

## State College South

State College South is an attractive, stable neighborhood made up primarily of single-family residences. The neighborhood was formulated from several annexations and subdivisions that took place primarily after World War II. For several years, this neighborhood was the most southerly portion of the Borough. The architecture of the neighborhood is characteristic of mid to late 20th century residential construction. Many residents in the neighborhood that own their homes have lived in State College South for a period of time and reside in small households of one or two people. Today, the neighborhood has a roughly triangular shape, and is bounded by University Drive, Easterly Parkway and South Atherton Street.

Annexations of land that make up the area of the State College South neighborhood took place from 1930 to 1947. This land was then subdivided as the Stuart Farm, Smithfield,

South Hills, and Nittany Hills plots and Lytle's and White Oak Additions. A catalyst for the development of the neighborhood, and thus, the expansion of the Borough to the south and east, was the development of "forty duplexes on South Atherton Street to ease the postwar housing shortage." According to the Story of the Century, by Jo Chesworth, this development brought into existence Easterly Parkway and Centre Lane. From there, residential development in this area seemed to spring up overnight, forming the State College South neighborhood.

The neighborhood remains primarily as a single-family residential neighborhood and is zoned almost exclusively for those uses. The neighborhood is bounded by a series of commercial and civic uses along its edges on Easterly Parkway and South Atherton Street. While the proportion of residences in the neighborhood that are rented has increased since the preparation of the 1999 neighborhood plan, the neighborhood has maintained its single-family character. The neighborhood is home to a series of apartments that are maintained as a mix of affordable and market rate units through a partnership of the Borough and the Community Land Trust.

The State College South Neighborhood Association represents the residents of the neighborhood. At the time of this writing, neighborhood leadership was focusing efforts on improving communications with the Association's residents and reaching out to new residents that had not previously been involved. Additionally, because the neighborhood's housing stock and conditions are conducive to residents staying in their homes for a long time, the Association was hosting education sessions about services and programs that can help seniors stay in their homes.



## Neighborhood Characteristics

The population of State College South according to the 2010 Census was 1,313. This represents 3.1% of the total population of the Borough and a 6% decrease in the neighborhood's population since 1995.

The age of College Heights residents is fairly well-balanced, with each significant age group making up roughly an equal part of the neighborhood's population. Consistent with the neighborhood's character as a neighborhood that residents can live in for a long time, approximately 40% of the neighborhood's population is over 45. Within 17.4% of the neighborhood's housing units reside families with children.

Of the neighborhood's 620 Occupied Housing Units, 53.4% are owner-occupied and 46.6% are renter-occupied. Therefore, the mix of owner-occupied and renter-occupied housing units is almost evenly balanced. According to the Borough's Registered Student Home list in December of 2013,



there were **41 single-family homes or duplexes with student home permits** in the neighborhood. This represents roughly 7% of the occupied housing units in the neighborhood.

Land use has been and is still predominantly single-family, owner-occupied housing with rental homes scattered throughout. Many of these rentals are concentrated in the western portion of the neighborhood along Pugh and Allen Streets, Old Boalsburg, and the Atherton Street and University Drive corridors. The number of occupied units has grown since 1995, most likely as undeveloped lots were developed and as single-family homes grew to accommodate small apartments and rooms for let. (See the Land Use map on page 31 and the Housing Tenure Map on page X.)

### State College South by the Numbers

Population (2010)	1,313
% of Borough	3.1%
Increase since 1995	6%
Age of Residents (2010)	
Under 18	13%
18-24	18%
25-34	17.6%
35-44	10.6%
45-64	24.6%
65 & up	16.2%
Occupied Housing Units (2010)	620
Owner-Occupied	53.4%
Renter-Occupied	46.6%
Increase in Units since 1995	11.7%
Registered Student Homes (2013)	<b>41</b>

According to the Centre Region Planning Agency's Growth Forecast Map for 2009-2040 the neighborhood is essentially built out; only a few opportunities for the construction of new single-family homes on vacant lots were identified. The map also identified some opportunities for redevelopment of existing commercial lots along South Atherton Street near the intersection with University Drive.

Along the perimeter of the neighborhood are a number of public uses, schools and churches. The neighborhood is situated just west of the Centre Hills Golf Course, Lederer Park and Walnut Springs Park. Smithfield Park and the recreational equipment at Easterly Parkway Elementary school are also located within the neighborhood. These natural areas help contribute to the quality tree canopy within this area of the Borough. The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources indicated that the neighborhood has a good amount of tree canopy, especially

when compared to other Borough neighborhoods. Just about 50% of the neighborhood has mature tree coverage. (See the Community Facilities map on page 41.)

Several churches make their home in the neighborhood along Easterly Parkway and University Drive. Along Atherton Street, there are a number of commercial uses, including several restaurants, clothing stores, professional offices and banks, and hotels.

Traffic and transportation have historically been of concern to the neighborhood's residents. Atherton Street is a Pennsylvania Department of Transportation roadway carrying heavy daily traffic volumes and connecting the north and south parts of the Borough. At times, particularly on football game weekends, traffic along Atherton Street and University Drive can get rather busy. Residents sometimes experience problems with cut through traffic and speeding



on Pugh, Allen and Garner Streets. These roadways impact the neighborhood in terms of their impacts on neighborhood continuity, safety, and accessibility of bus, bike and pedestrian routes. Parking issues are minimal in the neighborhood due to on-street parking restrictions. While the intent of these parking restrictions is to prevent the “warehousing” of cars in the neighborhood, this sometimes poses an inconvenience to neighborhood residents wishing to have guests. (See the [Transportation Systems map on page 39.](#))

Atherton Street, Pugh Street and University Drive carry several daily routes for CATA bus service. These routes provide connections to campus, downtown, and the commercial areas along South Atherton and even such amenities as Tussey Mountain Recreation area. While these routes pass through the neighborhood frequently, there are only a few access points for neighborhood residents wishing to use the buses.

Several bike routes run through and around the perimeter of the State College South neighborhood connecting it to Borough amenities as well as recreational bike routes throughout the Centre Region. Bike routes run along South Atherton connecting to the neighborhood, and along South Garner and South Allen Streets connecting to downtown and campus. The neighborhood is also in close proximity to nearby walking and hiking trails in Lederer Park and Walnut Springs Park.



# Neighborhood SWOT Analysis

## Strengths

Residents of State College South felt that a major strength of their neighborhood is that it is well-established with a strong mix of new and longer term neighbors. Generally, residents felt that getting around the neighborhood and reaching nearby destinations was easy because of the bike paths, sidewalks and close proximity to a bus route and major transportation routes. Residents also felt that Easterly Parkway Elementary and the SCASD High School, Welch Pool and Weis grocery were within walking distance.

## Weaknesses

Many of the weaknesses residents observed were related to traffic and parking. Residents noted that occasionally there are issues with people using Pugh Street

as a cut through street to avoid South Atherton. Additionally, recent parking changes and parking on the street by non-residents make it difficult to utilize street parking, particularly for having guests. Some neighborhood streets, such as those leading to Easterly Parkway, have issues with sight distance as a result of their topography. Residents also feel that nuisances such as crows and loud parties have begun migrating into the neighborhood. Finally, residents feel that it is a weakness that there are not more streamlined and readily available channels of communication to learn about Borough issues and resources.

## Opportunities

Residents felt that the expansion of programs such as the First Time Home buyer program could help the neighborhood because it presents an alternative to



additional rental conversions in the neighborhood. Residents also felt that there was an opportunity to improve Borough communications on issues that impact neighborhoods and to hold more community dialogues such as the neighborhood SWOT meetings.

#### Threats

Neighborhood residents did not share any threats at the time that staff met to gather input.

#### SWOT at a Glance

- + Well-established neighborhood
- + Mix of resident ages and affiliations
- + Walkable, bike routes, bus service, access to major roadways
- + Proximity to SCASD schools and Westerly Parkway
- Traffic, sight distance on Pugh Street & South Atherton Street
- Non-resident parking on neighborhood streets
- Restrictions on overnight parking a hassle
- Access to information from the Borough
- Expand First Time Home buyer Program
- Make information more convenient, accessible
- More community dialogues

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