

Vallamont

Vallamont is the Borough's smallest and most scenic neighborhood. Situated just off of University Drive, Vallamont is a quiet, natural area tucked between the Thompson Wood area and Walnut Springs Park. This area of the Borough was annexed in the mid-1930s and the neighborhood features a range of architectural styles, many of which fit in with their surrounding natural context. Many of the homes that abut Walnut Springs Park are situated along a ridge line, affording them views of the preservation area, wildlife and other surrounding natural areas.

Despite its close proximity to downtown and campus, this neighborhood has been insulated from dense residential and commercial development. While there is a series of professional offices located along University Drive near McCormick Avenue, the neighborhood's singular entry point, and some multi-family housing located just to the north of

the neighborhood, significant vegetative buffers separate those uses from the peaceful, quiet character of this small residential area.

The Vallamont Neighborhood Association represents homeowners both in the portion of the neighborhood located in the Borough, as well as those few homes that are located in College Township. Because some of the neighborhood's infrastructure is private, the Neighborhood Association is tasked with collecting fees and contracting maintenance services for items such as parking, plowing and street maintenance.

photo of neighborhood



Neighborhood Characteristics

The population of Vallamont according to the 2010 Census was XXX. This represents XX% of the total population of the Borough and a X% decrease in the neighborhood's population since 1990. The age of Vallamont residents is well-balanced, with each significant age group making up roughly an equal part of the neighborhood's population. The largest percentage of residents fall within the XX age group, with XX% of residents. Within XX% of the neighborhood's housing units reside families with children. Of the neighborhood's XX Occupied Housing Units, XX% are owner-occupied and XX% are renter-occupied.

Vallamont is the only Borough neighborhood in which all of the housing in the neighborhood is maintained as owner-occupied. According to the Borough's Registered Student Home list in December of 2013, there were no single-family homes or duplexes with student home permits in the neighborhood. Land use for this area was historically wooded



and natural; despite the neighborhood's use as a single-family, owner-occupied neighborhood, it still maintains much of its natural features. In fact, a report from the Pennsylvania State Department of Conservation and Natural Resource's Forestry Division indicated that the neighborhood is part of the Highlands tree management area, which maintains approximately 50% of its land area with mature tree cover.

Immediately to the north and west is a mix of multi-family residential housing and commercial uses, and immediately to the south is a natural preservation area. Housing units have increased by only X since 1990. According to the Centre Region Planning Agency's Growth Forecast Map for 2009-2040 the neighborhood is essentially built out; only a

Vallamont by the Numbers

Population (2010)	XX
% of Borough	XX%
Age of Residents (2010)	
Under 18	X%
18-24	XX%
25-34	X%
35-44	X%
45-64	X%
65 & up	X%
Occupied Housing Units (2010)	XXX
Owner-Occupied	X%
Renter-Occupied	X%
Increase in Units since 1994	X%
Registered Student Homes (2013)	0

few opportunities for the construction of new single-family homes on vacant lots were identified.

The neighborhood is located within the State College Area School District and is within walking distance of the Easterly Parkway Elementary School. It is also in close proximity to many other community amenities such as Walnut Springs and Lederer Parks, downtown and the Penn State Campus. Traffic and transportation impacts, such as illegal parking and speeding, on the neighborhood are limited due to the lack of any through streets and the fact that many of the neighborhood's streets are private. There are some congestion issues experienced by residents traveling into or out of the neighborhood at peak times of day when traffic is heavy on University Drive. Due to the limited connectivity of the neighborhood to other areas of the Borough, there are no bus or bike routes that run through the neighborhood. Residents do have access CATA bus

routes that utilize University Drive and the nearest bike route connecting to downtown and campus runs north and south along Garner Street.

Neighborhood SWOT Analysis

Residents of the Vallamont neighborhood participated in a SWOT Analysis along with residents of the Nittany Hills East and Penfield neighborhoods. Many of the characteristics of these neighborhoods as identified by residents were similar. This analysis does include those comments that were unique to Vallamont residents.

Strengths

Residents of these neighborhood areas feel that they live in a quiet and orderly place with beautiful views of the surrounding natural areas. Residents enjoy a close proximity to both SCASD public schools as well as Penn State's campus. They feel that the numerous parks in the area are strengths and appreciate their rustic, natural quality as compared to other Borough parks. Finally, residents feel it is a strength that they have access to a bus route on University Drive.

Weaknesses

Many of the weakness identified by the neighborhood residents were centered around University Drive. Some residents feel that University Drive is an important gateway in our community, connecting the University athletic facilities with other parts of State College, and its aesthetic appeal does not reflect its importance or the same level of design that other community gateways do. Additionally, where there are street lights, some trees and vegetation block the view. Special event traffic, rush hour, and changes to traffic



patterns during construction make it difficult to exit onto University Drive from the neighborhood. Some residents feel that it is a weakness that the neighborhood is not served by natural gas. Others experience problems with deer from Thompson Woods destroying neighborhood vegetation and walking across University Drive.

Opportunities

Residents from these neighborhoods felt that there was an opportunity to enhance University Drive as a gateway in State College by adding plantings, signage, and lighting that will make the corridor safer and more aesthetically pleasing. Additional improvements suggested for University Drive included: addressing traffic issues during construction and special events to make access to the neighborhood less problematic; addressing pedestrian safety issues at the College Avenue interchange by adding crosswalks or pedestrian refuges; and installing traffic mirrors at intersections with University Drive where visibility is limited for cars turning out of the neighborhood.

Threats

Residents of these areas felt that there were several threats that could impact quality of life in the neighborhood. Some residents felt that neighborhood boundaries should be clearer as to exclude the University Terrace apartments from their neighborhood boundaries. Residents also felt that recent or future developments in College Township could threaten neighborhood quality of life. For example, lights from banks and gas stations on South Atherton cause light pollution in the neighborhood. Additionally, the neighborhood is surrounded by Thompson Woods, the Centre Hills Golf Course and the proposed educational center for the Kissinger Meadows. Residents feel that it would be a threat if any of these areas were sold and developed for uses

other than nature and recreation. Finally, neighbors feel that the deer in the neighborhood are a threat to personal property maintenance, for traffic when they cross University Drive and have the potential of exposing residents to Lyme disease.

SWOT at a Glance

- + Quiet, orderly
- + Proximity to campus, schools, parks, access to bus routes
- Traffic on University Drive impacts exiting neighborhood
- No natural gas service
- Deer from Thompson Woods
- Address traffic, pedestrian crossings on University Drive
- ✗ Potential new developments in College Township
- ✗ Neighborhood boundary not to include University Terrace Apartments
- ✗ Deer impacting vegetation and crossing University Drive