



Conversations about the Future
GREENWOOD
2013 Community Interviews

I. Johnson County Community Profile

Community Name: Greenwood

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Demographics

Population as of 2010: 34,040 (U.S. Census Bureau)

Residential Development Projects in Planning or Consideration

- A. In the city of Greenwood, there are about 200 new homes built annually. Although not the 600+ of years past, growth is holding steady (Greenwood Dept. of Planning, Zoning, Research, and Economic Development).
- B. The Cobblestone Addition north of Stones Crossing is growing by “leaps and bounds”.

Commercial Development Projects in Planning or Consideration

The corridor on State Road 135 south of Stones Crossing has had several interested businesses making inquiries, including banks and restaurants. The city of Greenwood includes the northeast corner at State Road 135 and Whiteland Road. The other three corners are in Bargersville.

Community Bonds - History and Trajectory

Greenwood Community School system: GCS will have a GO bond for \$4.3 million to renovate and add to Westwood and Southwest Elementary Schools. The debt rate will remain constant and there will be no tax rate change. As long as each project is below \$2 million, they will not need to go to referendum

Roads and Highway Assessment

- A. Worthsville Road: The city of Greenwood will begin widening Worthsville Road to four lanes in 2013. This will also include construction of a new interchange at I-65/Worthsville Road, which is scheduled to start in 2014. There has been substantial residential

- and commercial growth in the area, increasing the traffic flow on Worthsville Road. It is hoped that road improvement will lessen the traffic load, stimulate economic development, increase urban growth, and decrease traffic at existing interchanges at I-65, Main Street and Whiteland Road. Other additions to the four lane road will include a landscaped median, intermittent turn lane, trails, and a roundabout at the intersection with Sheek Road.
- B. Over the next 2-5 years, Worthsville Road will be widened to four lanes from I-65 to Highway 37. This will create a main east-west corridor for southern Greenwood and White River Township.
 - C. Cost of Worthsville Road project: Greenwood plans to borrow \$20 million to cover the costs of widening Worthsville Road and another \$10 million to help pay for the I-65 interchange. The state of Indiana will contribute another \$10 million for the interchange. Repayment of the loans will be collected through property taxes.
 - D. Additional costs: The City Council approved spending an additional \$10,000 for the proposed roundabout at the Honey Creek/Stone Crossing and the Averitt/Main Street intersections, and the Worthsville Road/Sheek Road intersection. Greenwood already approved spending \$300,000 on preliminary work for both roundabouts, which includes design work and the purchase of land. The city hopes to get federal grants to help pay for the project.
 - E. INDOT study: The Indiana Department of Transportation is currently working on an environmental study to assess the possible outcomes for the new interchange at I-65/Worthsville Road.

Indicators of Commitment to Quality of Life

A. Education

- Public education within the Greenwood school district is overseen by the Greenwood Community School Corporation. Currently the school superintendent is Dr. David Edds.
- Greenwood schools have a 91% graduation rate.
- Pre-schools: A minimum of 17 private pre-schools serve the Greenwood area.
- Elementary schools: There are four public elementary schools in Greenwood serving grades K-5. There are six private schools in the area serving the elementary grades. One serves grades K-3, the others serve grades K-5.

- Middle Schools: There is one public Middle School in the Greenwood district. There are four private schools in the area that serve through grade 8.
- High Schools: There is one traditional public high school and one public career center serving high school students in the Greenwood district. There are two private schools in the area that accommodate high school students, one serving through grade 11, and the other through grade 12.
- Public School pupils

High school	9-12	1,200	
Middle school	6-8	920	
Elementary schools	K-5	1,700	

- Special Needs: All of the traditional public schools within the Greenwood district accommodate students with special needs in grades K-12. Greenwood Public Schools guarantee a free and appropriate public education for students with special needs ranging from students with disabilities to the gifted/talented student. The district offers services for students with disabilities from age 3-21. Special Services of Johnson County supports special needs classes at all local school districts and oversees the Earlywood Academic Center for students with special needs. Dr. Pamela Wright is the Executive Director for Johnson County Special Services. The Cornerstone Autism Center located in Greenwood is an educational center geared specifically for students on the Autism Spectrum.
- Post-secondary Education: There are four colleges with a presence in Greenwood that are accessible to students in the Greenwood district.
 - IUPUI has a Greenwood Learning Center.
 - Indiana Wesleyan University has a Greenwood Education and Conference Center.
 - Marian University has an adult program center located in Greenwood.
 - The Indiana Baptist College is located in the northern part of Johnson County not far from Greenwood.

B. Parks and Recreation

- Four Paws Dog Park

- Skate Park
- Greenwood Trails System
- Parks:
 - University Park
 - Freedom Park
 - Craig Park
 - Northeast Park
 - Northwest Park
 - Woodmen Park
 - Westside Park
 - Summerfield Park
 - Old City Park
 - Surina Square Park
 - Pool Park
 - Children's Garden Park
 - Trails Park
- Greenwood Little League

C. Cultural Venues

- Greenwood Community Center
- Greenwood Amphitheater
- Southside Arts League/Off Broadway Gallery
- Churches
- Greenwood Public Library

D. Public Gathering Spaces

- Tilson Conference Center
- Farmers Market on North Madison
- Winchester Place
- Greenwood Community Center
- Greenwood Community Garden
- Valle Vista Conference Center
- Greenwood VFW Post
- Churches

E. Community Events

- Greenwood Freedom Festival
- Greenwood A-Glow
- Old Town Autumn Walk

- Greenwood Summer Concert Series
- Taste of the Southside
- WAMMFest – Festival of Wine, Art, Music and Microbrew
- Heartland Film Festival
- Annual Valentine’s Dance for Parents and Children
- Annual Easter Egg Hunt at Craig Park
- Annual Arbor Day Tree Giveaway
- Greenwood Farmer’s Market
- Theater, Music, Sports at Local Schools
- Annual Air Show: Bob Gasiorowski Memorial Radio Control Model Fly In
- Chamber of Commerce Annual Miniature Golf Classic

F. Volunteer Structures: There are a number of volunteer opportunities in the Center Grove area. A sampling of those available includes:

- Greenwood Public Library
- Greenwood Senior Citizens Center
- Greenwood Parks & Rec Dept.
- AARP Foundation Tax-Aide (county wide)
- Big Brothers & Big Sisters of Central Indiana (county wide)
- Johnson County Youth Connections (county wide)
- Jumpstart Mentoring (county wide)
- Humane Society of Johnson County (county wide)
- Girl Scouts & Boy Scouts – troop leaders (county wide)

G. Libraries

- There is one public library located within the city of Greenwood, the Greenwood Public Library.
- As GPL is part of the Evergreen Consortium system, its patrons have access to materials from all Evergreen members.
- Through Interlibrary loan, GPL members also have access to materials from libraries in other districts.

Neighborhood Groups

Homeowners Associations: There are numerous neighborhood HOA’s throughout the city.

Health, Wellness, and Security

A. Major Healthcare Providers

- St. Francis
- Community South Hospital

- Several Immediate Care facilities
- B. Community/Public Health Events: Senior Expo

II. Historic Perspectives

A. Rich, Small Town History

Greenwood has had yearly celebrations to remember its origins including “Old Settlers’ Days” and more recently the “Freedom Festival”. Greenwood started as a small town outside Indianapolis and has retained its small town feel despite the fact that it is so close to Indianapolis. It is seen as a quiet and safe city where people are willing to help each other in time of need. Old buildings in “Old Town” Greenwood have been preserved.

B. Growing and Diverse Population

In recent decades, Greenwood has been seen as a bedroom community, but it has a very diverse population and different kinds of housing are available, including upscale housing. Churches report seeing more minorities attending services. The population of Greenwood has doubled over the years.

C. Business Center Has Shifted

There has been a shift of businesses from the Old Town area to farther up Madison Avenue. One of the major drivers of this change has been the lack of convenient parking in old town Greenwood. It was reported that a study has been done that showed that as affluence of a person rises, willingness to walk longer distances to enter a store decreases.

III. Current Facts

A. Greenwood Growing East

The growth in the city of Greenwood is to the east. With the planned interchange at I-65 and Worthsville Road in 2014, Greenwood is expected to see even more growth as residential, commercial, and business developments add to the area.

B. E-Government Reliance Increasing

The city of Greenwood is transitioning to more online government services as they attempt to reduce the amount of paper being used.

They would like to get permits online and a majority of the City Council members will be getting iPads.

C. Community Pool Shuts Down

The Greenwood community pool was shut down and demolished in 2012 due to major safety issues. The city is planning to build a new aquatic center at Freedom Park. The decision to spend the money on a new center has caused much controversy in Greenwood.

D. More Than a Bedroom Community

Greenwood is the second largest bedroom community that commutes to Indianapolis. However, Greenwood is more than just a commuter community as it also has upscale housing and many businesses and commercial areas.

E. Increase in Free and Reduced Lunch Need

The free and reduced lunch student population has greatly increased for the Greenwood Community School District in the last 20 years. In 1995, the rate was about 11% and it has now risen close to 50%. This increased rate has correlated with a demographic change in the school district.

F. Decrease in City Funding and Staff

The city of Greenwood has had a decrease in funding and staff. There is less staff to do more work at the city level, and the money for roads has decreased by 25% while the need for road maintenance rises. Assessed values have gone down, resulting in less money for the city to spend.

G. Greenwood School District Bond

The Greenwood Community School District will have a GO bond for \$4.3 million to renovate and add on to Westwood and Southwest Elementary Schools as well as for technology and equipment needed school-wide.

H. Partnering in the County

There are some county-wide partnerships existing in the county. The Senior Centers of Franklin and Greenwood have done grant

proposals, and there is more cohesion between the two groups. More cooperation between government groups is also reported.

IV. Patterns and Themes

A. Technology is a Priority

Almost all interviewees said that keeping up with technology is very important for communication and business. The city is looking at services they can have online such as obtaining permits and paying by credit card. Greenwood City Council members are receiving iPads to improve communication and decrease paper needs.

B. Small Town Feel, Close to Everything

Greenwood interviewees highly value the small town feel and values that the city possesses. Residents take pride in the family atmosphere that their community offers but also appreciate the proximity to the numerous amenities that nearby Indianapolis offers. Interestingly enough, only one interviewee mentioned the Greenwood Park Mall.

C. Lack of Funding Prevalent

Lack of funding to create programs and services that people want and need is a widespread issue. Tax caps have had a large impact on the city, schools, and libraries. Roads need to be built but there is less money to do it. Thoughts were expressed that instead of settling for mediocrity due to less money, a way should be found to pay for the best services for people.

D. Change Requested to Libraries' Access Policies

Several people mentioned the need to be able to use both library districts in Greenwood (Greenwood Public Library or the White River branch of JCPL) regardless of address. Reciprocal borrowing and library redistricting were mentioned as possibilities.

E. Importance of Worthsville Road Interchange

Planning the interchange and growth at I-65 and Worthville Road is a priority. Methodical staged growth is preferred over fast, unplanned growth. In order to sustain growth, hopes for the area include a mix of commercial, industrial office space, and residential areas. The city is seen as having one chance to make it right. The

Worthsville Road improvement will help ease the traffic congestion in downtown Greenwood and create a major east-west road.

F. Quality of Life Improvements

Several people mentioned how a new aquatic center in Freedom Park will improve the quality of life and attract new families to the area. The importance of completing and joining together the walking trails was also mentioned. One person summed up the sentiment – making decisions must be made with “hearts and heads”, what is best for the community, yet fiscally responsible.

V. Emerging Insights

A. New Growth May Require Expanded Library Accessibility

As Greenwood grows in the northeast corner of the county with the I-65 and Worthsville Road interchange, library services may be needed in that area. The library does not currently have a presence in the northeast corner, and with this growth, library needs in this area will increase.

B. Combined Library Services

Many people work in the Greenwood Public Library district but live in the Johnson County Public Library district, or vice versa. For this reason, many citizens desire combined services of the city and county library systems so that they can use either library at their convenience.

C. Increasing Importance of Community Partnership

A common theme heard throughout the interview process was that funding for business, education, government, and non-profit organizations was lacking. To help alleviate the burden, community partnerships will grow in importance as they become part of the solution. An example is the 911 call centers in Johnson County. While there are currently five centers, the state has mandated that in order to keep funding for 2014 the county must reduce the number to two. Communities must begin to work together.

D. Need for a Resource Center

There is a need for training for people who need increased knowledge of computers or internet use. People still need assistance finding jobs online. Sharing this information throughout the community would be beneficial to all people. Small businesses could use a hub for research and as a meeting location.

E. Enrichments to Quality of Life Coming

With the new planned aquatic center, younger families may be attracted to the city as well as businesses looking for a good place for their employees to live. Greenwood is striving to revitalize old town Greenwood, to improve traffic patterns, to build safer sidewalks, and to connect walking trails.

F. The "Silver Tsunami" is Here!

The Baby Boomers, an active and vital part of the community, do not consider themselves senior citizens. Instead of 9-5 programming, programs are planned on evenings and weekends so that the Boomers who are still working can attend. They are looking for more variety of programming in the city. Membership in The Social of Greenwood has increased from 317 to 500 members.

VI. Provocative Possibilities

A. Satellite Location on the Northeast Side

A branch or satellite location could be created to meet the needs of the population in this area due to future growth. An accessible location will make it easier for the population who lives in this area to utilize our services. JCPL could partner with a business to have library lockers to drop off items for people.

B. Reciprocal Libraries

Combining the library services of JCPL and the Greenwood Public Library could be explored. Possibilities include a reciprocal borrowing agreement for materials and a reciprocal use of community room agreement for programs, guest speakers, and community group meetings.

C. Library as a Business Incubator

The library could provide business reference and research for local Greenwood businesses. The library could provide space for business meetings and a location that local businesses could use to do research.

D. Library as a Resource Center

In order to secure JCPL as a center for information in the eyes of our community, marketing must continue. Since some patrons are Greenwood residents, information about the city could be available at the White River branch. Increased community events at the branch would draw more people into the library, as well as help JCPL better market ourselves as a hub in the community.

VII. Illustrative Highlights

A. Dedication of Teachers

One thing heard repeatedly from the educators interviewed was how students are the greatest hope for the future. Educators passionately talked about the intelligence of today's children and how students are doing amazing things for their school and community. The driving force behind all decisions made in the school system is the benefit to the students, and it was memorable to see those interviewed speak passionately about the children in the school system.

B. Greenwood is Exciting!

Interviewees agree that the city is coming to life. New council members and mayor show a willingness to change and adapt. A new method for awarding contracts shows more financial accountability. People are hoping the city will be proactive to encourage development – figuring out what is possible instead of saying “can’t”.

C. Positive Energy in the County

An enjoyable quote, “Libraries! They still care about the people and the quality of life.”

D. Making JCPL More Integral in the Community

JCPL should look for more grant opportunities like the Greenwood Public Library does. Community activities could bring more people into the library such as Greenwood A-Glow brings people into GPL. JCPL should be more noticeable in the community.