

# State College Neighborhood Plan 2015-2016 Implementation Program



Implementation Program for the  
State College Neighborhood Plan  
State College Borough Planning Commission  
DRAFT November 2014



## introduction to the program

The adoption of the State College Neighborhood Plan marked 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.

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 its reach to make the planning process a success.

While the natural tendency when a planning process is complete is to breathe a sigh of relief, the true test of the strength of the plan lies in its implementation. During the planning process, much thoughtful dialogue was initiated, many great ideas were offered, and several community-wide challenges were identified. It is incredibly important to build upon the energy that was generated and the connections that were made during that process to move the Plan forward. This guide has been prepared to outline strategies for implementation and to bring the community back together to launch the vision into action.

The pages of this implementation program are filled with ideas for action that can be taken over the short and long term. In order for this action to take place, a cooperative effort on the part of residents, neighborhoods and community leaders will be necessary. Some recommendations may be the responsibility of groups of citizens, and others the responsibility of Borough officials. But there will often be opportunities for collaboration and good communications to support each of the individual efforts. This program not only outlines who may have the capacity to lead the charge on these ideas, but also how all of our community's stakeholders can be a part of the process.

### Special Thanks for inputs on Implementation Program

#### 2014 Commissioners:

Michael Roeckel, Chair  
Anita Genger, Vice Chair  
Zoe Boniface  
Charles Dumas  
Scott Dutt  
Jon Eich  
Rich Kalin

#### State College Residents

#### Neighborhood Associations:

INSERT ASSOCIATIONS  
SUBMITTING PROJECTS

#### Student Organizations:

INSERT ORGANIZATIONS  
SUBMITTING PROJECTS



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# implementing the plan

The success of the State College Neighborhood Plan lies in its implementation. The purpose of this Implementation Program is to provide an outline for the community to use in initiating and sustaining the implementation of the Plan.

## The Implementation Program

This program outlines the actions that will be taken to carry out the Neighborhood Plan goals. This document includes initiatives that will be taken on by the Borough, as well as by neighborhood associations, student and community organizations, and groups of residents.

This program focuses special attention on the activities that can be launched within the next two years. These activities respond to the goals and recommendations that were indicated as important through the neighborhood planning process. The projects are organized around the Plan's three themes: Neighborhood Facilities & Appearance, Owner- & Renter-Occupied Housing, and Neighbor-to-Neighbor Relations.

A project description is included for each short-term action item; this includes critical information about what will be required to initiate the activity and its intended outcomes. These will help individuals that will be involved in the Plan's implementation to develop specific projects for work programs, budgets, or to form working groups.

It is important to note that all of the projects listed in this Implementation Program will not necessarily be the responsibility of the Borough. While the activities within this Program certainly reflect the work of a diversity of Borough ABC's and departments, it also identifies tasks that will be led by residents, community organizations and student groups. Through the implementation of the Plan, the Borough may seek out and work with leaders to implement certain activities; however, some initiatives will be more appropriate for organizations to complete independent of the Borough's involvement.

## Purpose of the Program

Some of the projects in this program have been summarized from existing work programs or will be ongoing activities. Others are new ideas or short-term activities that could be launched to address specific needs identified within the Plan. Regardless of their source, the purpose for this collective document is to provide a clear picture of the activities that are being done to improve the Borough's neighborhoods. This program will include projects being led by all who are involved in its implementation. This program will be a valuable tool for the partners to measure implementation, report information, and give insights to those who want to engage in a project or other initiative.

The Neighborhood Plan Implementation Program will:

- ✓ be a communication tool to showcase what is being done to implement the Plan's goals
- ✓ create awareness throughout the Borough about new or ongoing activities that address neighborhood plan goals
- ✓ clearly outline the expectations of these projects and the roles of individuals and groups which will be involved in the implementation
- ✓ highlight opportunities for collaboration among departments or among the Borough and outside organizations
- ✓ identify resources needed to complete tasks
- ✓ set realistic expectations regarding time commitments necessary and current capacity to meet goals
- ✓ provide metrics and a template for progress reports

## Developing the Program

Because this Plan includes recommendations that can be implemented by many community stakeholders, and across a diversity of neighborhood quality of life issues, a number of steps should be taken to launch its implementation.

Within the Plan, each neighborhood has a section, which identifies a number of priority goals for the neighborhood. A first step in the process will be to discuss these priority goals with the neighborhoods and determine what can reasonably be achieved. Some may be individual priorities, and others may be community-wide priorities that can be addressed in a collaborative way throughout the Borough.

This step will be an activity for the Planning Commission and Borough staff to carry out in order to make recommendations to Borough Council and other advisory groups on items that should be included in community goals and work programs.

Another early step will be to work with the Borough's internal Neighborhood Services Team. Staff members on this team represent all of the Borough's Departments and communicate with the Borough's ABC's. Through this team, activities which achieve the Plan's goals that have been planned, initiated or are nearing completion can be shared. Updates can be provided which shine light on opportunities for internal collaboration on projects.

As these projects and activities are identified, they will be added to the Implementation Program. Each activity will be summarized with basic information about how the project will be completed and who will be responsible. These points of information include:

- Relationship to Plan goals & neighborhoods of priority
- Responsible organization and partners
- Anticipated Timeframe
- Project description & importance
- Resources available & needed
- Metrics & implementation status

## Evaluating Progress

There are many points throughout the year that provide an opportunity for evaluating the progress that has been made to implement the Plan's recommendations. These include:

- **Quarterly Updates to Borough Council-** When the Plan was adopted by Borough Council in 2014, it was requested that quarterly updates are provided on the progress of the Plan. This will likely take place as a staff or ABC report, jointly prepared by Planning Commission and the Planning staff. This report provides the opportunity to evaluate the activities that the Commission has engaged in related to implementing the Plan, as well as an opportunity to initiate new tasks or adjust time lines if needed.
- **Regular Planning Commission Meetings-** The Planning Commission

*This program outlines the actions to be taken in the next two years that will carry out the Neighborhood Plan goals.*

## Developing the Implementation Program

Borough and community organizations identify priority projects for next two years, and identify other projects as long-term. Develop two year Implementation Program.

Develop project summaries for each of the short-term implementation activities in the program. Include who will complete, resources available, and metrics.

Provide quarterly updates on implementation progress to Borough Council and relevant ABC's and community organizations.

In 2016, review the NSR and NCS data and compare to progress on implementation activities. Evaluate impacts and prepare updated program for 2017-2018.

meets up to three times each month. The Commission can discuss the implementation of the Plan and make adjustments to priorities and timelines during these regular meetings.

- **Annual State of Planning Report-** This report is an inventory of activities that staff and the Planning Commission has completed each year. The preparation of this report typically takes place during the first quarter of the year, and can include a review of the implementation status of the Plan's recommendations. A section should be added to this annual report which outlines the progress that has been made on the Plan's implementation.
- **Neighborhood Association Meetings-** Many of the Borough's neighborhood associations meet on a regular basis, with at least the neighborhood's leadership. Additionally, the Coalition of Neighborhoods meets regularly. Typically, at least once per year, the Borough's Community Engagement and Planning Departments meet with neighborhood leadership to discuss projects and other activities that are of high importance. Finally, the Planning Commission added quarterly meetings with neighborhoods to the 2015 Work Program.

These neighborhood association and joint meetings of the Borough and residents provide opportunities to review the Plan's recommendations and their implementation progress. In particular, this provides an opportunity for residents and Borough officials to communicate their individual work and successes to each other and to solicit support and assistance if needed.

## Updating the Plan

It will be important to keep the Plan up-to-date to aid in the implementation of its recommendations. As significant changes take place in the community, the Plan should be updated to reflect those changes. The demographic data should be updated when the U.S. Census Bureau data becomes available following the 2020 Census. If additional data or reports on existing conditions are needed, this information should be added as an appendix to the document.

The process for outlining short-term implementation projects should take place at least every two years. New projects should be advanced if previously identified projects have been completed, or will be completed in a short period of time. If a recommendation that was determined to be a short-term item has not been implemented during that time, it should be closely evaluated to determine the obstacles preventing its implementation. A determination should be made about whether the project should continue to be included as a short-term item, or if the project should be moved to a longer-term timeframe.

Following the 2014 Neighborhood Sustainability Report and National Citizen's Surveys, it is the goal for these reports to move to a two-year cycle. This timeframe is directly in line with the two-year activities outlined in this program. These reports should be updated simultaneous to, if not as a part of, the evaluation of the Implementation Program's progress. These reports include a number of metrics that can be used to evaluate what impact the

activities have had on the conditions of the Borough's neighborhoods.

## What's in the Program?

The remainder of the Implementation Program includes project summaries for the activities which will be launched or continued within the next two years. This includes projects submitted by the Borough as well as community groups and organizations. Each of these summaries includes important information about how the project will be completed. The projects are organized by the Plan's three themes. The program concludes with a list of all of the Plan's goals and recommendations. More information about the Neighborhood Plan can be found at: [www.statecollegepa.us/NeighborhoodPlan](http://www.statecollegepa.us/NeighborhoodPlan).

Theme 1:  
Maintain  
high-quality  
neighborhood  
infrastructure,  
facilities and  
appearance

Theme 2:  
Maintain  
a balance  
between  
owner- and  
renter-occupied  
housing

Theme 3:  
Improve  
relationships  
among  
neighbors  
and within the  
community

## Getting Involved

The following sections present key details about each of the projects, including an overview of the activities, timelines and who may be involved in the implementation. To request additional details about any of these projects, or to get involved in a project's implementation, contact the Planning Department at [planningdept@statecollegepa.us](mailto:planningdept@statecollegepa.us) for details.

# neighborhood facilities & appearance

The goals and recommendations of this theme emphasize the importance of maintaining the neighborhoods' facilities and high-quality aesthetics.

## Overview of Theme One

In general, the Neighborhood Plan discusses that residents feel that the diversity of the Borough's neighborhoods is a strength as long as they remain stable and well-maintained. Residents believe that access to parks and recreation facilities, the proximity of neighborhoods to public and private amenities, and the accessibility of most modes of transportation make the Borough's neighborhoods strong and livable. However, residents recognize the need to protect and reinvest in the Borough's neighborhoods as growth occurs in the Centre Region. The goals of the Neighborhood Facilities and Appearance theme include recommendations that will help protect and enhance the physical amenities, aesthetics and accessibility of the Borough's neighborhoods.

## Implementation Activities

The projects which have been identified for implementation in 2015-2016 for the Neighborhood Facilities and Appearance theme will improve the aesthetics and function of key areas throughout the Borough. The implementation of these projects will help improve the Borough's natural environment, recreational areas, and alternative transportation infrastructure. Additionally, these projects will lay the groundwork for future improvements by researching best practices and preparing a more up-to-date regulatory environment for growth and development.

Throughout 2015 and 2016, the implementation partners will be working on the following Theme One activities:

- Comprehensive Borough Zoning Ordinance Update (1.A.)
- Historic Resources Commission Activities (1.C.)
- Neighborhood Beautification & Cleanup Projects (1.H.)
- Neighborhood Park Improvement Projects (2.B.)
- Crowdfunding Pilot Project in Tusseyview Park (2.E.)
- Permeability Study of Key Areas (3.A.)
- Sustainable Communities Collaborative Partnerships (3.B.)
- Invasive Plant & Insect Species Removal & Prevention (3.E.)
- McKee Street Pedestrian Refuge Island (4.D.)
- West End & West Campus Bike & Pedestrian Connection (4.D.)

There are four goals and a number of recommendations for Theme One. The goals for this theme include:



Goal 1: Maintain neighborhood aesthetics, high-quality housing stock and cultural and historic resources



Goal 2: Protect existing neighborhood activity, social and commercial centers and enhance these facilities in order to serve residents' needs



Goal 3: Explore opportunities for increasing environmental sustainability of the Borough's neighborhoods



Goal 4: Address neighborhood-scale transportation safety and opportunities for expanding multi-modal systems

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## Recommendation 1.A. Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance Update

PRIORITY: HIGH

LEAD PARTNER(S):  
PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE,  
PLANNING DEPARTMENT

PROJECT PARTNER(S):  
COUNCIL, PLANNING COMMISSION,  
COMMUNITY

ANTICIPATED COMPLETION:  
2017

NEIGHBORHOODS:  
BOROUGH-WIDE &

### COMPREHENSIVE BOROUGH ZONING ORDINANCE UPDATE

The Borough’s last major update to the Zoning Ordinance took place in the mid-1970s following the adoption of the 1976 Regional Comprehensive Plan. With that update a new zoning map was drawn and several new zoning districts were established. However, much of the ordinance was still based on the original ordinance adopted in 1959. Today, the ordinance does not always reflect the best planning and zoning practices and has not proven to be an effective tool in implementing the recommendations of the community’s adopted plans.

This project proposes a comprehensive update of the Borough’s Zoning Ordinance in order to:

- improve the functionality and readability of the ordinance and eliminate inconsistencies
- modernize its regulations in order that it may be used as a tool to achieve the community’s land use and development goals

#### RELATIONSHIP TO THE PLAN:

In addition to implementing recommendation 1.A., the completion of this project could implement or set the stage for the launch of several other recommendations, including:

- 1.E. Develop a model to evaluate the impacts from new developments
- 3.F. Evaluate ordinances related to sustainable building design & renewable energy resources
- 7.F. Consider housing types and amenities that will attract new residents
- 8.A. Support the recommendations of the Downtown Master Plan

In the past two years, the Borough has adopted a Downtown Master Plan and a State College Neighborhood Plan. Additionally, the Centre Region municipalities accepted the 2013 Comprehensive Plan update, prepared by the CRPA. These documents, as well as many others, provide guidance on policies and priorities for land use, development objectives, and physical improvements.

The updated ordinance should be reflective of these community policies, as well as best practices for land use, planning, development and urban design. In order to do so effectively, significant research into zoning ordinances and engagement of community stakeholders will be required. To this end, the project should be guided by a steering committee who will represent the needs of the residential, commercial and transitional areas in the Borough. Additionally, residents should be regularly engaged in order to learn about the principles of zoning and to be a part of the process of updating the ordinance.

#### Project Importance

The current ordinance was written in a traditional Euclidean format; over the years, piecemeal amendments have incorporated more modern zoning techniques. However, the ordinance lacks a cohesive vision for how State College should approach land use regulations and does not incorporate modern standards in a systematic way.

Since 1959, the ordinance has been amended over 200 times. This large number of amendments has created inconsistencies within the ordinance. In addition, the ordinance is bulky and difficult for the general public and developers to interpret. Furthermore, stakeholders representing the interests of the Borough’s neighborhoods, as well as those that represent the interests of land owners and the development community, perceive that the current ordinance is insufficient in its ability to achieve the goals of the community as outlined in its adopted plans.

#### RESOURCES AVAILABLE

- 2016 CIP FUNDING
- SCPC ZONING REVIEW; ADOPTED PLANS
- PLANNING DEPT STAFF; SCPC

#### RESOURCES NEEDED

- GRANT/FUNDING SOURCES
- PROJECT SCOPE & OBJECTIVES FOR PROJECT
- CONSULTANT, STEERING COMMITTEE

## Anticipated Timeline & Milestones

Throughout 2014, the Planning Commission has reviewed the Zoning Ordinance and identified issues that should be discussed as part of the ordinance update process. The input from the Planning Commission can inform the Steering Committee and others involved with the update. The process for launching the update to the Zoning Ordinance will likely include the following major milestones:

- Q4 2014: Research zoning updates from peer communities.
- Q1 2015: Develop an outline of activities and milestones that will be important to the successful completion of the update. Develop a website to keep the community up-to-date on the project's progress and goals. Additionally, apply for additional funding in the form of a grant from sources such as the Department of Community & Economic Development; anticipate a decision regarding funding awards during Q3 or Q4 2015.
- Q3 2015: Issue an RFQ to select a consultant to complete the majority of the technical aspects of the update and to facilitate additional opportunities for community input. Anticipate that a consultant will be selected in Q4 2015.

During 2015, Borough staff and ABC's can host community education and input sessions on a wide variety of issues related to zoning. This will help prepare the community for a more technical review of the update as it takes place. Additionally, staff will be involved in many administrative activities to prepare for the project in 2016. While there is much support on the part of the community to complete this update prior to 2016, carefully laying the groundwork during 2015 will make the project more productive and purposeful. This includes developing a scope of work, determining how the project will be funded, and securing a consultant with an excellent history of completing similar projects.

It is anticipated that the bulk of the work on this project will take place during 2016 and potentially into 2017. The consultant, as well as Borough staff, ABC's and the Steering Committee, will work on activities to provide community outreach, technical review and recommendations for an updated ordinance.

## Implementation Metrics

The most direct metric to determine the implementation of this project will be to evaluate whether or not it has been implemented. Implementation of this project will be in the form of an updated ordinance, which meets the goals which are established for the update, and is adopted as a formal ordinance for the Borough.

Other metrics which can help the community evaluate the quality of the project include the secondary impacts that result from its completion. These secondary impacts should be routinely monitored and may include:

- increased investment in the form of redevelopment in the community
- reduction in the number of requests for ordinance amendments
- increase in the percent of "excellent or good" responses to the planning and zoning questions on the biannual National Citizen's Survey

Q4 2014	Complete PC Review of ordinance; research zoning updates from peer communities
Q1 2015	Develop outline of milestones & project activities; a website for project updates; apply for grant funding to supplement project costs
Q4 2015	Issue an RFQ and select a consultant to complete technical update & facilitate community input
2017	Consultants, staff, ABC's and Steering Committee work on update to ordinance and community education/input activities

### IMPLEMENTATION STATUS:

The current status of this project is:

ONGOING	IMPLEMENTED
DEFERRED	NOT IMPLEMENTED



## Recommendation 1.C. Design Guidelines for Historic Properties

PRIORITY: LOW

LEAD PARTNER(S):  
HISTORIC RESOURCES  
COMMISSION

PROJECT PARTNER(S):  
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD, PLANNING  
DEPT,

ANTICIPATED COMPLETION:  
Q4 2016

NEIGHBORHOODS:



### HISTORIC RESOURCES COMMISSION ACTIVITIES

The Borough has two National Register Historic Districts: the College Heights Historic District and the Holmes-Foster Highlands Historic District. These districts are recognized by the National Register of Historic Places, a program which was established in 1966 in order to support efforts to identify, evaluate and protect historic resources. According to materials produced by the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission (PHMC), this is the “nation’s list of properties recognized for their significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering and culture.”

Properties on this list have been documented and evaluated according to uniform standards. While this listing helps to recognize the importance of these resources and the individuals, organizations and governments who have taken actions to preserve and protect them, a listing does not interfere with the owner’s rights to alter, manage or dispose of these properties. According to the PHMC, this listing does contribute to the preservation of these resources in the following ways:

- recognize that a property is significant to either the country, state, or local community in which it is located
- become eligible for federal tax incentives for income-producing buildings
- become eligible for federal or state grants for buildings owned by non-profits and governments
- are considered in the planning and/or projects which are assisted by federal or state agencies

Today, 278 properties are considered to be contributing structures to the College Heights Historic District and 727 are contributing to the Holmes-Foster Highlands Historic District. The Historic Resources Commission has expressed interest in a number activities to expand these districts and ensure a greater level of local preservation for them.

### RELATIONSHIP TO THE PLAN:

In addition to implementing recommendation 1.C., the completion of this project could implement or set the stage for the launch of several other recommendations, including:

- 1.A. Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance update
- 2.A. Maintain neighborhood amenities or reuse in a context-sensitive way
- 6.A. Continue education on ordinances & codes

Work has begun to review an additional 340 properties in College Heights and an additional 980 properties in Holmes-Foster and the Highlands to determine their eligibility to be listed as contributing structures. Photos of most of the properties have been taken and mapping has been completed when Geography interns are available to work with the Planning Department. However, challenges remain with locating permits for structures and verifying the dates of construction from the County’s historical data. A preliminary submission of additional properties for the College Heights district was made to the PHMC,; it was indicated that more detail would be needed on the size of the proposed district expansion and properties which have not had changes made to their facades.

More information about the criteria for contributing structures and the process for submitting properties for designation are available at: [http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/Portal/Communities/BHP/nr\\_fact\\_sheet.pdf](http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/Portal/Communities/BHP/nr_fact_sheet.pdf).

### RESOURCES AVAILABLE

PHOTOS & DATA COLLECTED & MAPPED FOR PROPOSED COLLEGE HEIGHTS PROPERTIES, PHMC FEEDBACK

PLANNING STAFF

### RESOURCES NEEDED

DATA FOR INCOMPLETE PROPERTY EVALUATIONS, REVIEW OF FACADES VIA PERMITS

GIS INTERN OR ADDITIONAL STAFF HELP

## Project Importance

Historic resources carry great aesthetic and cultural value for a community. In the Borough, many residents comment that the diversity of architectural styles throughout neighborhoods is one of the strengths of the community. Furthermore, residents of the Borough's neighborhoods which have historic districts have indicated that these designations are a strength, and that the preservation of these properties is highly important. Some residents have also expressed an interest in local programs or policies which would encourage a greater level of preservation of these resources and adherence of new construction to the Design Guidelines to protect the character of historic neighborhoods.

### IMPLEMENTATION STATUS:

The current status of this project is:

ONGOING	IMPLEMENTED
DEFERRED	NOT IMPLEMENTED

## Anticipated Timeline & Milestones

The Historic Resources Commission and Planning Staff have continued to review properties within the proposed district expansions as time permits. These tasks typically are completed when an intern with working knowledge of GIS software is available. Future activities related to these projects will continue to depend on the availability of staff time and volunteer or intern availability. It is anticipated that some progress will be made on this project during 2015, but until additional staff resources are identified to help with these activities, a more exact timeline will not be available.

## Implementation Metrics

The most direct metric to determine the implementation of this project will be the submission of an application to expand the College Heights and Holmes-Foster Highlands Historic Districts.

Other metrics which can help the community evaluate the impact of the Historic Resources Commission's activities. These secondary impacts should be routinely monitored and may include:

- the number of properties reviewed by the HRC for improvements or demolition, and the number of properties for which these improvements were impacted by the input of the HRC
- the number of Historic Property plaques applied for and granted
- other data collected which supports the efforts of historic preservation and community education about these resources
- the impact on the number of properties included within a National Register Historic District



## Recommendation 1.H. Organize beautification projects

PRIORITY: LOW

LEAD PARTNER(S):  
PUBLIC WORKS DEPT,  
NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES TEAM

PROJECT PARTNER(S):  
NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS,  
STUDENT/COMMUNITY GROUPS,  
SCASD STUDENTS

ANTICIPATED COMPLETION:  
Q3 2015 LAUNCH; THEN ONGOING

NEIGHBORHOODS:



### NEIGHBORHOOD BEAUTIFICATION & CLEANUP PROJECTS

This project focuses on the development of a program through which residents can submit requests for either a Neighborhood Beautification Project or a Community Cleanup Project. Similarly, the development of this type of program will help student and community groups to learn about available projects for which they can volunteer, donate supplies or sign up to participate in other ways.

The project should use the Love your Block and Neighborhood Partnership Projects programs from Austin, Texas as a model, and develop a program to match residents' requests for community projects with available resources and volunteers.

Examples of neighborhood beautification projects typically include flower plantings, maintenance of other vegetation, or replacing or repairing equipment or other infrastructure in public spaces like parks, tree lawns and vacant lots. This program would allow residents to submit a request for a project such as, "plant flowers in the median in my neighborhood."

Neighborhood cleanup projects include routine activities that take place in the Borough's neighborhoods. IFC's Greek Sweep is a great example, and is an activity that launched in the Fall of 2014. Additionally, volunteers have participated in cleanup activities following State Patty's Day for a number of years. This program builds upon these activities by making these cleanup events more well-known and open to a greater number of participants.

Project and cleanup requests will be evaluated by staff as they are submitted based on the current availability of funding, supplies or volunteers; staff will communicate regarding logistics with the resident that submitted the activity. The Borough may provide materials such as gloves, bags, tools, plant materials and labor to support the project as they are available, and residents will supply volunteer labor. It is anticipated that this program could evolve into a more formal Neighborhood Partnership Program in the future.

#### RELATIONSHIP TO THE PLAN:

In addition to implementing recommendation 1.H., the completion of this project could implement or set the stage for the launch of several other recommendations, including:

- 2.D. Consider Neighborhood Partnership Projects
- 2.E. Identify creative funding sources to implement projects
- 9.C. Foster working relationship among student organizations and neighborhood associations

#### Project Importance

Residents feel that high-quality maintenance and aesthetics are among the greatest strengths of the Borough's neighborhoods. This project can expand upon current efforts to protect and enhance these qualities.

Projects submitted through this program can provide opportunities for service that engage the community's youth, Penn State students, and adults to build pride in the appearance of the Borough's neighborhoods. Additionally, interactions that take place during the completion of these projects can connect residents who may not otherwise meet, and demonstrate the value of working together to improve the appearance of the Borough.

Furthermore, these projects can help mitigate the impacts that are experienced during major event weekends when litter and vandalism affects residents' quality of life. Whether routine or one-time activities, these projects provide the benefit of being timely and responsive to the community's needs.

#### RESOURCES AVAILABLE

TOOLS, CLEANUP SUPPLIES, PLANTS/TREES- BOROUGH

PUBLIC WORKS DEPT, NEIGHBORHOOD SVCS TEAM, AMERICORPS VOLUNTEER

#### RESOURCES NEEDED

GRANT OR DONATIONS FOR SUPPLIES

PROCESS FOR SUBMITTING/ MATCHING PROJECT IDEAS

VOLUNTEERS

## Anticipated Timeline & Milestones

Community cleanup projects are already underway and occur with some frequency in the Borough. Specifically, cleanup activities are focused around the IFC Greek Sweep, State Patty's Day cleanups, and Penn State's Fresh Start Day of Service each fall. The next step to implementing this project is to expand these activities to include routine beautification projects. A method should be developed, perhaps through an online registration form, for residents to submit project requests and volunteer sign up. This recommendation was also made by a Sustainable Communities Collaborative project in 2013, which recommended online volunteer sign up as a way to improve community participation.

Developing this program should include a discussion of the types of projects that can be requested in order to ensure that the Borough has adequate funding and supplies available for the projects. The program could be launched by the 3rd Quarter of 2015 as a pilot, perhaps in partnership with a student organization and neighborhood group. This program should focus on small projects, with an eye on developing a more formal Neighborhood Partnership Program for implementation of bigger and more expensive projects.

## Implementation Metrics

The most direct metric to determine the implementation of this project will be to evaluate whether or not a formal process or program has been launched. Implementation of this project will be in the form of a program through which requests for beautification and cleanup can be submitted and matched with available resources and volunteers.

Other metrics can help evaluate the impacts that result from the launch of such a program. These impacts should be routinely monitored and may include:

- increase in the percent of "excellent or good" responses to community appearance questions on the biannual National Citizen's Survey
- increase in the percent of respondents who know a neighbor or have volunteered in the community on the biannual National Citizen's Survey
- savings to the community that result from in-kind labor of volunteers or donated materials/services for cleanup and beautification projects
- impact on the number of refuse violations reported in the biannual Neighborhood Sustainability Report

Q3 2015

Expand routine volunteer activities to include beautification projects

Develop program for submitting project requests and volunteer sign up

Launch as a pilot project, potentially as a partnership with a student organization and a neighborhood association

Consider development of a more formal Neighborhood Partnership Program for more significant projects

### IMPLEMENTATION STATUS:

The current status of this project is:

ONGOING

IMPLEMENTED

DEFERRED

NOT INITIATED



## Recommendation 2.B. Maintain and enhance Parks and Public Spaces

PRIORITY: MEDIUM

LEAD PARTNER(S):  
PUBLIC WORKS DEPT

PROJECT PARTNER(S):  
COMMUNITY, BOROUGH ABC'S

ANTICIPATED COMPLETION:  
Q4 2015

NEIGHBORHOODS:



### RELATIONSHIP TO THE PLAN:

In addition to implementing recommendation 2.B., the completion of these projects could implement or set the stage for the launch of several other recommendations, including:

- 1.F. Maintain and increase quality tree canopy
- 1.H. Organize beautification projects
- 2.D. Consider neighborhood partnership improvement projects
- 2.E. Identify creative funding sources for projects

The Borough recognized the importance of saving the remaining trees and developing a strategy to replace those that had been lost. The Borough was awarded a grant from DCNR to help fund a long-range master plan for the Park, which will provide recommendations for the next 20-30 years to protect and enhance the tree canopy, explore walking trails and seating, and evaluate the conditions of the Park's facilities. Improvements will be made over the years through the Capital Improvements Program.

### Project Importance

In the 2012 Centre Region Comprehensive Plan Survey, 56% of respondents indicated that having access to open spaces was one of the most important objectives to guide future growth. In the 2014 National Citizen's Survey, 82% of respondents indicated that they frequently visit Borough parks and 85% responded that the maintenance of these parks was "excellent or good."

### NEIGHBORHOOD PARK IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

Centre Region Parks & Recreation takes care of the day-to-day operations in most of the Borough's parks. However, any major or capital improvements to the parks is a responsibility of the Borough. Three such projects are planned during 2015.

#### SMITHFIELD & TUSSEYVIEW PARKS- PLAYGROUND REPLACEMENTS

Smithfield Park is a small neighborhood park located in State College South between Garner and Smithfield Streets. Similarly, Tusseyview Park is a small park in Tusseyview, at the end of Marylyn Avenue. These parks include a pavilion, small basketball/tennis courts, and play equipment. The Borough plans to replace/update some of the play equipment at these parks.

#### HIGH POINT PARK WALKING PATH

High Point Park is located within the Orchard Park neighborhood, situated between Whitehall Road and Stratford Drive, surrounded by a mix of single- and multi-family homes. Currently, the ball field, basketball and tennis courts, and playground cannot be accessed via an ADA accessible walking path; instead, visitors must traverse open lawn. With the implementation of the proposed Whitehall Road Regional Park, High Point Park will become the shortest route for residents of the Orchard Park neighborhood to access it. The Borough plans to construct a five-foot wide gravel path linking both entrances and the park's facilities to each other. This project is partially funded through a grant from DCNR.

#### HOLMES-FOSTER PARK MASTER PLAN

Holmes-Foster Park is an 11-acre park located in Holmes-Foster. The park is a focal point for the neighborhood and the community, primarily because of its tree canopy made up of 200-year-old Oak trees. Over the last decade, nearly 20% of the trees within the park have died, blown over, or had to be removed for safety reasons.

#### RESOURCES AVAILABLE

- \$ 2014-2015 CIP FUNDING
- 💡 PARK/PROJECT DESIGNS
- 👥 PUBLIC WORKS STAFF, CRPR, CONSULTING TEAM, HF PARK STEERING CMTE

#### RESOURCES NEEDED

- \$ GRANT/FUNDING SOURCES
- 💡 ADOPTION OF HOLMES-FOSTER PARK MASTER PLAN

While the priorities for each of the park improvements differ, each is important to ensuring quality of life for the Borough’s neighborhoods. During the SWOT Analysis sessions with residents of the Borough’s neighborhoods, residents of each of the Borough’s neighborhoods indicated that the availability of public parks was a strength, and that lack of maintenance or loss of these parks would be a threat. Additionally, when asked to note recommendations from the Plan that residents felt were important for the enhancement of their neighborhood, Recommendation 2.B. was identified by each neighborhood.

### Anticipated Timeline & Milestones

It is anticipated that Smithfield Park will be updated in late 2014 or early 2015 and Tusseyview Park late in 2015 (see the Crowdfunding Pilot project on page 19). The walking path for High Point Park will be designed by the Public Works Department by the end of 2014, and put to bid in 2015. The Borough received \$25,000 of the estimated \$50,000 for the project as a grant from DCNR. The Holmes-Foster Park Master Plan should be complete by the end of 2014 and adopted by Borough Council in early 2015. Improvements will be made over the next 20 to 30 years within the Park. The Borough received \$10,000 of the estimated \$25,000 for the preparation of this plan as a grant from DCNR.

### Implementation Metrics

The most direct metric to determine the implementation of these projects will be to evaluate whether or not the identified park improvements are constructed.

Other metrics can help evaluate the impacts that result from the improvement of these parks. These impacts should be routinely monitored and may include:

- impact on the percent of “excellent or good” responses to community appearance questions on the biannual National Citizen’s Survey
- impact on the percent of residents who report that they have visited a Borough Park on the biannual National Citizen’s Survey
- impact on the percent of “excellent or good” responses to questions about Borough Parks on the biannual National Citizen’s Survey
- impact on estimated number of users in Borough Parks each year
- number of acres of parks and open spaces in the Borough

Q4 2014	Replace Smithfield Park Playground equipment
	Complete design for the High Point Park walking path
	Complete the Holmes-Foster Park Master Plan
Q2 2015	Bids to construct the High Point Park path
	Council adopt the Holmes-Foster Park Master Plan
Q4 2015	Construction of the High Point Park path
	Improvements to Tusseyview Park
Ongoing	Implementation of Holmes-Foster Park Plan projects

**IMPLEMENTATION STATUS:**

The current status of this project is:

ONGOING	IMPLEMENTED
DEFERRED	NOT IMPLEMENTED



## Recommendation 2.E. Identify creative funding sources for projects

PRIORITY: MEDIUM

LEAD PARTNER(S):  
PLANNING DEPT

PROJECT PARTNER(S):  
CENTRE REGION PARKS & REC.,  
TUSSEYVIEW NEIGHBORHOOD  
ASSOC., NITTANY VALLEY CHARTER  
SCHOOL, NEIGHBOR.LY

ANTICIPATED COMPLETION:  
Q4 2015

NEIGHBORHOODS:  
BOROUGH-WIDE

### CROWDFUNDING PILOT PROJECT IN TUSSEYVIEW PARK

Crowdfunding is an internet-based fundraising tool that allows a large number of users to donate small amounts of money to projects they care about. Civic Crowdfunding uses the same model to fund projects that have a community impact.

During the SWOT Analysis meeting with the residents of Tusseyview, some residents suggested improvements for Tusseyview Park, such as upgrading the play equipment and landscaping, and incorporating lighting or electrical hookups. The 2015-2019 Capital Improvements Program (CIP) includes approximately \$25,000 for a replacement tot-lot in the park in 2015.

The Tusseyview Park improvements will be used to launch a Civic Crowdfunding pilot for the Borough. The project will build upon the Borough's planned improvements in order to fund and construct additional amenities into the park that residents find desirable.

During a Day of Play, as well as other communications with residents and users of the park, ideas for additional park improvements will be collected. These ideas will be evaluated with Centre Region Parks & Recreation for feasibility and cost. Ultimately, a "Wish List" of park improvements will be developed. The crowdfunding campaign will be launched with the goal of raising the necessary funds to implement the "Wish List" of improvements, while the Borough's funds are dedicated to the replacement of the tot-lot.

When the park improvements are funded and ready to be implemented, community volunteers will be invited to participate in a Build Day to assist with the installation of the new park features.

The project will serve to demonstrate how residents can impact the design and construction of projects which are important to them, and how the Borough can utilize alternative sources of funding to implement community improvements.

#### RELATIONSHIP TO THE PLAN:

In addition to implementing recommendation 2.E., the completion of this project could implement or set the stage for the launch of several other recommendations, including:

- 2.B. Maintain and enhance parks and public spaces
- 2.E. Identify creative funding sources for projects

#### Project Importance

Diversifying available funding mechanisms for implementing community improvements will be key as demands on municipal budgets continue to increase. The pilot will explore the feasibility of using crowdfunding as a supplement to traditional funding methods.

Additionally, the project can serve as a case study for neighborhood organizations and community groups to fundraise their own community improvement projects. Civic crowdfunding platforms allow local governments, community organizations and non-profits to generate funds for projects that will benefit the public and the larger community.

#### RESOURCES AVAILABLE

- \$ 2015 CIP FUNDING
- 💡 NEIGHBOR.LY PLATFORM
- 👥 PLANNING, PUBLIC WORKS & CRPR STAFF, TUSSEYVIEW ASSOC., NVCS STUDENTS

#### RESOURCES NEEDED

- \$ COMMUNITY FUNDRAISING
- 💡 SCOPE OF WORK FOR IMPROVEMENTS
- 👥 DONORS & VOLUNTEERS

## Anticipated Timeline & Milestones

Planning and Public Works staff will continue to communicate with staff from Centre Region Parks and Recreation to work out logistics of the project. Staff has initiated a conversation with the fundraising host site, Neighbor.ly, to determine the process for launching the crowdfunding campaign.

A Day of Play was held in Tusseyview Park on September 28, 2014 to focus on this project. Several residents attended to discuss crowdfunding and the park. Additionally, staff attended the Nittany Valley Charter School during October of 2014. During this visit, students from each of the classrooms at the school shared what they use the park for today, and what they would love to see in the future. A display of the children’s work was on exhibit in the lobby of the Borough Municipal Building.

Following this input, a scope of work for the park will be developed and shared again with residents that frequently use the park. This will help shape the crowdfunding campaign, which is expected to launch in the 1st Quarter of 2015. Once the funding for the project is in place, it will be put to bid and a community-wide build day will be set to install the improvements in the 3rd Quarter of 2015.

## Implementation Metrics

The most direct metric to determine the implementation of this project will be to evaluate whether or not the improvements to Tusseyview Park have been made. Implementation of this project will include at least the replacement of the tot-lot using the Borough’s funding.

Other metrics can help evaluate the impacts that result from the launch of such a program. These impacts should be routinely monitored and may include:

- percent of the goal project funding that is raised through the crowdfunding campaign
- percent of community members who donate to the project and/or participate in the build day
- number of responses to an exit survey regarding willingness to participate in future crowdfunding projects
- impact on the percent of residents who report that they have visited a Borough Park on the biannual National Citizen’s Survey
- impact on the percent of “excellent or good” responses to questions about Borough Parks on the biannual National Citizen’s Survey

Q3 2014	Logistics & community input on the Park’s needs; develop a wish list for improvements
Q4 2014	Determine scope of project & share with community; prepare for launch of campaign
Q1 2015	Crowdfunding campaign open to donations; prepare for build day
Q2 2015	Design and bid the project based on funding from campaign
Q3 2015	Community build day to construct the park’s new features

### IMPLEMENTATION STATUS:

The current status of this project is:

ONGOING	IMPLEMENTED
DEFERRED	NOT IMPLEMENTED



## Recommendation 3.A. Evaluate long-term resource supply & demand

PRIORITY: LOW

LEAD PARTNER(S):  
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

PROJECT PARTNER(S):  
PSU CLASSES, BOROUGH  
PLANNING & PUBLIC WORKS DEPTS

ANTICIPATED COMPLETION:  
Q5 2014

NEIGHBORHOODS:  
BOROUGH-WIDE

### PERMEABILITY STUDY OF KEY AREAS

This project is currently identified in the Design Review Board 2015 Work Program. Information about this project will be forthcoming as the Design Review Board defines this activity.

#### RELATIONSHIP TO THE PLAN:

In addition to addressing recommendation 3.A., this study could implement or set the stage for the launch of several other recommendations, including:

- 2.C. Maintain & enhance neighborhood & commercial areas
- 3.B. Work with PSU on innovative solutions
- Utilize tree canopy to reduce heat island & stormwater issues

DRAFT

#### RESOURCES AVAILABLE



#### RESOURCES NEEDED



DRAFT



## Recommendation 3.B. Work with Penn State on innovative solutions

PRIORITY: MEDIUM

LEAD PARTNER(S):  
SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES  
COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT  
TEAM

PROJECT PARTNER(S):  
PSU SUSTAINABILITY INSTITUTE,  
BOROUGH SUSTAINABILITY CMTE,  
BOROUGH ABC'S

ANTICIPATED COMPLETION:  
ONGOING

NEIGHBORHOODS:  
BOROUGH-WIDE &

### SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES COLLABORATIVE

Since the spring of 2013, State College Borough has been participating in a cooperative program with Penn State University's Sustainability Institute called the Sustainable Communities Collaborative. This program is inspired by the University of Oregon's program, which matches university classes and students with the needs of communities. In State College, individual projects have been conducted between the Borough and specific classes over the years, but this partnership is the first time the process for matching projects has been formalized.

Through the Collaborative, the Borough shares projects or programs with unfulfilled needs to the Sustainability Institute, who works to find a professor and class that is interested in helping meet these needs. This provides a unique educational environment and experience for the students, while helping the Borough achieve its goals.

The Borough is currently engaged with five classes for the fall of 2014 semester. These class projects include:

- Design of Stormwater and Erosion Control Facilities- evaluating unique ways to handle stormwater throughout the Easterly and Westerly Parkway corridor in anticipation of road reconstruction
- Human Resource Ethics- researching communities which have sought net zero energy initiatives
- Mediation of Environmental and Public Conflicts- developing a facilitated approach to getting like-minded stormwater groups to collaborate
- Engineering Club- exploring alternative energy possibilities for the Borough
- Photojournalism Class- documenting the work of the four other projects in this semester's Collaborative partnerships

Several projects have been discussed for the spring of 2015 semester. These include: the development of baseline numbers for energy sustainability by a mathematics class; developing a backyard stormwater treatment best practices guide for State College residents; developing food waste collection and composting program for downtown businesses; and continuing research on the net zero energy case studies from the fall of 2014.

### RELATIONSHIP TO THE PLAN:

In addition to implementing recommendation 3.B., the ongoing participation in the Collaborative could implement or set the stage for the launch of several other recommendations, including:

- Many of the recommendations of Goals 2, 3 and 7
- 9.C. Foster working relationship among student organizations and neighborhood associations
- 9.H. Study peer university communities

### Project Importance

Projects shared through the Sustainable Communities Collaborative are important for many reasons. First and foremost, it promotes a working relationship among the students and faculty and the community in which the campus is located. This relationship helps these individuals contribute to and invest in the future sustainability of the Borough.

The Collaborative also helps generate new ideas, research and solutions to address community sustainability issues. This partnership can help fill a void for the Borough, where staff resources or funding might not be available, or can compliment a project that is being undertaken by staff or one of the Borough's ABC's.

### RESOURCES AVAILABLE

DATA/RESOURCES AT PSU & BOROUGH

BOROUGH STAFF, SUSTAINABILITY INSTITUTE, STUDENTS

### RESOURCES NEEDED

PROJECTS & CHALLENGES FOR THE PARTNERSHIP TO ADDRESS

## Anticipated Timeline & Milestones

It is anticipated that potential projects for the spring of 2015 will be developed during the 4th Quarter of 2014. These projects will then be conducted by the students and faculty during the spring 2015 semester. These projects typically include a welcome session to introduce the student teams to Borough staff, as well as a closing reception for the students to present their projects.

This program is expected to evolve and continue indefinitely. It is a goal of the Sustainability Institute to eventually reach a point with the Sustainable Communities Collaborative partnership with the Borough, that it can be used as a model for other Commonwealth campuses and their host communities.

## Implementation Metrics

With each of the individual projects that are advanced through the Sustainable Communities Collaborative, there will be different metrics to measure its implementation. For example, with the projects that are taking place in the fall of 2014, a secondary impact from researching peer communities' net zero energy practices might be that a solution is uncovered that can significantly reduce energy consumption in State College. In future classes, ideas or collaborations may emerge to help address other pressing community issues and metrics for understanding their impact will need to be developed. Developing these metrics could potentially become an activity of the management team when matching the Borough with classes, or could be an exercise of the faculty and students completing the individual projects.

### IMPLEMENTATION STATUS:

The current status of this project is:

ONGOING

IMPLEMENTED

DEFERRED

NOT IMPLEMENTED



## Recommendation 3.E. Develop a plan for invasive species removal

PRIORITY: MEDIUM

LEAD PARTNER(S):  
PUBLIC WORKS DEPT

PROJECT PARTNER(S):  
TREE COMMISSION, DCNR,  
COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

ANTICIPATED COMPLETION:  
ONGOING

NEIGHBORHOODS:  
BOROUGH-WIDE

### RELATIONSHIP TO THE PLAN:

In addition to implementing recommendation 3.E., the completion of this project could implement or set the stage for the launch of several other recommendations, including:

- 1.F. Maintain & increase quality tree canopy
- 2.B. Maintain & enhance parks & public spaces

### INVASIVE PLANT & INSECT REMOVAL & PREVENTION ACTIVITIES

Keeping the Borough's trees healthy and save can be an expensive and ongoing task. One of the more serious threats to our urban forest is the invasive Emerald Ash Borer (EAB). This is a tiny insect which attacks and kills all species of native ash trees. This insect was first detected in Detroit, Michigan, in 2002; since then, it has quickly expanded its range. The EAB was first confirmed to be within Centre County back in 2012. It is now found throughout the Borough and is afflicting public and private trees alike. Fortunately, these trees can be protected through the use of various chemicals, but their use can be expensive and labor intensive.

The Borough's Tree Commission recognized that EAB was going to be a serious threat long before it reached the Borough's borders and began planning for its arrival. The Borough stopped planting ash trees over seven years ago and began critically evaluating existing street trees and trees in Borough parks. Any that had structural problems or were in poor health were removed and replaced with another tree species. The 'unofficial plan' was to reduce the number of ash trees that the Borough would maintain and keep only the ones with the best chance for survival. As of 2013, the Borough's inventory of nearly 7,000 street trees included only 350 ash trees.

In 2014, the Borough was awarded a grant from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) for up to \$5,000 to help develop and publish an 'official' Emerald Ash Borer Management Plan. The Plan, which was completed in 2014, describes the resources used and the efforts made to date to minimize the Borough's exposure to EAB. It also details criteria for long-term management techniques, such as which trees should be chemically treated, how many to treat each year, and what species of trees the Borough plans to use in place of lost ash trees. This project will include the implementation of the EAB Management Plan's recommendations. Future activities could also include the development of strategies to remove and protect against other forms of invasive plant or insect species which could damage the native plant and wildlife species in the Borough.

### Project Importance

State College Borough's street and park trees are a tremendous asset to the community, and at one time were collectively valued at over \$23 million. Many of the Borough's trees, especially those located in historic parks, such as the Holmes-Foster Park, are mature and part of the historic landscape of the community. Protecting these trees are important to maintaining the appearance of the community and also saving large amounts of money for the Borough when trees have to be cut down and replaced.

A well-maintained urban forest also provides health benefits, beautifies neighborhoods and attracts residents, visitors and businesses to the community. In fact, many Borough residents indicated that the mature tree canopy and quality vegetation were one of the strengths of their neighborhood and something that should be preserved in order to protect the neighborhoods' sustainability.

### RESOURCES AVAILABLE

- \$ 2013 DCNR GRANT
- 💡 EAB MANAGEMENT PLAN, EXPERTISE AT PSU/DCNR
- 👥 BOROUGH ARBORIST, TREE COMMISSION, DCNR

### RESOURCES NEEDED

- \$ FUNDING FOR TREATING AND REMOVAL/REPLANTING OF AFFECTED TREES
- 💡 ONGOING INVENTORY OF TREE HEALTH

## Anticipated Timeline & Milestones

The Emerald Ash Borer Management Plan was completed in 2014 with the help of Borough AmeriCorps members and volunteer interns. The Borough will continue to evaluate the health of the trees, treat or remove those infected, and act on opportunities to plant new species of trees. It is anticipated that these activities will be completed annually, and will be an ongoing activity for the Borough to continue.

### IMPLEMENTATION STATUS:

The current status of this project is:

ONGOING

IMPLEMENTED

DEFERRED

NOT IMPLEMENTED

## Implementation Metrics

The implementation of the Emerald Ash Borer Management Plan will be measured through a variety of metrics, particularly by analyzing the impact on the overall health of the Borough's tree canopy. Particular metrics could include:

- number of infected trees discovered/reported each year
- number of infected trees treated and able to be salvaged in relation to the number of trees removed
- overall trends in the health of the Borough's public tree inventory
- number of known invasive plant or insect species existing in the Borough

DRAFT



## Recommendation 4.D. Improve pedestrian & bicycle infrastructure

PRIORITY: HIGH

LEAD PARTNER(S):  
PUBLIC WORKS DEPT

PROJECT PARTNER(S):  
PA DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION  
(PENNDOT)

ANTICIPATED COMPLETION:  
Q4 2015

NEIGHBORHOODS:



### PARK AVENUE & MCKEE STREET PEDESTRIAN REFUGE ISLAND

The intersection of Park Avenue and McKee Street presents challenges for vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians. Park Avenue is an arterial roadway with significant daily traffic volumes, and is owned by the Pennsylvania State Department of Transportation (PennDOT). It represents the northern boundary of the Penn State University Park Campus in the Borough. Park Avenue accommodates many bus routes that serve campus and the community, is a major route for accessing the Penn State athletic facilities as well as one of the hospitals in the area. Conversely, McKee Street is a neighborhood street with low traffic volumes and an on-street bike route. This bike route connects the Penn State Campus to the off-street bike path near Sunset Park and the Penn State Arboretum.

The intersection of these two streets currently presents challenges for pedestrians and cyclists crossing at this intersection. Presently, there are yellow flashing lights and a yellow warning sign alerting motorists to be aware of pedestrians crossing. However, motorists frequently fail to yield to pedestrians in or approaching the crosswalk despite the signage. Additionally, safe and appropriate turning movements for bicycles crossing Park Avenue from campus onto McKee Street are unclear.

In order to address these conflicts and increase safety for pedestrians and cyclists using the intersection, the Borough will install a Pedestrian and Bicyclist Refuge Island. This island will be located between the opposing lanes of traffic along Park Avenue. In a design similar to the traffic diverter currently at the intersection of Atherton Street and Foster Avenue, the island will provide a protected area so that pedestrians and cyclists can cross one lane of traffic at a time.

In order to accommodate the island, Park Avenue will be widened slightly in the vicinity of the intersection. Additionally, new sidewalk and handicap curb ramps will be installed to comply with the latest federal and state standards for ADA accessibility.

#### RELATIONSHIP TO THE PLAN:

In addition to implementing recommendation 4.D., the completion of this project could implement or set the stage for the launch of several other recommendations, including:

- 4.E. Promote alternative transportation options

#### Project Importance

This refuge island will project supplement the existing yellow flashing light and pedestrian crossing sign at this intersection. It is anticipated that this will help provide a safer and more navigable crossing for pedestrians and cyclists using this intersection. Additionally, it is hoped that this island will increase motorists' awareness of non-motorized users at this intersection. Finally, and most importantly, this project will aid the safety and mobility of a nearby resident who is visually impaired and frequently experiences challenges with crossing Park Avenue.

While many users of this intersection are commuting between campus and other parts of the community, this intersection is also used by residents of the College Heights neighborhood. During the neighborhood's SWOT analysis meeting, this intersection was mentioned, among others on the edges of the neighborhood, as one that should be improved in order to facilitate safer access into and out of College Heights.

#### RESOURCES AVAILABLE

\$ CIP FUNDING (FROM 2014 TRANSFER TO 2015)

💡 ENGINEERING DESIGNS

👤 PUBLIC WORKS DEPT

#### RESOURCES NEEDED

\$ GRANT SOURCE FOR MATCH

💡 HIGHWAY OCCUPANCY PERMIT FROM PENNDOT, SCHEDULE FOR COMPLETION

## Anticipated Timeline & Milestones

The project was originally scheduled to be completed in 2014; however, the volume of construction projects and the application for PennDOT grant funding delayed the project to 2015.

The project has been designed; the next steps will be to obtain a Highway Occupancy Permit from PennDOT and for a contractor to be hired to complete the construction. It is anticipated that the project will be bid either in late 2014 or early 2015 with construction to begin in May of 2015 following the conclusion of the Penn State academic year.

## Implementation Metrics

The most direct metric to determine the implementation of this project will be to evaluate whether or not the improvements to the Park Avenue and McKee Street intersection have been made.

Other metrics can help evaluate the impacts that result from the improvement of the intersection. These impacts should be routinely monitored and may include:

- number of accidents occurring at the intersection
- percent of “excellent or good” responses to questions regarding ease of various forms of transportation in the National Citizen’s Survey for the College Heights subgroup

Q1 2015	Receive bids for the construction of the project & select a contractor
Q2 2015	Begin construction of the project
Q3 2015	Complete construction of the project

### IMPLEMENTATION STATUS:

The current status of this project is:

ONGOING

IMPLEMENTED

DEFERRED

NOT IMPLEMENTED



## Recommendation 4.D. Improve pedestrian & bicycle infrastructure

PRIORITY: HIGH

LEAD PARTNER(S):  
PUBLIC WORKS & PLANNING DEPTS

PROJECT PARTNER(S):  
PA DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION  
(PENNDOT), PENN STATE UNIV.,  
NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOC., CRBAC,  
CRBC

ANTICIPATED COMPLETION:  
Q4 2016

NEIGHBORHOODS:



### WEST END & WEST CAMPUS BIKE & PEDESTRIAN CONNECTION

Currently, Sparks and Gill Streets are on-street bike routes within the Borough, intersecting with the Foster Avenue bike route and connecting to the Orchard Park shared use path. However, as these routes reach the terminus of Sparks and Gill Streets, a clear and convenient transition onto the Penn State West Campus does not exist. Today, a pedestrian or cyclist can navigate through several informal ‘cow paths’ and breaks in the shrubs, or they can travel along Railroad Avenue to the vicinity of Patterson Street where a series of sidewalks can be navigated back toward the IST bridge and the ground-level crossing of Atherton Street.

This project proposes to locate a more convenient connection for bicyclists and pedestrians wishing to travel onto West Campus via the terminus of either Sparks or Gill Street. The final location and design will more clearly articulate the details of the project, but the Capital Improvements Program suggests that this connection could include features such as:

- sidewalk and/or ramp repair, replacement or construction
- shrub and/or tree removal or relocation
- directional signage to assist with connectivity to existing bike and pedestrian routes
- pedestrian-scale lighting

In 2014, the Capital Improvements Program was updated to elevate the importance of this project above other proposed West End improvement projects; in particular, this project was elevated to take the place of the West End Gateway and Wayfinding signage project. This project was submitted for the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) 2014 Multimodal Transportation Fund, which is funded by Act 89. The Borough’s application for matching funds for this project was awarded.

#### RELATIONSHIP TO THE PLAN:

In addition to implementing recommendation 4.D., the completion of this project could implement or set the stage for the launch of several other recommendations, including:

- 4.E. Promote alternative transportation options

#### Project Importance

A number of community planning documents have indicated that a more accessible connection between the West End neighborhood and Penn State’s West Campus would be an enhancement to the West End and Holmes-Foster neighborhoods. This project idea has been represented in the West End Revitalization Plan, the State College Neighborhood Plan, the Downtown Master Plan, and has been prioritized on recent Borough Council Strategic Objectives and Planning Commission Work Programs.

During the neighborhood planning meetings that took place in 2013 and 2014, it became clear that Holmes-Foster and West End neighborhood residents were more interested in implementing a connection between the neighborhoods and the Penn State campus than in projects like wayfinding signage. Therefore, a higher priority, and more near-term timeline, was given to this project when developing the 2015-2019 Capital Improvements Program.

This project also carries importance for the enhancement of the Centre Region’s bicycle network. Currently, the bikeways map for the Region

#### RESOURCES AVAILABLE

- PENNDOT GRANT FUNDING, CIP FUNDING 2016
- PUBLIC WORKS & PLANNING DEPTS, PSU OPP STAFF

#### RESOURCES NEEDED

- ENGINEERING DESIGNS, LOCATION
- COMMUNITY/USER INPUT

indicates that the Sparks and Gill Street connections simply end at Railroad Avenue, the border between the Borough and Penn State campus. For bike commuters traveling into the community from the southwest of campus, this connection represents a critical missing link in the infrastructure that exists today.

Finally, this project’s importance is elevated due to the successful application for matching funds for the project from PennDOT. Due to deadlines for allocating the funding tied to the award, this project will be considered a higher priority for capital improvements in the immediate term.

**IMPLEMENTATION STATUS:**

The current status of this project is:

ONGOING	IMPLEMENTED
DEFERRED	NOT INITIATED

### Anticipated Timeline & Milestones

The 2015-2019 Capital Improvements Program indicated that this project will be designed in 2015 and constructed in 2016. This timeline has guided the preparation of the 2015 Operating Budget; the local funding for design has been proposed.

During the 4th Quarter of 2014, several important decisions must be made which will influence the timeline for this project. First, the Borough Council must adopt an Operating Budget for 2015, which either includes the matching funds in 2015, or suggests that the project be delayed until a later year. Second, PennDOT must determine the timeline for obtaining grant agreements, disbursing funds and requiring construction of projects for the grant recipients. A more clear timeline for this project should be forthcoming in the 1st Quarter of 2015.

### Implementation Metrics

The most direct metric to determine the implementation of this project will be to evaluate whether or not the improvements to the identified location along the West End bikeways have been made.

Other metrics can help evaluate the impacts that result from the improvement of this infrastructure. These impacts should be routinely monitored and may include:

- percent of population commuting to work via the American Community Survey and US Census
- percent of “excellent or good” responses to questions regarding ease of transportation by walking or bicycle on the National Citizen’s Survey; particularly for the Holmes-Foster neighborhood geographic subgroup

# balancing owner- and renter-occupied housing

The goals and recommendations of this theme emphasize the importance of maintaining existing housing opportunities and expanding the diversity of housing available in the Borough's neighborhoods.

## Overview of Theme Two

The Neighborhood Plan presents a variety of priorities for maintaining existing housing stock, monitoring and regulating property maintenance and ordinance issues, and promoting and protecting homeownership. This includes ideas for addressing the balance of owner- and renter-occupied housing, as well as the management of lifestyle conflicts associated with this residential diversity.

Many residents feel that these goals can be achieved by increasing enforcement and regulation while also providing new incentives and programs. For example, many residents in near-campus neighborhoods feel that a sustained or increased level of enforcement necessary, particularly for issues related to rental housing maintenance, occupancy and noise. Others share a great interest in promoting the Borough's neighborhoods as a place for young professionals, families and graduates from Penn State to live, by providing more affordable and diverse housing options.

## Implementation Activities

The projects which have been identified for implementation in 2015-2016 for the Balancing Owner- and Renter-Occupied Housing theme evaluate existing and proposed programs and policies in order to understand the impact they may have on neighborhood sustainability.

The implementation of these projects will help provide a more thorough outlook on the role that existing regulations have on minimizing negative impacts on quality of life, and the potential impacts that can result from new initiatives. Additionally, these projects will lay the groundwork to provide data and information for future phases of projects or policies that may come from the Borough.

Throughout 2015 and 2016, the implementation partners will be working on the following Theme Two activities:

- Non-Conforming and Student Home Property Verification (5.B.)
- Evaluate Impacts of Intermittent Rentals on Neighborhoods (5.C.)
- Roundtables & Workshops for Zoning & Ordinance Information (6.A.)
- Implement Homestead Investment Program (7.A)
- Young Professional & Student Retention Recommendations (7.F.)
- Geodeliberation Project & Community Issue Review (8.D.)

There are four goals and a number of recommendations for Theme Two. The goals for this theme include:

 Goal 5: Maintain a high level of service and enforcement of Borough Ordinances and policies related to property management, behavior and occupancy

 Goal 6: Explore opportunities for creating programs or partnerships for improving the management of rental housing

 Goal 7: Increase home ownership in Borough neighborhoods and expand programs which provide assistance for affordable housing

 Goal 8: Consider impacts on and communications tools regarding neighborhood sustainability as growth occurs in the Centre Region

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## Recommendation 5.B. Verify student homes and non-conforming

PRIORITY: HIGH

LEAD PARTNER(S):  
PLANNING DEPARTMENT

PROJECT PARTNER(S):

ANTICIPATED COMPLETION:  
ONGOING

NEIGHBORHOODS:



### RELATIONSHIP TO THE PLAN:

In addition to implementing recommendation 5.B., the ongoing nature of this project could implement or set the stage for the launch of several other recommendations, including:

- 5.A. Evaluate effectiveness of current ordinances and modify if needed
- 6.A. Continue education on ordinances & codes
- 6.B. Improve working relationship among stakeholders regarding rental management
- 6.D. Review rental housing database for trends

### PROPERTY VERIFICATION ACTIVITIES

Throughout 2013 and 2014, Borough staff have worked to begin reviewing paper files, rental housing reports and county ownership files to verify whether one and two family homes in areas of the Borough are properly permitted. A small geographic area is selected for each review, and as time permits, staff works to verify the status of these properties using the aforementioned resources, and by making contact with property owners.

From within the geographic area reviewed to date, 182 properties were evaluated by staff. This area was the first for review because staff consistently received inquiries or requests for activity over the last few years related to student homes and rental properties. Many properties in the geographic areas were not evaluated because they were owner-occupied or because they contained multi-family dwellings (a property with three or more dwelling units). When staff could not verify the status of a property using the data available within the office, a letter was sent to the owner asking for a response. 33 letters were sent to properties for which the owner's address did not match the location of the property, and for which a rental permit or other property note could not be tracked down. Of these, many were owner-occupied homes occupied by family members of the owner, or properties which received mail at a P.O. Box. 16 properties resulted in other actions, including:

- 1 appeared to be an illegal student home; the use was to be remediated in Fall of 2014 and is yet to be verified
- 4 did not have rental permits, but did not appear to be student homes; these were referred to the Centre Region Code office
- 1 was difficult to track down information for and monitoring was to continue in Fall of 2014
- 6 resulted in no contact with an owner and appear to be vacant
- 4 resulted in no contact with an owner or occupant either by letter or in person

Follow up activities for these properties and additional verification activities take place when staff time is available because the review is a very time intensive process. The initial process to review this set of properties and prepare for field work took approximately 45 hours of staff time, not including the time it took to locate and return files and write letters to property owners. The review of data and property analysis was completed by the zoning officer with the help of a staff assistant. Field work was done intermittently when weekend hire was available and when ordinance enforcement staff had the time.

### Project Importance

Many of the Borough's records are in paper form, which makes locating a full range of information about a property very difficult and time consuming. Additionally, while some databases do exist, for rental housing permits for example, no such database exists for historical property information. While

### RESOURCES AVAILABLE

PROPERTY FILES, HISTORICAL DATA IN PAPER FORM

PLANNING DEPT STAFF

### RESOURCES NEEDED

MUNIS DATABASE, CONVERSION OF FILES TO DIGITAL FORM

DATA ENTRY INTERN OR ADDITIONAL STAFF

the new information system, MUNIS, that the Borough will soon use will help to establish ongoing property information, a historical background is also necessary to record. This process of reviewing multiple data sources will help to begin to piece together a history of many of the Borough's properties.

This project is also of great importance to many residents from the Borough's neighborhoods. Residents feel that having a more accurate record of information about properties will provide a more clear picture of the conditions of the Borough's neighborhoods.

#### IMPLEMENTATION STATUS:

The current status of this project is:

ONGOING	IMPLEMENTED
DEFERRED	NOT IMPLEMENTED

### Anticipated Timeline & Milestones

While this project is believed to be well-supported by the community, it is a labor-intensive process. It is the hope that another small geographic area can be selected for review in the near future. However, it is important to note that these activities will take place as time permits at the current staffing levels, or when volunteers are available to assist, and are likely to be ongoing.

### Implementation Metrics

Because the activities associated with this project will be incremental and ongoing, there is not a direct metric for determining the effect of implementing this project. Instead, it will be important to work towards a database of historical information about properties that can be stored in one place, and that is frequently used by staff and the community. This should include the following information for properties in the Borough: use, occupancy, rental status, student home status, and, if applicable, nonconforming status.

Other metrics can help evaluate the impacts that result from the development of this database. These impacts should be routinely monitored and may include:

- impact on the annual number of complaints pertaining to illegal rental, illegal student home, or over occupancy
- overall number and percent of rental properties and permitted student homes in the Borough's neighborhoods
- impact on the annual number of requests for new student homes or new rental housing permits



## Recommendation 5.C. Evaluate impacts of Intermittent Rentals

PRIORITY: HIGH

LEAD PARTNER(S):  
PLANNING DEPARTMENT

PROJECT PARTNER(S):  
NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES TEAM,  
PLANNING COMMISSION

ANTICIPATED COMPLETION:  
Q2 2015

NEIGHBORHOODS:



### RELATIONSHIP TO THE PLAN:

In addition to implementing recommendation 5.C., this project could implement or set the stage for the launch of several other recommendations, including:

- 5.A. Evaluate effectiveness of current ordinances and modify if needed
- 6.A. Continue education on ordinances & codes

### EVALUATE IMPACTS: INTERMITTENT RENTALS IN NEIGHBORHOODS

In the Centre Region, the short-term rental of a single-family home have frequently been referred to as “Football Homes.” In the Borough, there are two types of identified “Football Homes.” A tourist home is defined by the Borough’s Zoning Ordinance as a single-family home for which the primary use of the home is a commercial operation—renting the home for short-term stays. Intermittent Rentals, on the other hand, are homes are usually tenant or owner-occupied homes, but are temporarily rented, such as for a football weekend or special event. Tourist homes are not a permitted use in the Borough’s R-1, R-2 and R-3 Zoning Districts. However, Intermittent Rentals are currently unregulated.

During the Fall 2014 Football Season, Planning and Ordinance Enforcement staff will be monitoring both Tourist Homes and Intermittent Rentals in order to verify how common these uses are in the Borough’s single-family neighborhoods and to monitor potential impacts on neighborhood quality of life. In particular, staff will be collecting information on the following:

- Confirm the location and operation of Tourist Homes, which are not a permitted use in the Borough’s single-family residential zoning districts;
- Identify and confirm the short-term rental of owner-occupied single-family homes;
- Understand what impacts, if any, these uses have on public safety and neighborhood quality of life;
- Understand what impacts, if any, these uses have on the traditional hotel and tourism industries.

This information will be compiled in order to determine whether there is a significant impact to public safety or neighborhood quality of life as a result of the operation of Intermittent Rentals. If the review concludes that these rentals do create significant issues in neighborhoods, the next step may be to provide recommendations on the potential need to permit these rentals; the need for safety, code and/or fire inspections; or taxation of these rentals.

### Project Importance

The issue of Football Homes has come up from time to time beginning in 2011. While College Township has adopted a stringent ordinance pertaining to these rentals, the Borough’s Planning Commission reviewed the issue twice in 2013 and concluded that there was not enough information available to make a decision on the potential regulation.

However, the issue remains a concern for some residents and was frequently discussed during the Neighborhood Planning meetings. In particular, there are questions about whether or not these rentals have a significant impact on criminal, ordinance and quality of life violations or issues. This research is necessary to advise on whether or not regulation of some form should be considered for these types of rentals.

### RESOURCES AVAILABLE

ZONING & NUISANCE  
PROPERTY ORDINANCES, CASE  
STUDIES, PROPERTY ADVERTS  
ON WEBSITES

ZONING & ORDINANCE STAFF,  
SOLICITOR

### RESOURCES NEEDED

DATA FROM RESEARCH,  
METRICS FOR EVALUATION  
BASED ON COMMUNITY  
EXPECTATIONS

## Anticipated Timeline & Milestones

Staff will monitor a number of homes throughout the 2014 Football Season. This will include a weekly review of websites, newspapers and other advertising sources that list available short-term rentals. A list of addresses believed to be operating as Tourist Homes or Intermittent Rentals will be compiled and the properties will be patrolled and verified in the evenings of weekends with special events. Complaints of ordinance or criminal violations at these properties will be compared the police or ordinance warnings and violations that were formally issued to determine the impact of these short-term rentals.

Following the review of this information, the analysis of the potential impacts of Intermittent Rentals will advise on next steps, which may include recommendations to develop regulations for these uses.

## Implementation Metrics

The most direct metric to determine the implementation of this project will be the conclusion of the period during which data was collected for a number of properties in the fall of 2014. This analysis may also include an initial set of recommendations as to next steps the Borough may consider on this issue.

Other metrics can help evaluate the impacts that result from the completion of this research project. These impacts should be routinely monitored and may include:

- impact on number of ordinance and criminal offenses, both warnings and violations, at the monitored properties
- impact on number of complaints regarding illegal rentals
- impact on number of complaints of Tourist Homes and number remediated
- impact on local ordinances regulating rentals

Q3 2014	Identify properties to monitor in 2014 football season
Q4 2014	Monitor properties and collect data
Q2 2015	Findings and potential recommendations

### IMPLEMENTATION STATUS:

The current status of this project is:

ONGOING	IMPLEMENTED
DEFERRED	NOT IMPLEMENTED



## Recommendation 6.A. Continue education on ordinances and codes

PRIORITY: MEDIUM

LEAD PARTNER(S):  
PLANNING DEPARTMENT

PROJECT PARTNER(S):  
PLANNING COMMISSION,  
ZONING & ORDINANCE STAFF,  
NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES TEAM

ANTICIPATED COMPLETION:  
Q4 2015, ONGOING

NEIGHBORHOODS:



### COMMUNITY RESOURCES & WORKSHOPS ON ZONING, ORDINANCES

The Planning, Zoning, Ordinance Enforcement and Code officials in the Centre Region oversee many complex ordinances and regulations which help guide the development and maintenance of the community. However, these regulations are not always easy to interpret or access by residents, developers, realtors and landlords.

Implementation of this recommendation includes a number of activities to help educate residents and stakeholders of the Borough on these regulations. Additionally, these activities can be used as an opportunity to discuss the Borough's Zoning Ordinance, in anticipation of the comprehensive ordinance update in 2016, and the Property Maintenance Code, to be reviewed in 2015.

These activities are geared towards the navigation of the ordinances, the agencies in charge of enforcing them, and providing examples of what these ordinances do. For example, in order to engage the community in activities such as the Zoning Ordinance and Property Maintenance Code updates, information should be provided about the various forms these ordinances may take and what conditions they may regulate. Examples of these and other activities to share important information may include:

- Continuing the round table sessions from 2013 with landlords, realtors and others interested in property maintenance and code issues
- Holding additional round tables geared toward issues for landlords and tenants and/or neighborhood associations
- Create a checklist to describe the process for common applications, reviews or inspections
- Develop an online resource for the Zoning Ordinance rewrite information and timeline
- Design pamphlets, interactive websites/maps, record videos, press releases and other resources on FAQ's that can be distributed throughout the community on topics of interest
- Workshops and/or Citizen's Academies which provide more in-depth education and trouble-shooting
- Walking tours and public demonstrations to highlight policies in action

### RELATIONSHIP TO THE PLAN:

In addition to implementing recommendation 6.A., the continuation of this project could implement or set the stage for the launch of several other recommendations, including:

- 1.A. Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance Update
- 5.A. Evaluate effectiveness of current ordinances and modify if needed
- 6.B. Improve working relationship among stakeholders regarding rental management
- 10.C. Maps & data more readily available to residents

### Project Importance

In 2013, the Borough and the Centre Region Code Agency conducted several round table workshops to provide information on the process for rental permitting and inspections to landlords and realtors in the Centre Region. These were well-received by the participants and provided a platform for addressing many of the questions and misconceptions about renting in the region.

In the 2013 Neighborhood Planning process, residents of nearly all of the Borough's neighborhoods expressed interest in having more information available about various ordinances as well as reviewing current regulations to evaluate their effectiveness. Additionally, in 2014, many community dialogues took place regarding the scope and importance of the upcoming zoning update; it will be important to engage a diversity of the community in conversations about how this project is carried out.

### RESOURCES AVAILABLE

PREVIOUS COMMUNITY MEETINGS, FAQ & RESOURCE GUIDES, ENGAGE STATE COLLEGE, CASE STUDIES

PLANNING DEPT, NST

### RESOURCES NEEDED

BUDGET FOR MATERIALS & MEETINGS

COMPREHENSIVE SOURCE OF DATA ONLINE

## Anticipated Timeline & Milestones

Activities, particularly those related to the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite and Property Maintenance Code, should begin in the 1st or 2nd quarter of 2015 in order to provide a platform for the work that will be done throughout the next two years. Many of these activities should be conducted on a routine basis, such as biannual workshops and round tables with various stakeholder group. Others may be conducted on an as-needed basis.

Planning staff has begin to develop a list of activities that could be important to host in 2015 related to current and upcoming projects. Additional activities may be recommended by the Borough's ABC's, neighborhood associations or student groups. These activities should be planned and hosted as the resources, time and community interest are available. When possible, these events should be organized so that information about potentially related or overlapping projects can be coordinated among departments and with community groups.

Q1 2015	Identify community education and information activities that would be useful
Q2 2015	Plan and host various informational activities
Q4 2015	Plan and host various informational activities

## Implementation Metrics

The most direct metric to determine the implementation of this project will be to identify the number and type of community education and information sessions which take place.

Other metrics can help evaluate the impacts that result from hosting these sessions. These impacts should be routinely monitored and may include:

- impact on number respondents to National Citizen's Survey who report that they've attended a public meeting
- impacts on quality of life metrics presented in the biannual Neighborhood Sustainability Report
- impact on the number and type of zoning, ordinance and/or code complaints

### IMPLEMENTATION STATUS:

The current status of this project is:

ONGOING	IMPLEMENTED
DEFERRED	NOT IMPLEMENTED



## Recommendation 7.A. Implement Homestead Investment Program

PRIORITY: HIGH

LEAD PARTNER(S):  
REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY,  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE

PROJECT PARTNER(S):  
PLANNING DEPT, REAL ESTATE AND  
BANKING COMMUNITIES

ANTICIPATED COMPLETION:  
2017

NEIGHBORHOODS:



### RELATIONSHIP TO THE PLAN:

In addition to implementing recommendation 5.B., the ongoing nature of this project could implement or set the stage for the launch of several other recommendations, including:

- 7.C. Use RDA to implement workforce housing
- 7.D. Incentives for non-student housing in or near downtown
- 7.E. Address housing affordability

### RESOURCES AVAILABLE

LINE OF CREDIT

PROGRAM GUIDELINES

RDA BOARD, PLANNING STAFF

### RESOURCES NEEDED

DATA ON CARRYING COSTS FOR PROPERTIES, EVALUATION METRICS FOR PROGRAM

REVIEW COMMITTEE, ADT'L STAFF TO MANAGE PROGRAM, PUBLIC WORKS STAFF FOR MAINTENANCE OF PROPERTIES

### IMPLEMENTATION OF HOMESTEAD INVESTMENT PROGRAM

The Homestead Investment Program (HIP) was designed by the Borough of State College and the Redevelopment Authority in order to address several trends impacting the Borough's neighborhoods. Assumptions regarding these trends, which influenced the creation of this program, include:

- In neighborhoods near campus, rental property operators can out-bid potential owner occupants for single-family homes.
- As the number of registered Student Homes and single-family rental homes increase on a street, owner occupants are less likely to compete for a home on that street.
- A disproportionate number of Student Homes causes some residents to experience lifestyle conflicts with their neighbors.
- The demand for housing, particularly rental housing for University students, has led to housing costs which exceed the financial capacity of many households wishing to live in State College Borough.

The HIP was created to address these concerns about the stability of the Borough's neighborhoods, and to address two of the Borough's Strategic Plan goals, which are to "maintain safe, stable and attractive neighborhoods" and "develop additional housing, particularly workforce housing, in the Borough." The HIP addresses these objectives in two primary ways: by expanding the level of resources available to promote homeownership opportunities, and by adding to the resources available to expand the diversity of housing in the Borough.

The Redevelopment Authority (RDA) will operate the HIP through a line of credit. The RDA will select homes within the program's target area and meeting the program's selection criteria. An average of three homes per year will be purchased and resold on the open market through this program with the help of the real estate community. Before the homes are resold, the Borough will extinguish existing rental permits or student home designations, if they exist, and place a deed restriction on the property. This restriction will encourage owner-occupancy, limit the ability to rent, and prohibit student home use. The program will primarily target single-family homes in near-campus neighborhoods offered and sold at market rate. The program may also support a limited number of purchases made in conjunction with the Borough's affordable housing programs or to be maintained as non-student rentals.

In December of 2013, Borough Council passed a resolution authorizing the implementation of the Homestead Investment Program. Throughout 2014, the Redevelopment Authority worked to refine the criteria and process for selecting and purchasing homes, and initiated a \$5 million line of credit for three years.

### Project Importance

The availability of adequate housing for owner-occupied households in the Borough is among the most immediate concerns of residents. In addition

to the trends outlined in the HIP Policy Document regarding quality of life, social and economic trends in neighborhoods, many residents frequently cite these issues as being among the greatest challenges and opportunities in the Borough's immediate future. Implementing a range of new and existing strategies to protect and promote opportunities for homeownership and greater housing diversity will be one of the key areas for stabilizing Borough neighborhoods in the future.

### Anticipated Timeline & Milestones

The Redevelopment Authority and Borough staff have concluded many activities to operationalize the HIP program. Maintenance of records for the program and monitoring eligible real estate listings will require the ongoing effort of Planning Staff and the Redevelopment Authority. Additionally, as properties are purchased and sold, these steps will require the intermittent involvement of the Borough's Public Works staff to maintain properties, the Borough solicitor.

Given the nature of the real estate market, and the goal of utilizing program funds for properties which are most eligible, it is difficult to set concrete timelines for the program. However, some target milestones are known. First, it is the goal of the program to purchase and resell approximately three properties each year. Additionally, the progress of this program will be reviewed with an advisory committee at least once per year. The initial line of credit for the program was established for a period of three years. Therefore, during the 2nd quarter of 2017, a program evaluation should be completed, and the determination should be made about whether or not the funding should be extended.

### Implementation Metrics

The most direct metric to determine the implementation of the Homestead Investment Program will be the target of three properties purchased and resold through the program each year. In addition, the program outlines several other milestones which can be used to measure its implementation, including:

- investment of the funds used for owner-occupied properties at a ratio of 75% market rate properties, 25% affordable properties
- investment of the funds used for rental properties at a ratio of 50% for market rate rentals, 50% for affordable rentals

Other metrics can help evaluate the impacts that result from hosting these sessions. These impacts should be routinely monitored and may include:

- impact on the number of registered student homes and single-family rental properties in R-1, R-2 and R-3 zoning districts
- impact on the number of Homestead Exclusion eligible properties and the impact on Earned Income Tax revenue collected
- percent of "excellent or good" responses to quality of life questions on the biannual National Citizen's survey
- impact on quality of life offenses reported in the biannual Neighborhood Sustainability Report for neighborhood with HIP funds invested

Q4 2014	Operational documents & policies completed by the RDA and Borough staff
Q2 2017	Purchase three homes per year; review impacts of the program at least once per year with the appointed advisory committee
Q3 2017	Evaluate program; consider extension of line of credit

**IMPLEMENTATION STATUS:**

The current status of this project is:

<b>ONGOING</b>	<b>IMPLEMENTED</b>
<b>DEFERRED</b>	<b>NOT IMPLEMENTED</b>



## Recommendation 7.F. Housing amenities to attract new residents

PRIORITY: MEDIUM

LEAD PARTNER(S):  
CBICC GATEWAY GROUP

PROJECT PARTNER(S):  
PLANNING COMMISSION, RDA,  
PLANNING STAFF, CRPA,  
SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES  
COLLAB., YOUNG PROFESSIONALS  
GROUPS

ANTICIPATED COMPLETION:  
2016

NEIGHBORHOODS:



### RELATIONSHIP TO THE PLAN:

In addition to implementing recommendation 7.F., the completion of this project could implement or set the stage for the launch of several other recommendations, including:

- 3.B. Work with PSU on innovative solutions
- 7.D. Incentives for non-student housing in or near downtown
- 8.D. Increase community participation in planning activities

characteristics of the county that would make this a more attractive place to live and work. This report will be modeled after the Johnstown 2020 Report, which was provided recommendations from the perspective of young professionals in the community to several leading organizations in Johnstown, PA.

### Project Importance

These projects are important not only to inform policies and programs which will make our community a more attractive place for young professionals, but also serve as a tool to demonstrate how the retention of young professionals can promote the sustainability of the community as a whole. For example, retention of young professionals can impact communities by:

- becoming long-term residents and tax-payers of a community

### YOUNG PROFESSIONAL & STUDENT RETENTION ACTIVITIES

The demographic data about the Borough in the State College Neighborhood Plan indicates that just 9.5% of the Borough's population includes residents between 25 and 34 years old, and only another 3.7% between 35 and 44 years old. This is indicative of a low population of college graduates and young professionals and their families living in the Borough.

A number of initiatives have taken place over the past few years to understand the values of communities that Penn State graduates and young professionals look for when selecting a place to live and work. The goal of these initiatives is to understand the cultural, residential and economic opportunities that are desirable to these populations. This information can help advise community organizations, governments, property owners and developers on projects or initiatives that could be launched in order to attract and retain these individuals in the community.

These initiatives have included varying scopes of research and geographic area. Several Penn State classes, through the Sustainable Communities Collaborative, have partnered with the Borough and the Centre Region Planning Agency to conduct research on topics of community character and housing types which will be attractive to young professionals. This information can help advise on the development of an investment in various projects in the community.

In late 2013, the Chamber for Business and Industry of Centre County convened a working group of young professionals, the Gateway Group. This group is made up of young professionals representing the various communities of Centre County as well as the various industries in the county. This group is tasked with identifying projects and initiatives which will engage the County's Young Professionals in business and economic development activities.

One initiative of this group will be to conduct a community survey and demographic study of Centre County and its communities regarding the

### RESOURCES AVAILABLE

REPORTS FROM PREVIOUS SCC CLASSES, JOHNSTOWN 2020 REPORT

CBICC GATEWAY GROUP

### RESOURCES NEEDED

DATA ON TRENDS FOR STATE COLLEGE & CENTRE COUNTY

YOUNG PROFESSIONAL & STUDENT VOLUNTEERS FOR RESEARCH & WRITING

- contributing to economic, industrial, arts and cultural initiatives
- supporting critical services such as schools, volunteer fire companies and community organizations
- helping to develop concrete strategies for community problem solving and engagement
- becoming future leaders in government, businesses, volunteer efforts and more

**IMPLEMENTATION STATUS:**

The current status of this project is:

ONGOING	IMPLEMENTED
DEFERRED	NOT IMPLEMENTED

Additionally, “strategic planning towards the encouragement of PSU graduates to stay in the area as young professionals for stability and diversification of the tax base” was is the fifth most important Strategic Objective of the Borough Council according to their 2012-2013 list of objectives.

**Anticipated Timeline & Milestones**

There are a diversity of project and organizations that will be involved in activities related to this recommendation. Therefore, timelines will vary based on the availability of resources for research and program development and the commitments of the various organizations engaged in them. It is anticipated, however, that initiatives related to these topics will be continued throughout the next several years.

**Implementation Metrics**

A number of metrics can help evaluate the impacts that result from activities geared toward the recruitment of young professionals. These impacts should be routinely monitored and may include:

- impact on the Borough’s demographics according to the American Community Survey and US Census Bureau
- impact on the Borough’s tax base, homeownership patterns, school enrollment patterns and job opportunities
- percent of residents reporting that they will remain in State College over the next five years on the National Citizen’s Survey
- percent of residents reporting various reasons for not remaining in State College on the National Citizen’s Survey
- participation by young professionals on Borough ABC’s and within community organizations



## Recommendation 8.D. Increase participation in planning activities

PRIORITY: MEDIUM

LEAD PARTNER(S):  
PENN STATE IST GEODELIBERATION  
RESEARCH TEAM

PROJECT PARTNER(S):  
STATE COLLEGE BOROUGH,  
RESIDENTS

ANTICIPATED COMPLETION:  
Q4 2015

NEIGHBORHOODS:  
BOROUGH-WIDE &



### RELATIONSHIP TO THE PLAN:

In addition to implementing recommendation 8.D., the engagement models established by this project could implement or set the stage for the launch of several other recommendations, including:

- 9.B. Continue community dialogues
- 10.B. Improve communications with community and provide regular updates
- 10.C. Maps & data more readily available to residents
- 10.G. Increase interactions with Council & ABC's

### Project Importance

This project is important to the Borough as a tool for improving residents' ability to engage in important community discussions and impact decision-making as a result. Through the planning processes of the past several years, and ongoing Borough projects which are of interest to residents, it has frequently been noted that some residents feel that existing methods for public input are not sufficient. The Geodeliberation Project is important in order to help the Borough determine effective and efficient ways to engage with residents.

Additionally, the project has a significance for civic engagement and democratic decision making for all communities. According to the research team's website, there is a need to expand and deepen civic engagement and effective means of doing so has been challenging to date. It is believed that

### GEODELIBERATION & COMMUNITY ISSUE REVIEW

The Geodeliberation Project is a partnership between researchers from the College of Information Sciences and Technology and Penn State and the Borough of State College. This collaboration emerged from a project funded by the National Science Foundation entitled: "Geodeliberation: Enabling Democratic Decision-Making in Local Communities Through Place-Based Deliberative Dialogues."

The research team and the Borough have worked together since 2012 to develop and test online and mobile tools which can analyze and facilitate civic engagement and spatial decision-making in a community planning context. Specifically, the research team has studied current community engagement and decision making processes during the development of the Downtown Master Plan and State College Neighborhood Plan.

Currently, the team is working to pilot a tool for effectively engaging residents in conversations and the review of important information which can inform decision-making. This pilot, called the Community Issue Review, is modeled after the Citizen's Initiative Review utilized by the state of Oregon. This pilot will engage 20 randomly selected citizens as panelists to review an important issue of community interest.

Through this Community Issue Review process, panelists will hear from advocates for and against an important issue, as well as expert testimony from neutral sources on the issue. The panelists will use this input to write a citizen's statement highlighting the most important findings from the discussion. The statement will then be shared with all residents through the Borough's website and other media outlets. It is the intent that the citizen's statement will not be used to advocate for one position on an issue, but rather to provide a resource so residents can consider all sides of an issue before making a decision.

The pilot Community Issue Review process will help inform the researchers and the Borough on methods of online engagement and discussion which can be most successful in helping citizen's gain access to information, make decisions and utilize the Geodeliberation tool.

### RESOURCES AVAILABLE

PUBLIC INFORMATION ABOUT  
COMMUNITY ISSUES

PSU IST RESEARCH TEAM

### RESOURCES NEEDED

DATA & COMMUNITY  
IMPRESSIONS ON ISSUES

VOLUNTEERS FOR PILOT  
PROJECTS AND TO DEMO  
ONLINE PROTOTYPES

effective dialogues must go beyond public talk in order to encourage the constructive exchange of ideas, listening and understanding of participants, and critical thinking and reasoned argumentation to develop judgments.

### Anticipated Timeline & Milestones

The Borough as worked with the Penn State research team on various phases of the Geodeliberation Project development since 2012. This has involved observations of current engagement methods, interviews and brainstorming sessions with staff as well as participants in these activities, and focus group meetings with community leaders.

The Community Issue Review pilot project will take place in the 4th quarter of 2014. It is anticipated that community residents and Penn State research team will conduct the panel, with assistance from Borough staff. A debriefing of this pilot will occur before the end of 2014. It is anticipated that this pilot may be the first of several pilot projects to help develop and refine the deliberation tools for the overall research project. These activities will continue throughout 2015.

### Implementation Metrics

The most direct metric to determine the implementation of the Geodeliberation Project will be for an online engagement tool to be developed. Other metrics can help evaluate the impacts that result from participation in this online engagement. These impacts should be routinely monitored and may include:

- community awareness for important issues requiring local decision-making
- number of participants in pilot projects and number of residents reached with citizen's statements
- percent of respondents who report participation in Borough-sponsored activities on the National Citizen's Survey
- percent of respondents who report an awareness of or participation in various planning activities on the National Citizen's Survey

Q4 2014	Pilot project for Community Issue Review panel
Q2 2015	Additional pilot topics for Community Issue Review panels
Q4 2015	Continue development of Geodeliberation Project and engagement tools

**IMPLEMENTATION STATUS:**

The current status of this project is:

ONGOING	IMPLEMENTED
DEFERRED	NOT IMPLEMENTED

# neighbor-to-neighbor relationships

The goals and recommendations of this theme seek to enhance relationships among neighbors and with Borough officials.

## Overview of Theme Three

The final theme of the Neighborhood Plan 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 planning meetings held in 2012 and 2013. There was an expressed interest in continuing and increasing the opportunities for dialogue about these issues, as well as more regular updates on issues impacting the neighborhoods. Additionally, residents are interested in expanded opportunities for positive engagements between students and long-term residents, and more involvement on the part of landlords and realtors in neighborhood activities. Finally, there was an interest in making information more accessible and increasing communications with other Centre Region municipalities in order to evaluate the long-term impacts of growth.

## Implementation Activities

The projects which have been identified for implementation in 2015-2016 for the Neighbor-to-Neighbor address new opportunities for the community to engage in community decision making and receive information about Borough activities.

The implementation of these projects will help residents connect with Borough officials and provide feedback on important community issues. Additionally, these activities will provide new ideas and case studies for the Borough to consider in order to continue to address community issues in effective and innovative ways. These activities will not only demonstrate this commitment to a high quality of life and sustainability of the Borough to current residents, but also to potential future residents.

Throughout 2015 and 2016, the implementation partners will be working on the following Theme Three activities:

- Community Conversation & Coffee (9.B.)
- Research Best Practices from Peer Communities (9.H).
- Communications Action Plan (10.A.)
- Neighborhood Plan Website & Resource Page (10.A.)
- Office of Community Engagement & Neighborhood Services Team (10.D.)
- Neighborhood Appearance Committee (11.A).

There are three goals and a number of recommendations for Theme Three. The goals for this theme include:



Goal 9: Maintain and expand diversity of neighborhood's residents and improve relationships among student and permanent residents



Goal 10: Improve communications among residents, neighborhood leaders and Borough officials



Goal 11: Market the positive benefits of living in the Borough's neighborhoods

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## Recommendation 9.B. Continue community dialogues

PRIORITY: MEDIUM

LEAD PARTNER(S):  
OFFICE OF COMMUNITY  
ENGAGEMENT, NEIGHBORHOOD  
SERVICES TEAM

PROJECT PARTNER(S):  
RESIDENTS

ANTICIPATED COMPLETION:  
ONGOING

NEIGHBORHOODS:  
BOROUGH-WIDE & 

### CASUAL CONVERSATION & COFFEE

Casual Conversation & Coffee is an initiative that was started in 2014 by the Office of Community Engagement, a newly developed office launched through a partnership between Penn State Student Affairs and the Borough of State College (See page 57). During these events, all residents are invited to enjoy free coffee and meet members of the Borough’s Neighborhood Services Team. The main objective for these events is to provide regular, ongoing engagement between neighborhood residents and Borough staff that enhance relationships, improve communications, and increase awareness of neighborhood concerns. It is also an opportunity to communicate about the full range of services that are provided to neighborhoods and residents. Specifically, these events provide staff and residents with the opportunity to:

- exchange neighborhood updates,
- introduce community resources, services and information, and
- discuss proposed solutions which could help solve community issues.

### RELATIONSHIP TO THE PLAN:

In addition to implementing recommendation 9.B., this initiative could implement or set the stage for the launch of several other recommendations, including:

- 9.A. Expand programs for neighborliness & education
- 10.A. Improve communications with community and provide regular updates
- 10.D. Staff liaisons for key resources

The success of these events will depend on the participation of residents-- both long-term and student residents. Residents should bring issues and ideas which they are interested in discussing to these casual engagements. The events are held in the New Leaf Initiative’s Community Space, which is on the third floor of the Municipal Building. No RSVP is needed to attend.

### Project Importance

Opportunities for casual interaction with Borough staff and other representatives was frequently mentioned by residents in the Neighborhood Planning meetings in 2012-2014. Residents felt that having an informal opportunity to meet and talk about issues would help improve the working relationship among the Borough, University and residents, as well as provide opportunities for information to be shared before decisions were made. Additionally, in the 2014 National Citizen’s Survey, only 42% of respondents reported that they had attended a Borough-sponsored event, only 10% had attended a local public meeting, and only 33% had been in contact with a Borough employee. Informal engagements like Casual Conversation & Coffee provide residents with opportunities to meet with borough officials and discuss important community issues outside of formal public meetings.

### Anticipated Timeline & Milestones

The Casual Conversation & Coffee gatherings were launched in the Fall of 2014. It is anticipated that these activities will continue in 2015 on a routine basis. These gatherings are likely to be held at least once per month and will continue to be hosted by the Assistant to the Manager for Community Engagement and a member of the Neighborhood Services Team.

#### RESOURCES AVAILABLE

NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES  
TEAM

#### RESOURCES NEEDED

DIALOGUE ABOUT ISSUES  
IMPORTANT TO THE  
COMMUNITY

RESIDENTS’ PARTICIPATION

## Implementation Metrics

At this time, the Casual Conversation & Coffee gatherings are considered to be initiated. The primary goal for these events is to provide routine engagement with residents. Therefore, the ongoing implementation of this initiative can be monitored by the hosting of the gatherings and residents' attendance.

Other metrics can help evaluate the impacts that result from these gatherings. These impacts should be routinely monitored and may include:

- percent of respondents on National Citizen's Survey who report that they have made contact with a Borough staff
- percent of respondents who report that they have engaged in public meetings, online meetings, or Borough Communications tools
- percent of respondents on the National Citizen's Survey who report that they have made contact with a neighbor
- number of Borough departments engaged in gatherings
- ideas for solutions to community issues or new initiatives that emerge from engagements during these gatherings

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Q3 2014	Launch of events
Q4 2014	Neighborhood Services Team to set additional dates for 2015 gatherings
Q4 2015	Ongoing Casual Conversation & Coffee events

### IMPLEMENTATION STATUS:

The current status of this project is:

ONGOING

IMPLEMENTED

DEFERRED

NOT IMPLEMENTED



## Recommendation 9.H. Study peer university communities

PRIORITY: MEDIUM

LEAD PARTNER(S):  
PLANNING COMMISSION

PROJECT PARTNER(S):  
OTHER ABC'S, PLANNING DEPT

ANTICIPATED COMPLETION:  
Q4 2015

NEIGHBORHOODS:  
BOROUGH-WIDE &



### RESEARCH BEST PRACTICES FROM PEER COMMUNITIES

Overtime, the Borough and its partners have been successful in generating new and innovative solutions to community issues. In fact, the Borough has even been on the forefront of generating solutions, such as the recent development of the Homestead Investment Program and the launch of a civic crowdfunding pilot project. Additionally, the Borough frequently ranks as “above” or “significantly above” peer communities for topics reported in the National Citizen’s Survey.

However, there are many successful initiatives that have been undertaken by other communities, both university and non-university communities alike, that could influence new solutions to community issues for the Borough. There are many important issues that are being discussed in the Borough at the present time. Some of these issues include:

- communities which have implemented initiatives to foster positive relationships among student and long-term residents
- policies to guide future land uses and development projects
- comprehensive strategies for updating zoning ordinances, property maintenance codes and other important regulations
- model ordinances for sustainable building design
- initiatives to promote accessibility by and inclusion of all residents in public and private amenities
- development of public private partnership projects to achieve community benefits
- strategies for engaging a diversity of residents in civic and planning initiatives

### RELATIONSHIP TO THE PLAN:

In addition to implementing recommendation 9.H., this initiative could implement or set the stage for the launch of several other recommendations, including:

- 1.A. Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance Update
- 1.E. Model to evaluate impacts from new developments
- 1.G. Maintain quality services & evaluate opportunities to expand
- 5.A. Evaluate effectiveness of current ordinances and modify if needed
- 8.D. Increase community participation in planning activities
- Many other recommendations of Goals 1-11

During planning efforts and day-to-day work of the Borough’s ABC’s and staff, questions come up about solutions that have been tested that could be applied to community issues. With many of the implementation activities resulting from the Neighborhood and Downtown plans, there is an opportunity to conduct research in order to consider options for implementing these projects. Given the nature of the projects that are reviewed by the Planning Commission, the Commission is well-positioned to take a leadership role in conducting research and making recommendations on policies and programs which can address these critical community issues.

### Project Importance

Evaluations of the services provided by the Borough indicate that many of these activities have had a positive impact on conditions in the Borough. It will be important to maintain these initiatives to ensure a high quality of life for residents. However, in order to continue to improve the quality of life, and expand opportunities for new amenities and residents to come to the Borough, an ongoing effort towards innovating and solving outstanding issues will be required.

The Borough is at a critical point in terms of being able to respond to and address issues of concern to the community with the best solutions possible. Interest in redevelopment, recent planning initiatives, and the implementation of several important projects make this the best time to take a proactive approach to researching solutions for the community.

### RESOURCES AVAILABLE

LIST OF PEER COMMUNITIES FROM NCS

PLANNING COMMISSION & PLANNING STAFF

### RESOURCES NEEDED

CASE STUDIES & BEST PRACTICES FROM OTHER COMMUNITIES

## Anticipated Timeline & Milestones

Throughout 2015 and 2016, Planning Commissioners should conduct research on that are of importance to the community. Many topics have been listed here and others may emerge as the Boroug prepares for the Zoning Ordinance Update, Property Maintenance Code review and other sigificant projects.

These research activities may take the form of individual or small committee projects, like the recommendation to add the Planning Commission to the preliminary land development plan process from 2013. Others may involve the work of the entire Commission throughout several regular meetings. Regardless of how the work is divided, these research activities should benefit current and relevant community planning considerations and should serve to inform the Commission, and those they report to, on opportunities for new solutions.

## Implementation Metrics

Metrics for the various research activities will vary depending on the topics being researched and the resulting recommendations.

Q1 2015	Identify research topics to advance individually or as a group in 2015
Q3 2015	Quarterly reports to Commission on research topics
Q4 2015	Reports or recommendations regarding research topics

### IMPLEMENTATION STATUS:

The current status of this project is:

ONGOING

IMPLEMENTED

DEFERRED

NOT INITIATED

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## Recommendation 10.A. Improve communications with community

PRIORITY: HIGH

LEAD PARTNER(S):  
COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

PROJECT PARTNER(S):  
BOROUGH DEPARTMENTS

ANTICIPATED COMPLETION:  
ONGOING

NEIGHBORHOODS:



### RELATIONSHIP TO THE PLAN:

In addition to implementing recommendation 10.A., this initiative could implement or set the stage for the launch of several other recommendations, including:

- 8.D. Increase community participation in planning activities
- 10.B. Increase use of communications tools
- 11.B. Issue regular press releases to market achievements

### COMMUNICATIONS ACTION PLAN & TOOLS

Since 2007, the percentage of residents who have had personal contact with a Borough staff member has steadily declined. As processes become more automated, the number of opportunities for the Borough to interact with residents and tell the story of what is being done for the community is diminishing. At the same time the Borough's capacity to develop and support unique neighborhood programming has greatly improved. The programs that the Borough offers remains largely unknown to a significant number of residents.

In 2015, the Communications Office will be launching several new initiatives to help improve the number of contacts the Borough has with residents and the type of information that is shared. A few early steps to do so include:

- In 2015 the Communications Office will be developing and implementing an organization-wide communications policy. This policy will provide guidance on communication roles within each department, general content management, and processes for launching specialized campaigns.
- An editorial calendar has been created that will be populated with content earlier in the year to ensure that communications go out in a timely fashion and residents are better made aware of opportunities to engage with Council and staff on pertinent issues.
- Website analytics will be reviewed throughout the year to identify gaps in navigation and content optimized to improve user experience.

Additional activities include collaborations among departments to ensure that project-specific communications are being developed and delivered to the residents that want to remain informed about them. For example, in the 4th Quarter of 2014, staff in the Planning Department has begun working with the Communications Office to establish an email template and distribution list to use for sending routine updates about the Neighborhood Plan's Implementation Progress. This could expand to include other digital and print communications regarding high-profile planning projects in the future.

### Project Importance

During the Neighborhood Planning meetings in 2012-2013, residents of nearly all of the Borough's neighborhoods indicated that they would like to receive more routine information about Borough and community activities. In response to this, the Borough launched a more aggressive campaign for distributing messages, particularly regarding the Neighborhood Planning process. However, the issue still remains that the diversity of the Borough's residents' preferences on how to receive communications makes any one communication strategy somewhat limited in its reach.

According to the 2014 National Citizen Survey (NCS), less than 20% of respondents reported to having watched a local public meeting in the past year, but over 70% of residents read or watch the local news. Increasing the number of media releases issued by the Borough and sharing information through other outlets will help to inform residents about Borough programs and engage them in conversation, whether face-to-face or digital. The

#### RESOURCES AVAILABLE

FUNDING FOR MAILED NEWSLETTERS, EMAIL MARKETING TOOLS

COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

#### RESOURCES NEEDED

COORDINATED TEAM OF CONTENT CREATORS TO POPULATE COMMUNICATIONS

Neighborhood Plan is a good example of how improved efforts in communications can better inform residents on an issue. Due to the planning staff's communication efforts, with that project, 91% of respondents to the 2014 NCS had either attended a meeting, participated online, or had heard about the project through one of many forms of media.

### Anticipated Timeline & Milestones

The Proposed 2015 Budget includes additional funding for the purchase of Mail Chimp, an email marketing tool, to produce higher-quality email newsletters and launch more targeted campaigns. This tool will be integrated into the Borough website and used to communicate Neighborhood Plan Implementation updates. Pilot email newsletter campaigns will be created throughout the first quarter of 2015 and subscription options integrated into the website by the summer of 2015.

Additional funding has also been added to produce up to two mailed newsletters to increase the number of subscribers to the Borough's email newsletters and provide the community with bi-annual updates on neighborhood programming. In order to launch these ideas, The Borough will need to establish a coordinated team of content creators to make the most out of the tools and resources provided. It is anticipated that as the use of these new tools becomes more streamlined, additional opportunities for integrating messaging and communications with residents will emerge.

The Borough is scheduled to go through a website redesign process beginning in the summer of 2015. This process will include surveys on current use of the website and meetings with staff to discuss ways to simplify navigation, provide more interactive content, and make the website more mobile friendly.

Q1 2015	Pilot email campaigns for project-specific communications
Q2 2015	Email integration with Borough website; launch website redesign
Q4 2015	Analysis of new communications tools and website upgrade

**IMPLEMENTATION STATUS:**

The current status of this project is:

ONGOING	IMPLEMENTED
DEFERRED	NOT IMPLEMENTED

### Implementation Metrics

The most direct metric to determine the implementation of these communications tools will be the use of the pilot email campaigns and the designation of content creators for the Borough's website and emails.

Other metrics can help evaluate the impacts that result from these improved communications tools. These impacts should be routinely monitored and may include:

- number of subscribers to various Borough communications tools
- analytics from Mail Chimp regarding the success of email campaigns; analytics from Piwik regarding the use of the Borough's website
- percent of respondents on National Citizen's Survey who report that they have made contact with a Borough staff
- percent of respondents who report that they have engaged in public meetings, online meetings, or Borough Communications tools
- working relationships created with local news and media outlets to share Borough messaging



## Recommendation 10.A. Improve communications with the community

PRIORITY: MEDIUM

LEAD PARTNER(S):  
PLANNING DEPT

PROJECT PARTNER(S):  
COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE,  
NEIGHBORHOODS

ANTICIPATED COMPLETION:  
Q2 2015

NEIGHBORHOODS:



### NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN WEBSITE & RESOURCES PAGE

During the Neighborhood Plan Draft review, it was frequently discussed that having the Neighborhood Plan available in a more user-friendly online version would make much of the Plan's information more visible and increase the number of residents engaging with the document.

In the Fall of 2014, the Planning and Communications departments at the Borough recruited a Penn State Intern to help transfer the Neighborhood Plan into content that can populate a series of pages on the Borough's website. The purpose of this website will be for residents to learn about and preview the Neighborhood Plan's contents. These web pages will describe the overall themes of the Plan, feature important data and maps, contain links to other online resources and will feature pages describing how the plan addresses each of the neighborhoods. When this content is available online, it will eventually replace the Neighborhood Planning information available at: [www.statecollegepa.us/NeighborhoodPlan](http://www.statecollegepa.us/NeighborhoodPlan).

### RELATIONSHIP TO THE PLAN:

In addition to implementing recommendation 10.A., the completion of this website could implement or set the stage for the launch of several other recommendations, including:

- 8.D. Increase community participation in planning activities
- 10.B. Increase use of communications tools
- 10.C. Maps & data more readily available to residents
- 11.B. Issue regular press releases to market achievements

As implementation activities occur, this site can also be developed to display and share announcements, updates, photos and compare trends over time. In all, the website is intended to become a place where residents can not only learn about the Plan and its recommendations, but also how activities related to the Plan are impacting the community as a whole.

### Project Importance

Staff has received many comments from the Planning Commission and Borough residents about the strengths and quality of the Neighborhood Plan. However, due to the length of the document and the breadth of its information, it is unappealing for many residents to read and utilize. Having an online complement to the Plan, which lays out a snapshot of the information in the Plan will be a critical tool to introducing the Plan to residents and directing them to the locations of more detailed information in the document itself. Furthermore, having a web version of the

Plan will help the Borough to communicate the Plan to a wider audience of residents-- those that prefer to receive information online. Additionally, as the Borough's new communications tools are piloted and refined, this online Plan can be seamlessly integrated into email communications and other information releases.

### Anticipated Timeline & Milestones

It is anticipated that the content for the Neighborhood Plan's web pages will be tested during the 1st Quarter of 2015. Staff will review the information to ensure that the site functions as intended and that the most important content from the Plan is displayed. Following any improvements that result from this test, the site should be made available for public use by the 2nd Quarter of 2015. Residents will be informed via a press release about the launch of the website and will be invited to sign up for email updates on the progress of the implementation activities.

### RESOURCES AVAILABLE

NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN  
CONTENT, GIS DATA &  
SOFTWARE

COMMUNICATIONS INTERN  
FOR WEBSITE Q3 & 4 2014,  
COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE,  
PLANNING STAFF

### RESOURCES NEEDED

STAFF TIME TO MAINTAIN  
CONTENT & UPDATE

Following the initial launch of the Neighborhood Planning web pages, the content will need to be reviewed routinely to ensure that it is up-to-date. This may, from time-to-time, lead to the recruitment of additional intern or other Borough staff help to complete these tasks. The most important updates to this site will be around implementation activities, in order to provide updates on these activities' progress and any impact they have had on the Plan's benchmarks.

### Implementation Metrics

The most direct metric to determine the implementation of this project will be the public launch of the Neighborhood Plan website.

Other metrics can help evaluate the impacts that result from having the Neighborhood Plan's information available online. These impacts should be routinely monitored and may include:

- number of new partners for implementation activities related to the Neighborhood Plan
- percent of residents who report that they have participated in or know about the Neighborhood Plan in future community surveys
- percent of residents who report having communication with Borough officials on the biannual National Citizen's Survey
- analysis of website traffic and it's relationship to other communications tools

Q1 2015	Develop content for website and test webpages
Q2 2015	Public launch of the new Neighborhood Plan webpages
Q4 2015	Review content and update to reflect implementation

**IMPLEMENTATION STATUS:**

The current status of this project is:

ONGOING	IMPLEMENTED
DEFERRED	NOT IMPLEMENTED

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## Recommendation 10.D. Staff liaisons for key resources

PRIORITY: HIGH

LEAD PARTNER(S):  
OFFICE OF COMMUNITY  
ENGAGEMENT

PROJECT PARTNER(S):  
STATE COLLEGE BOROUGH,  
PENN STATE UNIVERSITY STUDENT  
AFFAIRS, NEIGHBORHOODS,  
STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS,  
BOROUGH DEPTS

ANTICIPATED COMPLETION:  
ONGOING

NEIGHBORHOODS:  
BOROUGH-WIDE & 

### RELATIONSHIP TO THE PLAN:

In addition to implementing recommendation 9.B., this initiative could implement or set the stage for the launch of several other recommendations, including:

- 9.A. Expand programs for neighborliness & education
- 9.C. Foster working relationships among neighborhood associations & student organizations
- 9.G. Good Neighbor School
- 10.A. Improve communications with community and provide regular updates

### RESOURCES AVAILABLE

FUNDING FOR DEPT

NHBRHD SRVC TEAM (ALL  
DEPTS), PSU STUDENT AFFAIRS

### RESOURCES NEEDED

GRANTS & ADT'L FUNDING

ACTION PLAN FOR PROGRAMS  
OR EVENTS, DOCUMENTS TO  
INCREASE AWARENESS &  
DISSEMINATE INFORMATION

COMMITTEES & TEAMS

### OFFICE OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement is a core value for Penn State University and the Borough of State College. The University and the Borough of State College are jointly funding the Community Engagement Office to continue and possibly expand on the many partnerships, collaborative initiatives, and existing programs lead by or for students and long-term residents as a means to improve neighborhood relations and assist with improving the quality of life for neighborhood residents.

The Community Engagement Office identifies opportunities for program development and implementation that inspire residents to appreciate, provide and promote meaningful contributions that improve the quality of life for long-term neighborhood residents, enhance the off-campus student-resident experience, and facilitate community introductions and new partnerships for collaborative, healthy, and sustainable practices lead by students, neighborhood association members and town-gown leaders. The Office has established the following goals:

- Coordinate Neighborhood Services Team to increase communication, coordination, and collaboration within and among Borough departments to assist with the Borough's goal of improving the quality of life within neighborhoods.
- Leverage on-campus and off-campus resources and assets to improve the quality of life issues for long-term residents and to enhance the off-campus student-resident experience through educational outreach and programs designed to build positive relationships between neighbors.
- Partner with Center for Character, Conscience and Public Purpose to provide a meaningful internship program experience that creatively depicts how student involvement at the local government level adds value to the off-campus student experience; and the internship program affords the Borough of State College the opportunity to receive feedback and assistance from student-minded professionals as we launch & develop community-oriented programs.
- Cultivate town-gown relations through new introductions and partnerships.
- Support town-gown events lead by and for neighborhood residents by offering to share event/program/projects with local media to increase visibility and awareness on efforts lead by or for student-residents, long-term residents, or town-gown leaders.

### Project Importance

The Borough's historical community engagement efforts have been organized and lead by staff from each of the departments. However, these efforts have lacked a central office that manages and serves as a resource for all community engagement activity. Through the Community Engagement Office, the Borough of State College and Penn State University, demonstrate

interest and support to continue traditional community-oriented programs, but also implement new ongoing programs that are designed to increase collaboration between the town and gown to improve neighborhood relations and provide the resources desired by long term and student residents.

### Anticipated Timeline & Milestones

As the Office of Community Engagement launches and builds bridges among the various Borough, Penn State and neighborhood groups it will convene, an action plan will be developed. This action plan will showcase initiatives that are intended to be launched through partnerships of the Office of Community Engagement and other organizations. This action plan will likely include a timeline for these initiatives as well as milestones to be reached. This section will be expanded in future updates of the Implementation Program as these details emerge.

### Implementation Metrics

The launch of the Office of Community Engagement in 2014 kicked off the implementation of this initiative. As the programs and initiatives of this Office are developed and implemented, additional metrics for measuring the impact of this office within the community will be established. This section will be expanded in future updates of the Implementation Program as these details emerge.

#### IMPLEMENTATION STATUS:

The current status of this project is:

ONGOING	IMPLEMENTED
DEFERRED	NOT IMPLEMENTED

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## Recommendation 11.A. Highlight the benefits of living in the Borough

PRIORITY: MEDIUM

LEAD PARTNER(S):  
BOROUGH DEPARTMENTS

PROJECT PARTNER(S):  
NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS,  
STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS,  
REALTORS, ABC'S

ANTICIPATED COMPLETION:  
TO BE DETERMINED

NEIGHBORHOODS:



### RELATIONSHIP TO THE PLAN:

In addition to implementing recommendation 11.A., this initiative could implement or set the stage for the launch of several other recommendations, including:

- 9.C. Foster working relationships among student organizations and neighborhood associations
- 9.D. Liaisons to welcome new residents
- 10.C. Maps & data more readily available to residents
- 11.D. Ensure properties are accurately portrayed when marketed to potential residents

### NEIGHBORHOOD APPEARANCE COMMITTEE

The Neighborhood Appearance Committee may be made up of representatives from Borough neighborhoods, student organizations, the real estate community and the Borough's Neighborhood Services Team. The purpose for this team will be to develop materials, communications and activities which will promote positive and factual representation of the Borough's neighborhoods to existing and prospective residents.

Activities of this Committee may include:

- Assist with the development of content to portray borough neighborhoods to new and potential residents (brochures, web/email content, mailers, press releases, etc).
- Advise on information that could be made available on the the Borough's website that would be effective in helping residents learn about their neighborhood/community.
- Distribute Neighborhood Plan Executive Summary and other Committee materials to neighborhood associations, realtors, and companies recruiting new employees.
- Communicate with the CBICC when creating the annual Neighborhoods of Centre County Guide.
- Review and provide feedback to the Borough on the contents of the New Homeowner Packets and LION Walk materials; provide recommendations for relevant materials and welcome activities.
- Propose projects that could foster improved relationships among neighborhood associations, student organizations, realtors, and landlords (for example, facilitate pilot project with Walk Your City and real estate community).

The information provided under the Residents, Student-Residents and Neighborhood Associations tabs of the City of East Lansing official website may serve as a guide for this Committee. This website can be found at: [www.cityofeastlansing.com/Residents](http://www.cityofeastlansing.com/Residents).

### Project Importance

The Myths of Affluence Report, which reviews a number of demographic and social trends in the Borough and its neighboring townships, indicates that the Borough has lost approximately 30% of its families since 1970. The Borough is at a critical inflection point, with the recent development of several important community plans the launch of new programs, to help slow or reverse the trends that have been highlighted in this report. Recruiting new residents, either homeowners or renters, will be a key activity to address these trends and create more sustainable neighborhoods in the future.

Some residents are concerned, however, that the Borough's neighborhoods are not positively represented to potential residents and information needed to make decisions about where to live in the Borough is not currently easily accessible. Establishing a positive working relationship among residents of the Borough's neighborhoods and those with the information and access to connect new residents to the community will be a step towards improving these conditions.

### RESOURCES AVAILABLE

HOUSING GUIDES & WEBSITES,  
BOROUGH WEBSITE, LIST  
SERVES, COMMUNITY RE-  
SOURCE & HOUSING FAIRS

PLANNING, COMMUNITY EN-  
GAGEMENT AND COMMUNICA-  
TIONS OFFICES

### RESOURCES NEEDED

FUNDING FOR PRODUCTIONS

MARKETING/ACTION PLAN

VOLUNTEERS FOR COMMITTEE

## Anticipated Timeline & Milestones

Goals for a Neighborhood Appearance Committee should be established by the end of the 2nd Quarter of 2015 so that invitations for participants can be distributed. The Committee should convene by the end of the 3rd Quarter 2015, and identify a series of initial projects and Borough promotional materials by the 4th Quarter 2015 in order that they may be incorporated in the 2016 Operating Budget.

The Committee should establish how it will operate and work on the projects it identifies. This may include monthly meetings, or meetings as frequently as necessary, throughout 2016 to move the projects forward and develop materials for distribution. After 2016, the Committee should meet as needed to update information/identify new ways to deliver content and to evaluate the effectiveness of the existing activities.

## Implementation Metrics

The most direct metric to determine the implementation of this project is to evaluate whether or not a committee has been convened and, if so, whether it has been able to identify materials that could be shared with the community.

Other metrics can help evaluate the impacts that result from the work of this type of committee. These impacts should be routinely monitored and may include:

- responses to surveys filled out by residents who receive the materials or take part in projects of the committee-- effectiveness of providing important or helpful information
- impact on trends reported in the Myths of Affluence Report
- impact on demographic questions in the National Citizen's Survey
- impact on the Borough's demographics as reported in the American Community Survey and US Census Bureau

Q2 2015	Goals for committee and invitations to members to participate
Q3 2015	Launch committee and discuss purpose & scope
Q4 2015	Identify projects that can be requested for the 2016 Budget
Q4 2016	Meet montly to develop & launch projects or materials

### IMPLEMENTATION STATUS:

The current status of this project is:

- |          |               |
|----------|---------------|
| ONGOING  | IMPLEMENTED   |
| DEFERRED | NOT INITIATED |

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To view this report online, visit [www.statecollegepa.us/NeighborhoodPlan](http://www.statecollegepa.us/NeighborhoodPlan)