

BOROUGH  
Commission Meeting  
January 8, 2013  
ADDRESS  
AFFILIATION

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### Planning Worksheet #3 Neighborhood SWOT Analysis

**What is a SWOT Analysis?**  
A SWOT Analysis is an inventory of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. It SWOT can be conducted at any of the planning process at every different levels. This analysis helps planners with community members to recognize and leverage their strengths and opportunities and mitigate weaknesses and threats.

**SWOT analysis is used for neighborhood planning**  
It is identify its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and position those factors that will help and position those factors that will hinder.

**Demographics & Social Issues**  
Identify the factors that define conditions that impact the neighborhood. This requires the planner to have a good understanding of the community. Examples of questions to ask are:  
- What are the demographic characteristics of the neighborhood?  
- What are the social issues?  
- How do these factors impact the neighborhood?

### Planning Worksheet #2 Neighborhood Walking/Biking Audit

**What is a walking audit?**  
A traditional walking or biking audit is a useful tool for evaluating the safety and walkability of a particular area. A walking audit helps commission members investigate the conditions of a pedestrian or bike route by getting a set of criteria or answering a series of questions. Conducting walking and biking audits can help highlight areas where sidewalks or pedestrian paths are in need of repair or where facilities do not provide access to the places that people want to travel. The walking audit worksheet for our neighborhood includes more than just the physical characteristics of our neighborhood. It also includes some information about what you see on your audit and some things you would be to using these pathways if additional amenities were in place or if you were to use these pathways.

**Easy Census Data**  
You can find census data for your neighborhood by using the American Factfinder website. The website provides a variety of data on a wide range of topics. You can search for data by geographic area, topic, and time period. The website also provides a variety of tools for analyzing and visualizing the data.

**Scouting Locations**  
Easting Locations  
Other street I used during my audit

### Planning Worksheet #1 Mental Map of your Neighborhood

**What is a mental map?**  
A mental map represents your understanding of a place, based on your experiences in that place. Many geographers and urban planners use mental maps to understand people's perceptions of a place. They often use using pictures, drawings, symbols, and words. Mental maps can be constructed things that they might view as impediments. For example, physical features like a stream or a hill might be viewed as impediments. They also might view things that they frequently visited, or those that were regular in their lives as landmarks. Countries drawn larger than geographical reality. This helps planners understand how certain factors affect people's awareness of and participation in places.

**How will my mental map be used for neighborhood planning?**  
Use your mental map to show us what your neighborhood looks like from your point-of-view. You can help Borough officials understand where residents consider their neighborhood boundary to be and why, and how each help highlight neighborhood concerns, opportunities for enhancement, and amenities that should be protected.

**What should I map?**  
Your mental map should represent your neighborhood from your point-of-view. Include your home, and map any of the other buildings, streets, transportation routes, landmarks and unique features that are important in your neighborhood. The only thing you should not map is your neighborhood. Do this on a drawing. Do this on a drawing. Do this on a drawing.

**Drawing your map**  
To help get you started, here are a few questions to help you as you draw your map:  
1. Where are your neighborhood boundaries? The boundaries are the streets that surround the neighborhood. Do not include the streets that are outside the neighborhood.  
2. Where are some places within your neighborhood that you visit a lot? (Add labels to your map.)  
3. What routes do you take to get to work/school? (Add labels to your map.)

**What is a mental map?**  
A mental map is a representation of a place that is based on your experiences in that place. It is a map that is drawn from your perspective. It is a map that is drawn from your perspective. It is a map that is drawn from your perspective.

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State College Neighborhood Plan

Show us how you get around using the circle mark your start and end destinations. Add the street name, block, or this to the line to show where you start and end these trips.

4. What places or features are important to your neighborhood? Show us by marking them with a \*

5. How do you think you can recall in your mind... Show us by marking them with a \*

## how to use this plan

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## purpose of the plan

The purpose of the State College Neighborhood plan is to provide an accurate evaluation of the neighborhoods' conditions and to develop a series of recommendations that will guide neighborhood-level planning activities in order to achieve the following goals:

Goal 1: Analyze neighborhood trends and conditions in such a way that neighborhood residents, community leaders and Borough Council can identify an appropriate framework for future decision making.

Goal 2: Outline a direction for the future of the neighborhoods that represents the needs and desires of current and future residents and furthers the mission of the Borough's Strategic Plan and regional planning goals.

Goal 3: Provide actionable strategies that give guidance to Borough Council and the boards and commissions when making decisions regarding growth and development of the Borough's neighborhoods.

Goal 4: Identify strategies for improving neighborhood programs, encouraging and expanding home ownership, and revitalizing critical neighborhood commercial areas and public spaces.

Goal 5: Focus on initiatives for the neighborhoods's residents and systems that will lead to socially, economically and environmentally sustainable neighborhoods.

## how to use these recommendations

The information about the Borough's neighborhoods is meant to be informative for residents, community groups and local elected and appointed officials. Likewise, the recommendations that have been drafted will be implemented through initiatives undertaken by both Borough officials as well as by neighborhood residents. Here are a few tips on how to use this plan.

### borough residents

Residents are encouraged to explore the information about and priorities for their neighborhood. Learning about what is currently happening and what the future vision is will help residents become more engaged in their neighborhood and more aware of opportunities to make our neighborhoods more livable places.



*Neighborhood residents were asked to share their thoughts on neighborhood issues and solutions during workshops that took place throughout 2013.*

Residents are encouraged to find recommendations they care about and engage in community initiatives that will help foster this initiative to implementation. This action could take the form of becoming a more active member of the neighborhood association, applying to serve on a State College board or commission, or simply reach out to lend a helping hand to a neighbor.

Additionally, residents are encouraged to continue to engage in the companion Citizen Planning Workbook. Although the process for preparing this plan is complete, the task of monitoring the conditions of our neighborhoods is never finished. Utilizing these workbook activities will help alert Borough representatives to changes or issues that should be responded to as well as help continue to highlight ways in which the plan's recommendations can be implemented.



*Planning Commission and staff held workshops at churches, schools and other community facilities within the Borough's neighborhoods in 2013.*

## neighborhood organizations

Many of the recommendations in this plan deal with programs and initiatives that can be led by the Borough's Neighborhood Associations. In some instances, the Associations and their leadership are more equipped to provide outreach to residents, organize events or observe issues because they are actively involved in the day-to-day activities of the neighborhoods.

Engaging the Borough's neighborhood associations in the recommendations of this plan will help ensure that they're implemented in a way that is meaningful to residents and can help improve the working relationship among neighborhoods and Borough officials.

Additionally, neighborhood associations are encouraged to share upcoming events, successes and other activities with the community in order to celebrate the positive things that are being achieved in our neighborhoods.

## borough officials

Borough officials and staff will also use this plan when setting goals, implementing policies or funding community improvements. This plan will help Borough officials focus on the priorities for our neighborhoods and incorporate them into strategic planning, work programs, capital and operational budgeting, and outreach activities. It is also the goal of this plan to provide the relevant information needed for local officials to make decisions that will lead to sustainable neighborhoods. This plan can also provide a tool for communicating with neighboring municipalities and working with community organizations when implementing its recommendations.

## how the document is organized

The remainder of the plan contains information about the current conditions of the Borough's neighborhoods and about this plan's future vision for them.

The next section, "Current Neighborhood Conditions," serves to provide baseline information about what is happening in the Borough today. This includes general information about the Borough, such as existing transportation systems, housing typologies, existing public facilities and other conditions affecting all of the Borough's neighborhoods. This section then goes on to provide a profile for each neighborhood. The neighborhoods of the Borough are identified on the map on the following page. These profiles include a review of the successes of any prior neighborhood planning efforts, a brief history of the neighborhood, and an outline of each neighborhood's current physical, social and economic conditions. Finally, the profiles also outline the results of the neighborhood meetings.

The "Establishing a Vision" section outlines a series of recommendations for improving the quality of life in the Borough's neighborhoods. The plan's goals and recommendations are organized into three themes, which emerged as the Planning Commission continued discussions with Borough Residents. These themes relate to Neighborhood Facilities & Appearance, Renter & Owner Occupied Housing, and Neighborhood & Community Relations. For each of these themes, there are 4 goals and a series of recommendations which will provide guidance for implementing these goals. These themes and goals can be found beginning on page 20.

The individual recommendations for each goal were crafted by considering residents' input that was shared during the neighborhood planning workshops. Additionally, staff conducted research, held discussions with the Planning Commission, and evaluated opportunities to coordinate other planning activities in order to draft an appropriate set

of recommendations for the neighborhood plan.

Additionally, the plan includes a section which discusses how to monitor implementation in order to assist the community in measuring its success and outlining additional priorities. Finally, there are many resources contained in the appendices which provide case studies from other communities and helpful information about resources available for groups to utilize in this area.

The content of the plan is meant to be organized in a user-friendly format which allows residents to either review the plan's recommendations as a whole or skip to information specifically related to an individual neighborhood. To assist with navigating this plan, there are two helpful symbols to look for.

To find background information and recommendations specifically related to a particular neighborhood, look for icons throughout the plan that are coded with that neighborhood's representative color and initials, which are shown on the map at right. For example, each recommendation will contain a color-coded dot, such as the ones here to indicate neighborhoods for which that recommendation is a high priority.



Likewise, each goal is represented with an icon, which can be found throughout the plan when referring to actions that can be achieved to implement that specific goal. These are used both within the discussion of general recommendations for all of the Borough's neighborhoods, as well as each individual neighborhood's priorities.





*This map illustrates State College neighborhoods' boundaries as they have been defined for the purpose of this neighborhood plan. Each neighborhood is depicted in a color and with an abbreviation that will be used throughout the plan when referring to information and recommendations specific to an individual neighborhood.*

## planning themes & goals

Throughout the early neighborhood planning meetings, residents shared many thoughts on the Borough's neighborhoods' strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. As Planning Commission and Staff analyzed those thoughts and compared each of the neighborhoods' input with the others, three major themes emerged. The Planning Commission and staff understood that a successful neighborhood plan would, at minimum, need to address the following issues:



The identification of these three themes helped guide discussions that took place with residents throughout the rest of the planning process. These themes have now formed the organizational structure for the goals and recommendations of this plan.

An appendix at the end of this plan contains a series of case studies that highlight initiatives taking place within the State College area as well as in other communities. These case studies have been included and are referenced throughout the plan in order to provide context for the recommendations as well as help give guidance for the implementation of the plan's recommendations.

## neighborhood facilities & appearance

The first of these themes is related to the maintenance of neighborhood facilities and aesthetics. In general, Borough residents indicated that the diversity of the Borough's neighborhoods are a strength as long as they remain stable and well-maintained. Residents believe that access to parks and recreation, the proximity of neighborhoods to public and private amenities as well as the accessibility of most modes of transportation make the Borough's neighborhoods strong and livable. However, residents are concerned that there is a need to protect and reinvest in the Borough's neighborhoods as growth occurs in the Centre Region. The following goals will include recommendations that will help protect and enhance the physical amenities, aesthetics and accessibility of the Borough's neighborhoods:



Maintain neighborhood aesthetics, high quality housing stock and cultural and historic resources



Protect existing neighborhood activity, social and commercial centers and enhance these facilities in order to serve residents' needs



Explore opportunities for increasing environmental sustainability of the Borough's neighborhoods



Address neighborhood-scale transportation safety and opportunities for expanding multi-modal systems

## owner and renter occupied housing

The second theme addresses the balance of renter- and owner-occupied housing in the Borough's neighborhoods and the management of lifestyle conflicts associated with this diversity. Many residents shared concerns and ideas related to this theme. For instance, many of the residents in the Borough's neighborhood feel that a sustained or increased level of enforcement for the Borough's Ordinances and policies, particularly those related to rental housing maintenance, occupancy and noise, is necessary. Additionally, many residents were interested in ways that the Borough's neighborhoods can once again attract families, young professionals, staff and graduates from the Penn State. Finally, this theme encompasses concerns about the affordability of the existing housing stock.

-  Maintain a high level of service and enforcement of Borough Ordinances and policies related to property management, behavior and occupancy
-  Explore opportunities for creating programs and partnership for improving the management of rental housing
-  Increase home ownership in Borough neighborhoods and expand programs which provide assistance for affordable housing
-  Consider impacts on neighborhood sustainability as growth occurs in the Centre Region

## improving neighbor to neighbor relations

The final theme includes recommendations for improving communications within and outside of the Borough. In general, residents appreciated the opportunity to share their ideas and concerns with the Planning Commission during the neighborhood meetings, and expressed interest in increased opportunities for dialogue about these issues and more regular updates on issues impacting the neighborhoods. Additionally, residents are interested in more opportunities for positive engagements between student and non-student residents and more involvement on the part of landlords and realtors in neighborhood activities. Finally, there was interest in making information more accessible and increasing communications with other Centre Region municipalities in order to evaluate the long-term impacts of growth.

-  Maintain and expand diversity of neighborhoods' residents and improve relations between student and non-student neighbors
-  Improve communications among residents, neighborhood leaders and Borough officials
-  Improve communications with neighboring municipalities in order to monitor the impacts of new developments on Borough facilities
-  Market the positive benefits of living in the Borough's neighborhoods