churches including Trafalgar United Methodist Church, Trafalgar Christian Church, and Disciples of Christ

E. Community Events

- Trafalgar Fire Department Fish Fry
- Carrie Clayburn Dinner
- Craft Fair and Bazaar at Indian Creek High School
- Baseball Parade
- Annual Community Fair and Walk
- Theater, music, and sports at Indian Creek schools

F. Volunteer Structures

- Trafalgar Fire Department
- Lord's Locker
- Victory Tutoring Program at the schools
- AARP Tax assistance at the Trafalgar Branch
- Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts
- FFA
- 4-H

G. Libraries

- Trafalgar Branch of the Johnson County Public Library
- School libraries at all four schools

Neighborhood Groups

- A. Spring Lake HOA
- B. Crest Ridge HOA
- C. Mystic Lake HOA
- D. Lamb Lake HOA

Health, Wellness, and Security

- A. Major Healthcare Providers
 - Trafalgar Family Health Center
 - Trafalgar Family Dentistry
 - Claude Willis DDS
- B. Community/Public Health Events
 - Community Resource Fair
 - Civil War Reenactment at the school

C. Safety and Security Issues and Perceptions

- Lack of sidewalks
- Lack of bridge between Indian Creek schools and services. Currently, people walk along and/or cross SR 252 or SR 135 to reach Subway, McDonald's, Burger King, and general stores.
- Safety is a concern at every school. Recently, entrances at all four schools were remodeled.

Community Name: Prince's Lakes and Nineveh

Researchers: Jen Sinclair

Demographics

- A. Population as of 2011: 1,511 in Prince's Lakes. There are 750 homes on the lake.
- B. Estimated Rate of Growth for the next 10 years: small increase
- C. Growth Indicators in past five years:
 - Several homes are in foreclosure at Prince's Lakes.
 - Since 2000, the population has dropped by 12.6% - no real growth seen at this time.

Residential Development Projects in Planning or Consideration

- A. Around Prince's Lakes, only 15 lots remain for residential building.
- B. No new developments or projects are in the planning stages in Nineveh.

Commercial Development Projects in Planning or Consideration

No projects at this time.

Community Bonds - History and Trajectory

None listed

Community Tax Levies- History and Trajectory

None listed

Roads and Highway Assessment

No projects at this time.

Indicators of Commitment to Quality of Life

A. Education

- Nineveh Hensley Jackson School Corporation
- Several private certified preschools and home daycares

B. Parks and Recreation

- Johnson County Park
- Town park at Prince's Lakes
- Little League

C. Cultural Venues

- Nineveh Heritage Festival

D. Public Gathering Spaces

- Restaurants
- Churches
- Rentals include Town Hall at Prince's Lakes and the fire station
- Senior Center at Nineveh

E. Community Events

- Nineveh Chili Cook-off (The Crossing Church)

F. Volunteer Structures

- Nineveh Fire Department

G. Libraries

- Trafalgar Branch of the Johnson County Public Library
- Franklin Branch also nearby

Neighborhood Groups

A. Prince's Lakes is composed of 14 lakes – each lake is privately owned and has its own Lake Lot Association

B. Beta Sigma Phi Sorority

C. Nineveh Masonic Lodge #317 and Eastern Star

D. Nineveh Heritage Committee

Health, Wellness, and Security

A. Major Healthcare Providers

- None listed, most visit Franklin or Columbus for medical and dental needs

B. Community/Public Health Events

- No recent public health events

C. Safety and Security Issues and Perceptions

- Prince's Lakes Police Department is viewed favorably by residents
- Safe environment for raising children
- Agreement that sidewalks and more street lights would be beneficial

II. Historic Perspectives

A. Slowly Moving Forward

Trafalgar was once a bustling and lively town with many stores and amenities. While much of that was lost, the community has been slowly recovering in the last ten years. In the last year, growth has stalled – most interviewees agree that it is due to the stagnant economy coupled with high utility costs – but there is confidence that growth will pick up again. Prince's Lakes area is not experiencing much growth as there are few available lots with the exception of the Celestial Woods subdivision.

B. Strong Rural and Agricultural Heritage

There were many smaller family farms in the past. In recent years, large scale farming has become more common, and much farm land has been lost to development. Regardless, the area's agricultural heritage is still strong.

C. Cultural Shift in Area

The Trafalgar/Nineveh/Prince's Lakes area has seen an influx of residents who work in Indianapolis, as well as young families, professionals, and urban retirees. Presently, most adult residents commute out of the community for work. This has brought more diversity, new ideas, and more money into the community.

D. Changes to Business Community

Several new businesses have come to the area in recent years, including CVS, Jessen Funeral Home, and new restaurants, including McDonald's. Two new churches have also opened in the community. However, some businesses have been lost, a bank, some restaurants, and Trafalgar Grocery. Local businesses seem to be in a flux, and many interviewees stated that they would like to see another grocery open in the area.

E. More At-Risk Families

The recession has caused the number of local at-risk families grow. Fortunately, the Lord's Locker fills many needs, and local medical and dental practices accept Medicaid and work with low-income patients.

F. Camp Atterbury Impacts Growth

Camp Atterbury was a major factor on local growth. Many military personnel live off-base in our local communities, and some retire and stay. Schools have not seen the growth in the number of students as was expected a few years ago. Atterbury did not increase the number of its personnel and is presently maintaining its current size.

G. Technology – A Mixed Bag

Several interviewees talked about the impact of technology on community and local schools. There is excitement over the improvements in Internet and cell phone coverage, and several talked about the benefits of technology to their businesses and organizations. All students at NHJ in grades 6-12 will receive an iPad as part of their book rental for the 2013-2014 school year. There is some concern that reliance on computers results in loss of personal communication, and that in schools, the dominance of technology is causing the loss of content and context in learning.

III. Current Facts

A. Self-Employment Prevalent

There are many self-employed in the area, and the proximity to Indianapolis, Franklin, and Greenwood is beneficial. Improved Internet access has also been very important.

B. Ivy Tech in Trafalgar

The old Trafalgar Town Hall is being remodeled, and Ivy Tech will move in and begin offering college classes to high school students during the day. If it goes well, they will also offer classes to the community. Plans are under way to house an alternative school there as well.

C. Classical Conversations Campus

The area will also host a new campus for Classical Conversations, a national homeschooling program. This will be the third such campus in central Indiana. Services and programs at the Trafalgar Branch were a big influence on the decision to open a campus here.

D. Utility Rates a Hurdle

Several interviewees suggested the area's high utility rates are hampering growth in the area, both for businesses and homeowners. Water and sewer fees were identified as particularly expensive.

E. Atterbury to Eliminate Civilian Jobs

Camp Atterbury has been an employer of many area civilians. Changes in policy will transfer those jobs from civilian workers to military personnel.

F. New Trafalgar Branch a Major Happening

Some interviewees considered the opening of the Trafalgar Branch a "major happening" in the community. Several talked about its importance in their lives and that of the community. However, we also heard that many seniors do not see the library as an interesting place to visit. One interviewee also mentioned that the Internet, Amazon, and iTunes seem more convenient than visiting the library.

G. Growth – A Blessing and a Curse

Recent growth has had both positive and negative influences on the community. While it has brought new ideas, diversity, and more money into the community, it has also brought what some people refer to as “city problems”.

H. Suburbanization of Trafalgar Area

While many interviewees were in favor of measured and sustainable growth, there was concern over the loss of the rural setting and lifestyle as the area becomes more populated and suburbanized. The east/west corridor was pointed out as a probable catalyst for this transformation.

IV. Patterns and Themes

A. Growth Has Slowed

Several cited an overall pattern of growth in the area, though it has slowed down with the economic downturn. Interviewees saw the poor economy and high utility rates as probable culprits. It was also mentioned that while Trafalgar is growing, the money is not. The town’s budget is too tight to provide some of the services that community members would like to see, such as a town park.

B. Good Place to Live

Residents appreciate the rural, laid-back lifestyle and the natural beauty of the area. There is a collective desire to keep things this way. Many commented that it is a good place to raise children. Young families and urban professionals are moving to the area to take advantage of this lifestyle and raise their children away from the city, while exposing them to good schools.

C. Ambivalence Over Growth

Some interviewees indicated a desire for further sustainable growth. They feel that it helps the economy, brings new ideas, increases diversity, and helps spawn new businesses. Others cited the negative impacts of growth – increased crime, encroachment of the city as it moves further south, and loss of farm land.

D. Caring is Sharing

Interviewees told stories of neighbors helping neighbors, people coming together after the 2008 flood, the work of the Lord's Locker, the importance of community fund-raising events, and civilians pitching in and helping fire and rescue workers.

E. Ambivalence Over Technology

Most agreed that technology is changing the way that we do things. Many also agreed that technology can be a blessing and a curse. It is seen as critical for local business and is appreciated as a communication medium, but it was also described as a force being applied to the community rather than embraced. Also, opinions vary as to the role and importance of technology in the schools. Some felt that it is an important part of education, while others see it as the tail wagging the dog.

F. Increased Amenities Desired

Many expressed the wish for additional businesses and services in the area – a good grocery, diverse new businesses, more childcare options, better options for challenged students, more convenience for seniors, light industry or other “anchor” employers, a farmer's market, and cultural events.

G. Stronger County and Municipal Budgets Needed

Many discussed their wishes for stronger budgets and resultant municipal projects – parks, community center and auditorium, hiking/biking trails, a community pool, a second entrance to Trafalgar Square, road maintenance, improvements to water lines and water pressure, a larger police force and new municipal vehicles, and preservation of lakes, wild areas, and wildlife. New fire stations, engines, and a paid stand-by staff were also mentioned.

V. Emerging Insights

A. Optimism Over Renewed Growth

There seems to be overwhelming positivity about renewed growth in the area. Better roads, good schools, slower pace, and safe

environs will promote population and business growth in the area, albeit slowly.

B. Mindfulness in Technology Use

While acknowledging the inevitability of technological advancement and the real advantages of technology, we should be careful not to lose our ability for real human interaction. It was observed that reliance on computers is robbing businesses and services of their “personal touch”. It was also mentioned that in education, technology carries a disproportionate influence and dominates the education process. One person lamented that she wants her child to know what it is like to “feel a real book, to read a real book.” Technology should be embraced, but with care and foresight.

C. Maintain Small Town Companionship

Several interviewees voiced concern that as our communities and businesses grow, the area’s general friendliness will diminish. In the case of the library, it was stated that even though the Trafalgar Branch is bigger now, people still enjoy being spoken to when they come in, preferably by name.

VI. Provocative Possibilities

A. Increased Library Partnership with Schools

The library and schools could form a partnership that would benefit both institutions. The library could work with area schools to provide access to our databases and other resources, saving the school money while promoting library services. As teachers become more familiar with library resources and services, they could promote these to students and parents. It was mentioned that teachers view librarians as trained and qualified professionals. Librarians could take part on teacher training days.

B. Community Links on JCPL Website

JCPL’s website could link to local business and government websites. This could help promote town hall meetings, school board meetings, and other community events.

- C. Increased Offerings for Seniors and People With Disabilities
Many senior citizens and those on disability do not know what the library offers. The library could visit senior centers and churches to ask what library services they need or are interested in. The library could host a local health fair.
- D. Library/Post Office Collaboration
If Trafalgar's post office closes, the community would need a mail drop-box. As a community destination, the library would be a good place for one. It was also suggested that the Postal Service could rent space at the Trafalgar Branch and run services from the library.
- E. Joint Chamber of Commerce
While there has not been a Chamber of Commerce in the area for some time, it was suggested that one could be formed jointly between the business communities of Trafalgar, Prince's Lakes, and Nineveh. The library could serve as meeting space for the group.
- F. Library Service to Outlying Areas
The idea of a bookmobile to serve Prince's Lakes, Nineveh and other outlying areas was suggested. Another possibility would be a library kiosk to allow people to pick-up and return materials.
- G. Community Room Usage
With the large community room, LCD projector, and other technology, the library is a desirable spot to hold staff trainings for organizations and businesses. Although the library currently offers this service, it could be marketed more heavily.
- H. After School Tutoring Service
The community could use an after school tutoring service. The program could be run by adult volunteers or a high school group in need of service projects. A possible partnership with the school for this service could be beneficial.

I. Welcome to the Area!

The library could be the first one to welcome new residents to the area. A welcome basket could be provided that includes information about the library and the area. Librarians could introduce themselves and the services offered in our buildings.

J. Targeted Programming to Meet Needs

It was suggested that the library could tailor programming toward a specific need of an organization or business.

K. Technology Training for the Community

Some in the community are wary of technology and see it as a force that they are not yet ready for. It was suggested that the library could offer technology training programs to the community.

L. Expanded Library Outreach

The community would like to see library staff step outside of the building and meet citizens in the community. "Librarians should get out of the building more often. Introduce yourself at businesses and stores like a politician – handing out cards and information."

"Library staff should have iPads so they can visit the community and share their expertise and resources."

VII. Illustrative Highlights

A. "We can buy eggs at the hardware store, but we have no grocery."

Many of our interviewees lamented the loss of Trafalgar's grocery store and stressed their desire to have one in the community again.

B. "CommUNITY"

This was a common theme, as several brought up the local propensity for lending one another a hand. Stories were told about people stopping to help fire and rescue workers, community benefits for various causes, the 2008 flood bringing people together to help one another, someone sentenced to doing community service, but continuing after official time was served, and the work of the Lord's Locker. "Everybody helping everybody."

- C. **Town Corporate Limits Not Representative of Area Population**
The town limits cover a small area and represent a portion of the population and tax base in the area. One interviewee commented that the town population triples when Indian Creek schools are in session.
- D. **"Not a money maker, but a smile maker!"**
This comment was about local healthcare providers accepting Medicaid. In fact, at least one offers a sliding payment scale and accepts Medicare, Medicaid, and uninsured/underinsured patients.
- E. **"Bring back the inter-urbans!"**
Several interviewees talked about the need for public transportation in the area, and both buses and light rail were discussed. Commuter trains once shuttled people to Indianapolis and other communities for shopping and entertainment. The community would like to see them again. Without buses, older children and non-driving teens may feel isolated and have no opportunities for jobs or to visit the library.
- F. **"Country Lifestyle"**
Most interviewees agreed that the rural, small-town lifestyle is one of the area's most desirable features, and one of the things that draws people to the southern part of the county. This was expressed variously as "laid-back community," "same old lazy town," and "old school, southern."
- G. **"Everything could be better, but everything is good now."**
This reflects the general contentment that several interviewees felt is common in the area.
- H. **Smaller Towns, Pooling Resources**
It was pointed out several times that in these tight economic times, towns and institutions should be helping each other by sharing resources and working together.

I. "The library is the greatest new addition to our community."

Many mentioned the importance of the library to themselves and the community. Some things that were heard:

- "Several years ago, I would have listed the library as one of my three wishes for the area, but now we have that beautiful library."
- "Library events fill a lot of gaps for people."
- "The library is very nice and fills the community's needs."
- "The library brings dignity to the community."
- "The library was a blessing for the community and represents cultural progress."
- "Our library here is a reflection of the community. It has been a part of the renaissance here."
- The library is an "awesome resource – I talk to people – I know it helps a great deal."
- "The library is a feather in our cap."

J. Other Thoughts on the Library

While many positive things were said about the library, suggestions were also made.

- "What happened to the vending area in the library? We bring lunch from McDonald's but would like coffee or snacks at the library."
- "The focus of the library should be reading for all ages."
- "There should be more places to leave my library books – like at Prince's Lakes and Nineveh. We might use the library more."
- "I want the library to have open arms, not be a tidy, petite, 'here are my boundaries', organization."

K. "Keep things rural while having more and diverse businesses."

This reflects the common theme of safeguarding the "country lifestyle," while still having the community grow and prosper.

L. "We would like to see fifty new people attending Town Council and School Board meetings."

The town has grown, and many would like to see new people involved in local politics.

M. "Would like to see a new elementary school on the NHJ campus"

N. "I don't want to lose our individual towns."

Reflects the desire to "let Franklin be Franklin, Trafalgar be Trafalgar, and Nineveh be Nineveh. If our communities lose their flavors then it becomes one big concrete jungle."