

Orchard Park

Orchard Park is an area of the Borough that is almost exclusively multi-family residential. This area includes a mix of well-maintained apartments, condominiums, and townhomes set among mature trees and park amenities. Orchard Park provides a home to the third largest neighborhood in terms of number of residents. Many of these residents are graduate students, international students and traveling scholars, and professionals and families.

Orchard Park is bounded roughly by Westerly Parkway Plaza and the State High South Building, the Orchard Park Bike Path, the Borough boundary along Blue Course Drive, and the Borough Boundary that roughly follows Whitehall Road. It is among the last of the Borough's annexed and subdivided areas and among the most recent developments. In fact, areas of this neighborhood continue to expand, such as the Retreat Student Housing Development along Waupelani

Drive in 2013.

The Orchard Park area is the only neighborhood in the Borough that is zoned entirely to permit the development of multi-family housing. Within the neighborhood, there are several small and large apartment, townhome and condominium developments that give the impression of many "communities" within this neighborhood area. Because each of these small communities is served by either a Condominium Association or a rental leasing company, there has not been any cohesion among the residents of this area in terms of self-governance and neighborhood association services.

This area is also one in which the boundary between the Borough and neighboring townships is very abstract. For example, the most recent development in this area, the Retreat, is built such that its entrance and several of the buildings are located within the Borough, but the majority of the development is located within College Township. Additionally, Blue Course Drive is home to many small apartment and townhome communities, making the boundary line indiscernible.



Neighborhood Characteristics

The population of the Orchard Park Area according to the 2010 Census was 4,000. This represents 9.5% of the total population of the Borough and a **X% increase in the neighborhood's population since 1990.**

The age of Orchard Park residents are skewed towards college age and early adult aged residents, which is consistent with the character of this neighborhood as a place that is popular for students and young professionals. Nearly 67% of the neighborhood's population is between 18-34. Conversely, Orchard Park is among the area with fewest percent of households with children. Within 10.6% of the neighborhood's housing units reside families with children.

Of the neighborhood's 2,053 Occupied Housing Units, 10.7% are owner-occupied and 89.3% are renter-occupied. Orchard Park has the highest percentage of renter-occupied housing of all of the Borough's neighborhoods. According



to the Borough's Registered Student Home list in December of 2013, there was 1 duplex with student home permit in the neighborhood, mostly due to the fact that this designation applies to a housing type and zoning district that are largely missing from the Orchard Park area.

Land use has been and is still predominantly multi-family, renter-occupied housing with some owner-occupied units scattered throughout. Many of these owner-occupied units are concentrated along Hart Circle, and in townhome communities off of Stratford Drive, Southgate Drive and Blue Course Drive. The conversion of owner-occupied units to rentals has become prominent in this area. (See the [Land Use map on page 31](#) and the [Housing Tenure](#)

Orchard Park by the Numbers

Population (2010)	4,000
% of Borough	9.5%
Age of Residents (2010)	
Under 18	7.5%
18-24	31.6%
25-34	35.4%
35-44	8.3%
45-64	10%
65 & up	7.2%
Occupied Housing Units (2010)	2,053
Owner-Occupied	10.7%
Renter-Occupied	89.3%
Increase in Units since 1995	X%
Registered Student Homes (2013)	1

map on page 37.)

According to the Centre Region Planning Agency's Growth Forecast Map for 2009-2040 the neighborhood is essentially built out; there were only a handful of sites indicated as suitable for future development and redevelopment opportunities. For example, the vacant field site located between the edges of the multi-family housing area of Orchard Park and the single-family housing area of Tusseyview was depicted as an area suitable for future multi-family housing, and is now the home to the Retreat Student housing complex, which was constructed in 2013. The map also indicated some opportunity for additional public uses along Waupelani Drive near South Hills Business School and the YMCA, and a greater mix and intensity of uses at the Westerly Parkway Plaza site. Significant redevelopment activity could be on the horizon if the SCASD High School renovation moves forward. Additionally, in nearby Ferguson Township, a major

student housing development on the Toll Brothers' property has been proposed for Whitehall Road. (See the Future Development section on pages XX.)

The Orchard Park area is conveniently located near a number of amenities. Within the adjacent Westerly Parkway Plaza shopping center are a number of restaurants, a gym, a grocery store and a pharmacy. Along Waupelani Drive are a number of civic uses, such as the South Hills Business School, the YMCA, churches and a nursing home. The neighborhood is also home to the Knights of Columbus, which is a convenient voting location during elections. Residents in Orchard Park also have access to High Point Park and Orchard Park with their many recreational amenities and walking/biking paths. A new regional park on Whitehall Road, which is expected to be completed by 2016 and the completion of the Musser Gap trail connection to the Rothrock State Forest will provide even more access to outdoor and recreational amenities.



Just outside of the neighborhood is open space and rural areas. According to the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, the Greentree Unit, which includes most of Orchard Park and the Greentree neighborhood, has only 32% mature tree canopy. Much of this vegetation is maintained in the Orchard Park, Highpoint Park and along the Orchard Park bike path. (See the [Community Facilities map on page 41.](#))

Traffic and transportation issues have fluctuated over time in the Orchard Park area. Whitehall Road, Waupelani Drive and Blue Course Drive are major streets connecting this part of the Borough to the major amenities both in the Borough and in neighboring townships. Additionally, during construction or times of peak traffic, some cut through traffic uses neighborhood streets to bypass issues. This can lead to congestion and speeding problems. Additionally, the right of way in some areas is challenging to accommodate driving lanes, on-street parking and bus traffic.. A new traffic light was installed at the intersection of Whitehall Road and Blue Course Drive as part of the Whitehall Road expansion.

Parking issues are minimal in the neighborhood. There have been some recent modifications to the on-street parking arrangements for Orchard Park. Because these parking zones alternate sides of the street on various days of the week, there are some issues with cars that are not moved at the appropriate time. (See the [Transportation Systems map on page 39.](#))

Waupelani Drive, Stratford Drive and Southgate Drive carry significant CATA bus traffic for the R bus and its various iterations. The R route is among the busiest of the routes that CATA operates and one that is fully operated within the Borough's boundaries. This route features regular routes connecting to downtown, campus and the major population areas of Orchard Park. Additionally, this route features

“express” routes, and one-way routes to handle peak service times.

Several bike routes run through or around the perimeter of the Orchard Park neighborhood area, connecting it to Borough amenities as well as recreational bike routes throughout the Centre Region. Waupelani Drive is designated as an on-street bike route, as is nearby Westerly Parkway. The Orchard Park shared use path acts as the northern boundary of the neighborhood and provides connections into the downtown and campus area of the Borough, as well as to the south and east where other regional recreational trails are located, such as the Blue Course bike path. A new bike lane was implemented along Whitehall Road as part of the reconstruction of that corridor in 2013.



Neighborhood SWOT Analysis

Strengths

Residents of Orchard Park feel that the area is very safe, quiet and tidy. It was stated as a strength that there is access to both High Point Park and Orchard Park and that the future Whitehall Road Park and bicycle access will further improve the neighborhood. Residents feel that having access to the Westerly Parkway Plaza and SCASD schools make the neighborhood a great place for people with children. Bus service, bike service and ease of driving make the area a good location for accessing other parts of the Borough, such as downtown. Additionally, residents feel that this area presents the opportunity for some of the most affordable housing within the Borough.

Weaknesses

One weakness residents observed was that some of the vegetation along Orchard Park bike path is poorly maintained. Additionally, some residents observe that Stratford is becoming a cut through from Whitehall Road and there is increased speeding. Parking continues to be problematic due to the parking alternating between both sides of the street on designated days. Residents experience some problems with congestion due to parking, traffic, pedestrians and buses making layovers at stops near Waupelani Drive. Finally, some residents feel that while the shopping center has been receiving some physical improvements in 2013, the quality of the Weis grocery is not sufficient for the demand of customers it could potentially serve.



Opportunities

Residents feel that the new Whitehall Road Park and bike path as well as the Musser Gap trail will be improvements for the neighborhood, and that the light at Whitehall Road and Blue Course Drive will help with traffic. Residents feel that this area has a great opportunity for focusing reinvestment in owner occupied housing and affordable housing units for the Borough. Finally, residents feel that there is an opportunity for improving the lighting throughout the neighborhood.

Threats

One threat that was identified by residents was the relocation of the SCASD High School or Corl Street Elementary School. Of particular concern was the idea of moving the High



School to Whitehall Road, which would require the Borough to purchase more land and could have negative traffic impacts on the Orchard Park area. Further conversion of owner-occupied housing units to rentals also poses a threat for individuals hoping to get financing to purchase a unit in the neighborhood. Finally, residents are interested in what impacts might result from the Retreat in terms of traffic, parking and general security issues.

SWOT at a Glance

- + Safe, quiet and tidy
- + High Point Park, Orchard Park, future parks & bike paths
- + Proximity to Westerly Parkway Plaza, SCASD schools
- + Bus service, bike access and ease of access to Borough
- + Affordability of housing in Orchard Park
- Maintenance of vegetation along Orchard Park bike path
- Stratford Drive traffic, speeding, parking management
- Safety of pedestrians, motorists, buses on Stratford Dr.
- Maintenance and quality of Weis Grocery store
- New Whitehall Rd. park and bike path; Musser Gap Trail
- Focus neighborhood for development of affordable and workforce housing
- Additional lighting in neighborhood
- ✗ Relocation of SCASD schools
- ✗ Further conversion to rental housing-- impacts on ability to obtain financing for buying a unit
- ✗ Parking and security impacts from the Retreat