

Neighborhood Plan Executive Summary



Executive Summary for the
State College Neighborhood Plan
Adopted July 21, 2014

message from the department

The adoption of the State College Neighborhood Plan marks a critical success for the Planning Commission, Planning Staff and residents of State College. The Plan highlights nearly two years' work on the part of the community and its volunteers and lays out a vision for the future of State College's neighborhoods. For some neighborhoods, preparing this Plan provided the chance to review the implementation of previous neighborhood plans, some of which were nearly 20 years old. For other neighborhoods, this Plan provided the first opportunity for residents to participate in neighborhood planning activities led by the Borough. Additionally, this Plan is the first neighborhood planning activity that has engaged all of the Borough's neighborhoods in one coordinated effort. The result is a Plan that not only calls attention to the unique character and opportunities of each neighborhood, but also highlights the commonalities among them and the major themes that are important to the Borough as a whole.

Preparation of this Plan included input from residents during 17 special meetings of the Planning Commission; residents' engagement in new communications tools such as the Citizen's Planning Workbook and Engage State College; participation in pilot projects led by Penn State students through the Sustainable Communities Collaborative; and the thoughtful feedback of residents and neighborhood associations.

The State College Planning Department would like to thank the Planning Commission for countless hours dedicated to hosting special neighborhood meetings and reviewing and editing the Plan as it was drafted. Staff would also like to extend their gratitude to the residents of the Borough's neighborhoods for engaging in the planning process and for sharing their ideas regarding the future of their neighborhoods. The Plan is a reflection of the input that was received from these dedicated individuals. Finally staff would like to thank the individuals and organizations that provided space for meetings, shared announcements about the process and collected feedback from residents. These contributions helped extend the capacity of the Planning Commission and staff far beyond our reach to make the planning process a success.

what is in this plan?

The State College Neighborhood Plan includes the following elements to help residents learn about their neighborhood, the Borough and the vision for the future. By visiting www.statecollegepa.us/NeighborhoodPlan, residents can explore the Plan, or by visiting the links below, download resources specific to a topic or their own neighborhood.



current conditions

The chapter on current conditions outlines what is happening in the Borough and its neighborhoods today. This includes information about population, housing, transportation, community facilities, and more.

This chapter also provides a profile of each neighborhood, including a brief history, unique characteristics, and a summary of residents' input that was shared during the neighborhood's SWOT Analysis meeting. See this chapter at <http://www.statecollegepa.us/DocumentCenter/View/9291>



the vision

The goals and recommendations of the Plan can be found in this chapter, which is organized around three themes. For each theme, several goals and recommendations have been identified, along with some guidance for implementing the goals.

While many of the Plan's goals are applicable to most of the Borough's neighborhoods, some are more important to particular neighborhoods than others. This chapter also helps residents understand which goals are a priority for their neighborhood and locations within the neighborhood where improvements could be applied. See this chapter at <http://www.statecollegepa.us/DocumentCenter/View/9332>



reaching the vision

An important chapter of the plan discusses how the goals can be implemented. This includes an analysis of what resources will be needed, who might be involved and when each activity should be completed. This section also talks about when the community should check in and evaluate its progress on implementing the goals. See this chapter at <http://www.statecollegepa.us/DocumentCenter/View/9349>



helpful resources

There are several appendices included in the Plan that provide helpful resources for residents. These include links to reports and websites, which are referenced throughout the Plan, as well as a summary of case studies from other communities that may provide helpful insights for implementing the Plan's recommendations. See these resources at <http://www.statecollegepa.us/DocumentCenter/View/>

who will use the recommendations?

The State College Neighborhood Plan includes recommendations that can be implemented residents, community groups and local elected and appointed officials. In order to be successful, implementation of the Plan will benefit from the work and input of all of these individuals.

borough residents

The Plan will help residents explore information about their neighborhood and the priorities that have been identified for its future. Some of the Plan's recommendations may inspire residents to engage in a community initiative that will help implement the Plan's goals. This action could take the form of becoming more active in a neighborhood association, applying to serve on a State College board or commission, or simply reaching out to lend a helping hand to a neighbor or community group.

Residents can also continue to use the Citizen Planning Workbook. Although the process of preparing this Plan is complete, the task of monitoring the conditions of our neighborhoods will be ongoing. Utilizing the Workbook will help alert Borough officials to changes or issues that should be addressed and highlight additional ways in which the Plan's recommendations can be implemented.

neighborhood organizations

Several ideas in the Plan include initiatives that could be led by neighborhood associations. In fact, for some recommendations, these associations and their members may be more equipped to provide outreach to residents, organize events and observe issues because they are actively involved in the neighborhoods' day-to-day activities.



Engaging residents and neighborhood associations in the implementation of the Plan will help ensure that its ideas are applied in a way that is meaningful to residents. This can also help improve the working relationship between neighborhoods and Borough officials. Additionally, the associations can share upcoming events, successes and updates with the community in order to celebrate our neighborhoods' achievements.

borough officials

Borough officials and staff will use the Plan when setting goals, formulating policies and funding community improvements. The Plan's priorities may be incorporated into strategic planning, work programs, capital and operational budgeting, and outreach activities. The Plan can act as a tool for communicating with neighboring municipalities and community organizations about the Borough's goals for its neighborhoods.

explore the Borough's neighborhoods

The State College Neighborhood Plan provides information about many aspects of the Borough and its individual neighborhoods, including who lives in them. Here's a snapshot of the information about the Borough's residents.



In 2010 the population of State College was

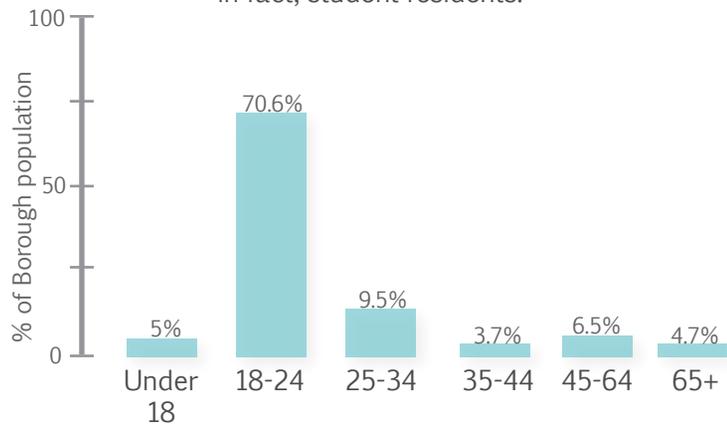
42,034 residents

57.2% of these residents live in one of the Borough's neighborhoods and the other 42.8% live downtown, on campus and in multi-family areas.

According to the 2010 US Census,

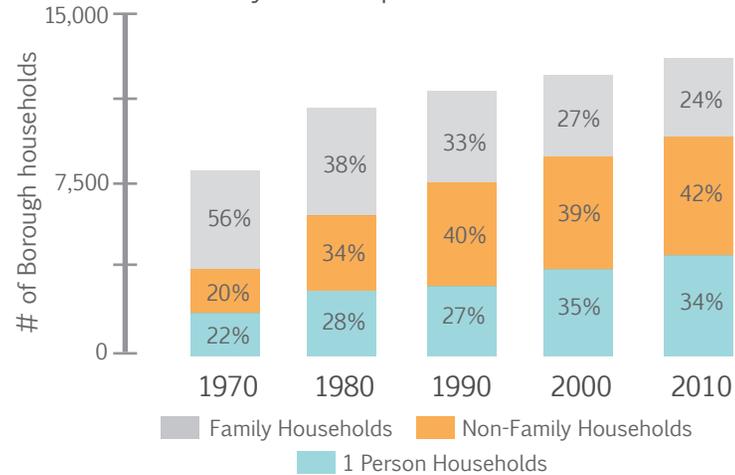
70.6% of the population was 18-24 years old

representing the largest age cohort in the Borough. While this age cohort is not exclusive to undergraduates of Penn State University, it is presumed that a majority of these residents are, in fact, student residents.



Percentage of the Borough population within each of the age cohorts above, according to the 2010 US Census.

In 2010, there were **12,610 households** in the Borough. Since 1970, there has been a growth in non-family and one person households.



Borough households from 1970-2010 according to the US Census.

In the Fall of 2013 the enrollment at the Penn State University Park Campus was

46,184 students

Off-campus living has been increasing. In the Fall of 2012, approximately 32% of the enrolled student body lived in on-campus housing.

68% live off campus





State College is comprised of 10 neighborhoods, the Pennsylvania State University campus, and several other multi-family residential areas. This map illustrates neighborhood boundaries as they have been defined in the State College Neighborhood Plan. Each neighborhood is depicted in a color with an abbreviation that is used throughout the plan when referring to information specific to each of the neighborhoods.

explore the Borough's neighborhoods

The State College Neighborhood Plan provides information about many aspects of the Borough and its individual neighborhoods, including its housing stock and other amenities. Here's a snapshot of the information about housing and services.



12,610 occupied housing units

The 2010 Census reported 97% of the Borough's units were occupied and 3%, or 397 units, were vacant.

According to the 2010 Census Bureau, vacant units include year-round vacancies, seasonal homes or homes that are occupied on an intermittent basis. The Borough's Planning office has not verified the status of each of these units.



Of the Borough's occupied housing units, 20% are owner-occupied and 80% are renter-occupied.

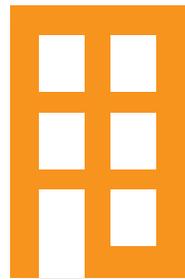


According to the Census Bureau, a housing unit is defined as a single family home, one half of a duplex, one townhome unit, one apartment unit, one mobile home, or one room that is occupied independent of other parts of the structure in which it is located.

Of the 13,000 total housing units, roughly 27% of these were single-unit structures and 73% were multi-unit structures.



27%



73%

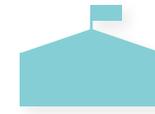
In the 2012 National Citizen's survey,

82% of residents rated their neighborhood as an excellent place to live.

State College's neighborhoods have many amenities that make them livable, such as an abundance of public park space, schools within walking distance and a bus system that has earned State College a designation as one of the top three transit-intensive small communities in the US.



13 parks



8 schools



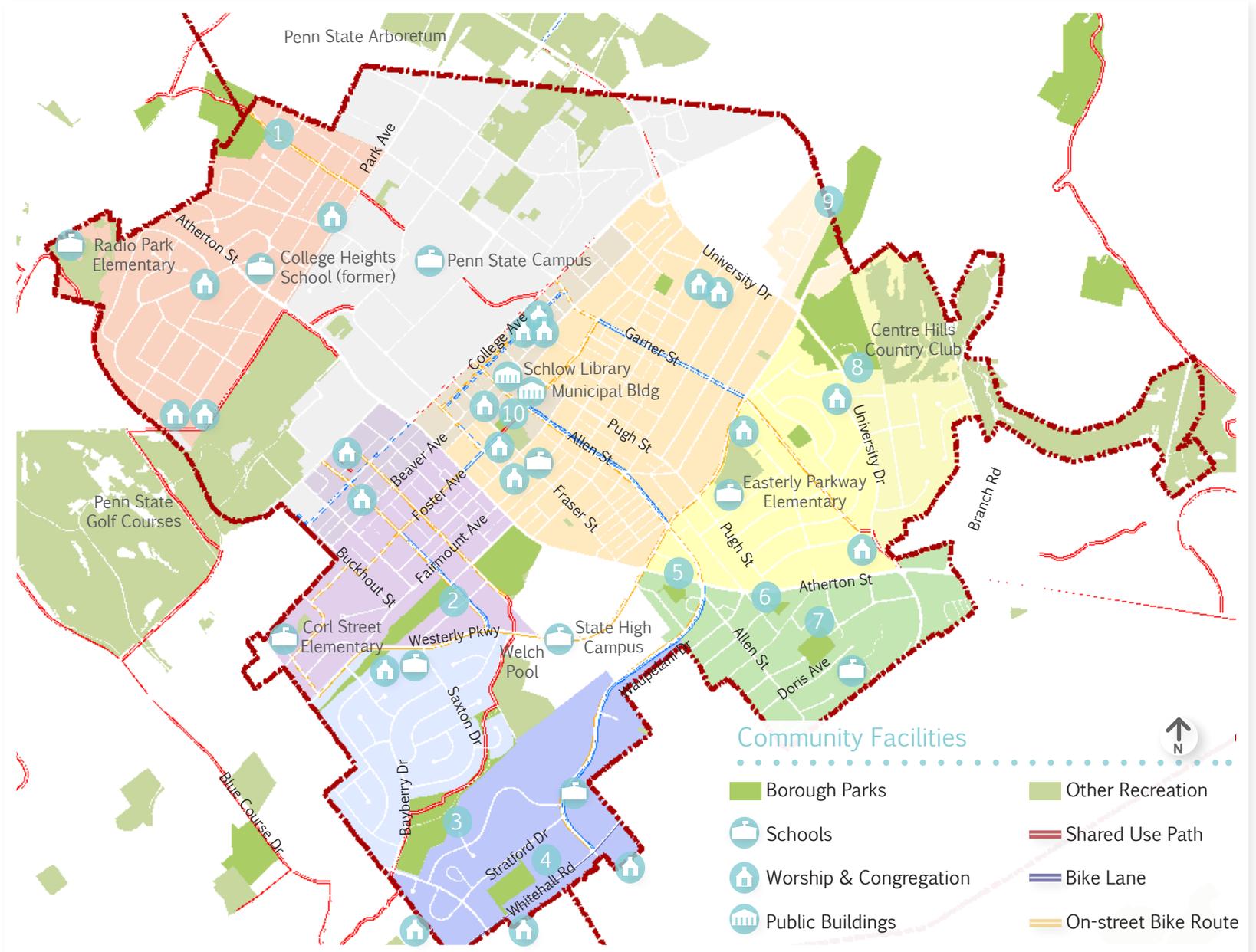
27 transit routes*

**Number of CATA Routes that were operated during full service schedule in Spring 2014. This includes community routes and campus routes. Additional special event shuttles are operated on an as-needed basis, particularly for home football games.*

In 2012, the League of American Bicyclists designated the Borough and the Centre Region as a

Bronze-level Bicycle Friendly Community



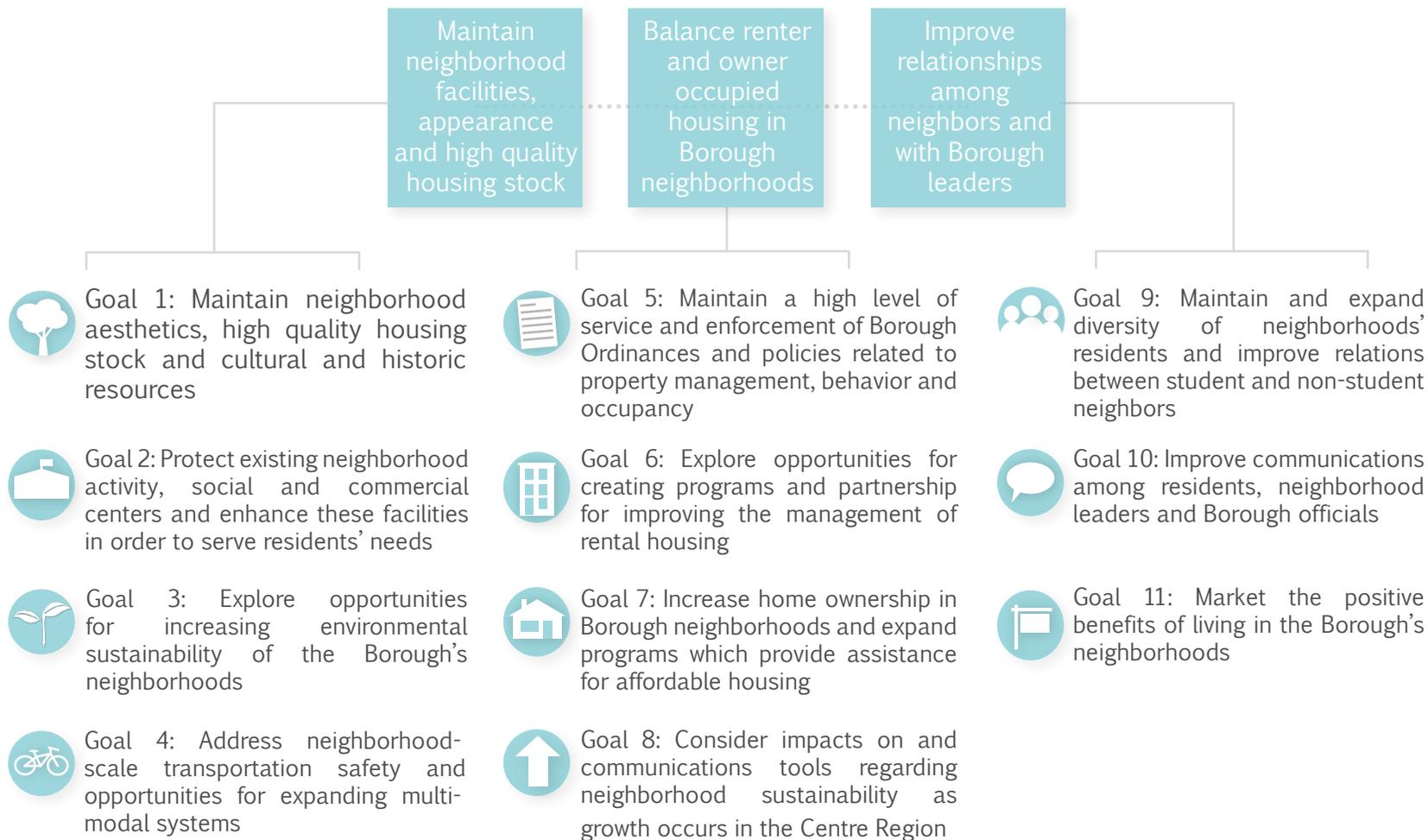


The Plan includes maps depicting the location of various community features. For example, this map shows the locations of parks, churches, schools and other community facilities such as the Schlow Library and the Borough Municipal Building. State College Borough parks are numbered on the map and include: 1) Sunset Park; 2) Holmes-Foster Park; 3) Orchard Park; 4) High Point Park; 5) South Hills Park; 6) Nittany Village Park; 7) Tusseyview Park; 8) Lederer Park; 9) Walnut Springs Park & Thompson Woods Preserve; 10) Sidney Friedman Parklet.

learn about the Plan's recommendations

The State College Neighborhood Plan also includes a section with details about each of the Borough's neighborhoods and their priority goals for the future. This information was collected with the help of Borough residents during a year-long planning process. Residents first shared their ideas about their neighborhood's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. This input defined three major themes that the Plan needed to address.

For each of these themes, a number of goals and recommendations were outlined. Based on each neighborhood's specific input about opportunities and threats, several of the goals and recommendations were outlined as priorities for each of the neighborhoods. Below are the themes and goals that were formulated based on residents' ideas. The following pages include a glimpse of how these apply to each neighborhood.



college heights



Basic Demographics (2010):

Population: 1,839; Occupied Housing Units: 787
70% Owner-Occupied, 30% Renter-Occupied

Unique Neighborhood Features:

Only neighborhood north of Penn State Campus. Founded with the goal of being the “garden spot” of State College. Historic district that is representative of early 20th century and mid-century modern neighborhood development. Very active neighborhood association which formed in the 1920s.

Opportunities for the Future:

Maintain historic features and streamline ordinance enforcement, zoning, and design guidelines to protect neighborhood character. Better communications within and outside the Borough regarding changes and developments.

Priority Goals:



View Online:

<http://www.statecollegepa.us/DocumentCenter/View/9312>

highlands



Basic Demographics (2010):

Population: 9,726; Occupied Housing Units: 3,506
12% Owner-Occupied, 88% Renter-Occupied

Unique Neighborhood Features:

Largest and most populated Borough neighborhood. Very walkable, with close proximity to many community amenities. Historic district that is representative of early 20th century and mid-century modern neighborhood development. Town-gown neighborhood with a diversity of residents and housing types. Very active neighborhood association formed in the 1980s.

Opportunities for the Future:

Increase owner-occupied housing and streamline ordinance enforcement, zoning and design guidelines to protect neighborhood character. Be a positive example of town-gown relationships by improving communications between student and non-student neighbors.

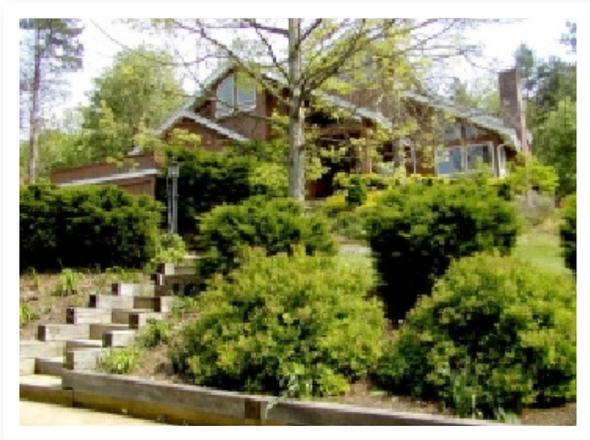
Priority Goals:



View Online:

<http://www.statecollegepa.us/DocumentCenter/View/9333>

vallamont



Basic Demographics (2010 est):

Population: 70 est; Occupied Housing Units: 34 est
100% Owner-Occupied, 0% Renter-Occupied

Unique Neighborhood Features:

Borough's smallest neighborhood area situated along a private street. Neighborhood residents know each other very well and the association represents homes in both State College Borough and College Township. Quiet and wooded neighborhood with unique residential architecture and commercial office buildings. Borders on Walnut Springs Park and Thompson Woods Preserve.

Opportunities for the Future:

Maintain the natural features that contribute to neighborhood ambiance and ensure that future developments do not impact the neighborhood ambiance. High quality maintenance of community amenities, particularly nearby parks and schools.

Priority Goals:



View Online:

<http://www.statecollegepa.us/DocumentCenter/View/9342>

nittany hills east & penfield



Basic Demographics (2010):

Population: 353 Occupied Housing Units: 151
68% Owner-Occupied, 32% Renter-Occupied

Unique Neighborhood Features:

Small, quiet neighborhood characteristic of 1990s and 2000s neighborhood development. Neighborhood is situated atop a hill; some homes have spectacular views of Mt. Nittany or of the commercial area along South Atherton Street. Adjacent to Lederer Park and the Centre Hills Golf Course.

Opportunities for the Future:

Maintenance of nearby community amenities and communications about developments in College Township. Emphasize University Drive as a gateway to the community and improve accessibility along the corridor. Mitigate impacts from increased rental housing in the neighborhoods.

Priority Goals:



View Online:

<http://www.statecollegepa.us/DocumentCenter/View/9344>

state college south



Basic Demographics (2010):

Population: 1,313; Occupied Housing Units: 620
53% Owner-Occupied, 47% Renter-Occupied

Unique Neighborhood Features:

Many residents in the neighborhood have lived in their home for a long time and are very involved in the community. Neighborhood includes Easterly Parkway Elementary School. Balance of owner-occupied and renter-occupied housing and considered to be an affordable neighborhood for families, working professionals and retirees.

Opportunities for the Future:

Preservation of existing housing stock, community amenities and opportunities for workforce housing. Increase communications with the Borough and more opportunities to engage residents in learning about neighborhood conditions and sharing ideas.

Priority Goals:



View Online:

<http://www.statecollegepa.us/DocumentCenter/View/9341>

tusseyview



Basic Demographics (2010):

Population: 995 Occupied Housing Units: 469
50% Owner-Occupied, 50% Renter-Occupied

Unique Neighborhood Features:

Neighborhood is the southernmost part of the Borough and is surrounded by a diversity of uses-- schools, commercial, multi-family residential and even farmland. Neighborhood includes Foxdale Village Retirement Community. Neighborhood association provides events for residents throughout the year and communicates with nearby residents of College Township.

Opportunities for the Future:

Maintenance of high quality housing in neighborhood. Improve features in neighborhood parks and nearby commercial areas. Alleviate traffic and safety concerns at Waupelani Drive and Atherton Street intersection. Increase communications about developments with and outside of the Borough that could impact the neighborhood.

Priority Goals:



View Online:

<http://www.statecollegepa.us/DocumentCenter/View/9346>

orchard park



Basic Demographics (2010):

Population: 4,000; Occupied Housing Units: 2,053
10% Owner-Occupied, 90% Renter-Occupied

Unique Neighborhood Features:

Neighborhood is primarily multi-family housing and home to many graduate students, international students, traveling scholars, professionals and families. Borders on Orchard Park and other community amenities. Access to bike paths and most frequent CATA bus service of any area in the Borough.

Opportunities for the Future:

Preserve and enhance nearby community amenities to protect characteristics that make neighborhood an attractive place to live. Increase owner-occupied and workforce housing in the neighborhood. Increase communications within and to the neighborhood's residents.

Priority Goals:



View Online:

<http://www.statecollegepa.us/DocumentCenter/View/9350>

greentrees



Basic Demographics (2010):

Population: 923; Occupied Housing Units: 359
93% Owner-Occupied, 7% Renter-Occupied

Unique Neighborhood Features:

Neighborhood has highest percentage of households with families and one of the lowest percentages of rental housing. Residents observe that homes sell quickly in the neighborhood due to its attractive quality of life. Active neighborhood association and annual neighborhood "Twelve Days of Christmas" display. Close proximity to schools, churches and other community amenities.

Opportunities for the Future:

Maintain property values and high quality of life in neighborhood. Ensure ordinance enforcement and policies are consistent and effective. Preserve nearby community amenities, particularly schools, which are attractive to families. Communications regarding development within and outside of the Borough.

Priority Goals:



View Online:

<http://www.statecollegepa.us/DocumentCenter/View/9351>

holmes-foster



Basic Demographics (2010):

Population: 1,597; Occupied Housing Units: 713
42% Owner-Occupied, 58% Renter-Occupied

Unique Neighborhood Features:

Historic district with housing characteristic of early 20th century and mid-century modern neighborhood development and built using locally-sourced materials. Arboretum-like appearance with mature trees and large park. Walkable neighborhood with close proximity to community amenities. Successful mix of owner and renter-occupied housing.

Opportunities for the Future:

Maintain historic features and streamline ordinance enforcement, zoning, and design guidelines to protect neighborhood character. Better communications within and outside the Borough regarding changes and developments. More neighborhood-oriented amenities and retail within walking distance. Implementation of planning documents.

Priority Goals:



View Online:

<http://www.statecollegepa.us/DocumentCenter/View/9352>

west end



Basic Demographics (2010):

Population: 2,324; Occupied Housing Units: 819
4% Owner-Occupied, 96% Renter-Occupied

Unique Neighborhood Features:

This area was historically an industrial area, with a train station and the Borough's first hospital. Today, it is a gateway between Penn State's West Campus, Downtown, the Holmes-Foster neighborhood and Ferguson Township. It is the location of a diversity of rental housing and small commercial offices and retail shops.

Opportunities for the Future:

Improvements to rental housing within the area and more engagement among residents, landlords and the community. Implementation of planning documents. Increased connectivity to Penn State's West Campus. More neighborhood-oriented amenities and retail within walking distance.

Priority Goals:



View Online:

<http://www.statecollegepa.us/DocumentCenter/View/>

engage in the implementation

The State College Neighborhood Plan includes recommendations that can be achieved through the help of many community stakeholders in both the short term and over a long period of time. The implementation of the Plan will depend on the availability of resources and activities of a broad cross-section of organizations in the community. The first step will be to prepare an implementation program.

This program will help to organize the priorities of the plan into a working document which provides a detailed outline of how projects can be implemented. This program will be updated regularly, so that the community is well-positioned to respond to challenges and opportunities as they become available. Here is a sample of the details in the implementation chapter of the Neighborhood Plan.



This flowchart summarizes the process for identifying short-term implementation items, preparing an implementation program, and regular evaluation.

timelines

Each of the Plan's recommendations has been given a timeline for when a project could be initiated or completed. These timelines have been recommended based on the availability of resources, interest from community partners or the perceived level of importance for the project. These timelines include:

- Short Term: Initiated or completed in the next 1-2 years
- Mid-Term: Initiated or completed in the next 3-5 years
- Long-Term: Initiated or completed in the next 5+ years
- Ongoing: Projects do not have a defined time line or projects that are not "one-time" solutions

implementation partners

The key to successful implementation of many of the Plan's recommendations is forging successful partnerships and utilizing the skills and capacities of the individuals and organizations within our community.

The Plan has identified many of these individuals and organizations that we believe could be a part of the implementation of the Plan. However, this is not meant to be a complete list. As more people learn about the Plan and projects are underway, new partners and resources may be identified that can assist with further implementation of the ideas.

resources

The Plan identifies resources that are currently available and resources that would be needed to successfully implement the Plan’s recommendations. Three categories of resources have been identified:

-  Funding
-  Human Capital
-  Other Resources

metrics

It will also be important to develop metrics for measuring the success of the Plan’s implementation. These will help keep the implementation partners on track with recording their successes and also give the community a snapshot of what has been done. For some recommendations, measuring the Plan’s success will be as simple as placing a check mark next to completed items. For others, a long-term analysis of changes in demographics or other conditions will be needed to chart success.

evaluation & updates

There are many routine activities that take place throughout the year that will provide the Planning Commission, Planning Staff and the community to evaluate progress on the Plan and consider updates.

Additionally, several reports, including the Annual State of Planning Report and the Neighborhood Sustainability Report gives the Borough an opportunity to evaluate the implementation of the Plan and to study any impacts its implementation has had on quality of life in the Borough’s neighborhoods.

By preparing a short-term implementation program every two years, Planning Commission, staff and the community will be able to clearly understand ongoing implementation activities and provide input. This will also give the community an opportunity to ensure that the goals and recommendations of the Plan are still addressing the community’s needs and are on track for the future.

Sample Implementation Chart from the Plan:

Recommendation & Neighborhoods	Timeline	Champion(s)	Resources Available	Resources Needed	Metrics
2.D. Consider neighborhood partnership improvement projects 	Mid-Term	Lead: Neighborhood Assoc., Student Orgs., SCASD Partners: Staff, Residents	 Borough planning, engineering & public works staff	 Funding for equipment/supplies, grants  Project volunteers	Implementation Status

For each recommendation of Neighborhood Plan, implementation details, such as those listed above, have been outlined in the Implementation chapter.

To review this document and the Neighborhood Plan online, please visit:
www.statecollegepa.us/NeighborhoodPlan