

Phone/email interview with Joseph Garland, RN, BSN

Conducted on April 20, 2020

Q: How do you feel about the community?

A: Effingham is a town that, depending on where you are located, can feel like a big city or a small town. The different aspects of the town make people feel comfortable there. I feel the community has a lot to offer to those who reside within, as well as travelers. The town is built in an area of high travel, which creates for good business opportunity as well as a good place to call home.

Q: Strengths? Weaknesses?

A: Strengths: outdoor activities (5 different parks, including one called Harmony Park that was built specifically for children that have developmental or physical disabilities), Trek trail for walking/running/biking, many different places to practice religion, varieties of food, traveling may be easier due to the two interstates intersecting the town, majority of essential places (stores, restaurants) are located in a small area, multiple schools to choose from, Kluthe center for continued education at the college level, abundance of career opportunities in both didactic education as well as trade education, opportunities for low income families to benefit through programs (FISH store, Shop w/ a Cop, etc.)

Weaknesses: impoverished families with low income, lack of personal transportation, >50 fast food restaurants serving as convenient food with little positive nutritional value, drug abuse, abundance of bars, potential for pollution due to travelers

Q: Risks/hazards?

A: Risk for injury in driving accidents with many travelers in the area not knowing the roads, also risk for potential abduction or harm with the increased amount of people in the area, drug abuse is a big issue, road/sidewalk work could be conducted to reduce the incidence of falls for those who walk, some roads do not have sidewalks at all, multiple railroad crossings with no guard arms, many railroad crossings that are blocked by stopped trains for extended periods of time that back up traffic

Q: What could improve it?

A: Substance abuse rehab facility, homeless shelter, railroad regulations to allow for better flow of traffic, increased intra-town transportation opportunities, better/healthier eating options, clear driving signage for out of town guests

Q: Perception of the level of safety?

A: I feel the safety within the town is above average but could definitely increase. Many risks/hazards were discussed previously, and by reducing these risks the town could become much cleaner and much safer.

Q: Perception of the health of the community?

A: I see many people in the community growing in their physical ability by walking/running/etc., but at the same time, if you go to a public store such as Walmart, the presence of obesity is evident. As most towns/cities, I anticipate the obesity percentage continues to rise and could use some intervention to slow the increase and, ideally, make a reduction in obesity percentage. The health of the city infrastructure from the outside seems to be intact. When you drive through downtown, the buildings look up-kept, sturdy, and aesthetically pleasing.

Q: Perception of the future of the community?

A: I perceive that this community will continue to grow both in resident population and in business opportunity. The town continues to grow each and every day. With the centralized location on the interstates creating a high volume of traffic, CEOs will look to place their business here to grow financially and emotionally. This will result in families and friends to come to the area and call Effingham home.