

Highlands

Priority Goals

In the SWOT analysis, many residents shared comments about the neighborhood's diversity of residents, proximity to community amenities, need for increased homeownership and improved communications with Borough officials. Therefore, many of the recommendations of goals five, six, seven, nine and ten have been indicated as a high priorities of the Highlands neighborhood.



The Highlands neighborhood has been referred to as the icon of a town-gown neighborhood. This neighborhood is afforded many benefits and challenges associated with being an attractive, walkable neighborhood within close proximity of downtown and the Penn State Campus. Additionally, it is home to the fraternity district and is a transitional area between high and low density residential and commercial uses.

Due to these characteristics, Goals 5 and 6 are very important to neighborhood residents. These goals are related to enforcement of zoning, local ordinances and the maintenance of rental properties. The recommendations within these goals address the need for a high level of uniform enforcement of Borough policies and ensure that rental housing is maintained to the same standard as owner-occupied dwellings in established neighborhoods and that behavioral impacts do not adversely impact non-student residents.

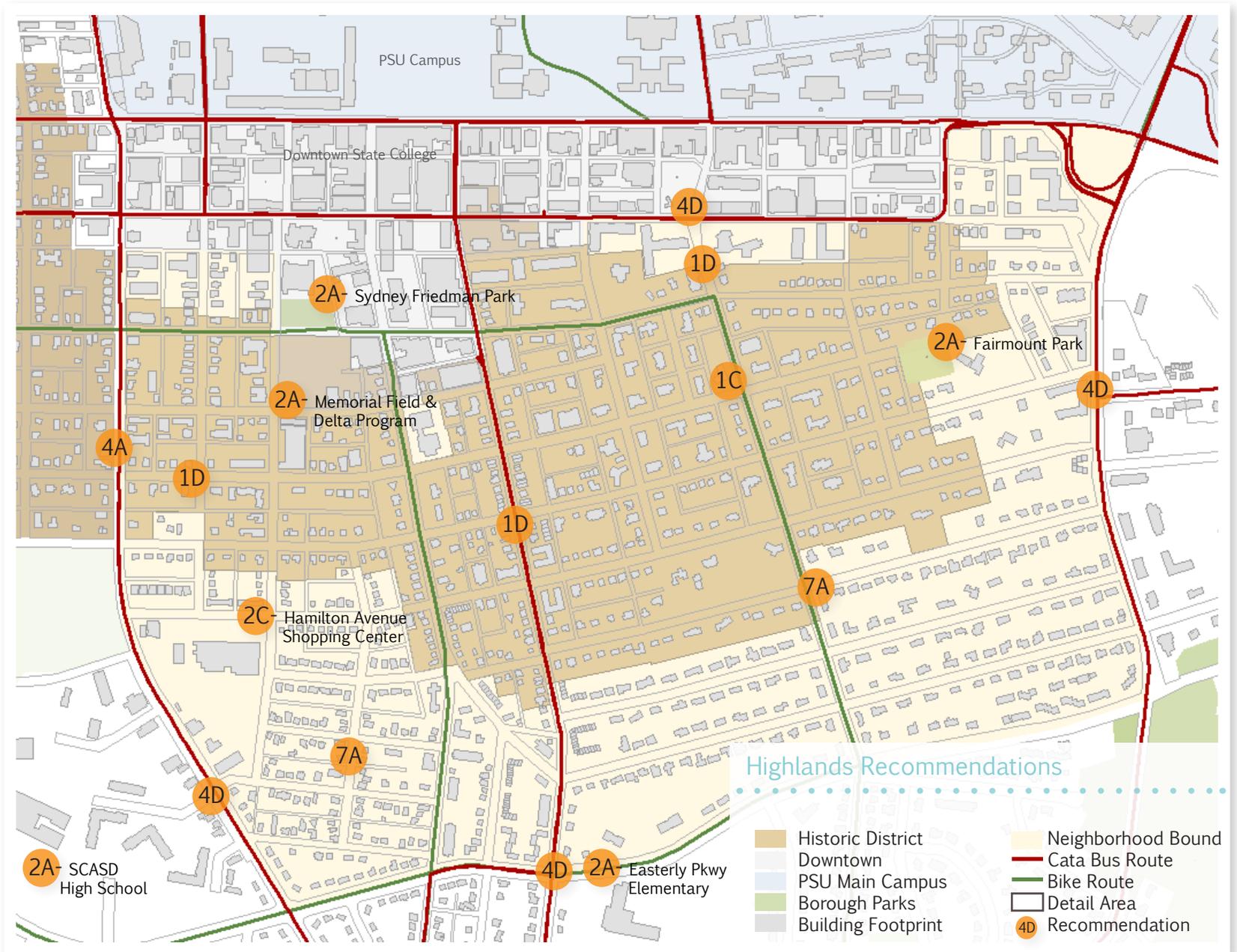
Goal 7 is a high priority for Highlands residents' because they

feel that increasing the number of professional and families in the neighborhood, encouraging more owner-occupied dwellings and increasing Earned Income Tax generated for Borough services are very important. This neighborhood has also had success as an area of investment for organizations focused on affordable housing.

Because the Highlands neighborhood is the home to many families and professionals as well as student residents, improving the relationships among the neighborhood's residents is also a high priority. Many residents support the recommendations of Goal 9 because they provide suggestions for encouraging more positive interactions among neighbors and a greater awareness for the social norms of living in a neighborhood.

Goal 10 is important also because many residents of the Highlands are very engaged in civic and community activities. Many residents serve as Borough elected or appointed officials, serve on boards and committees for local non-profits, and volunteer throughout the community. These residents have much insight into the strengths and weaknesses of communicating with Borough officials and are concerned with improving those communications for transparency and to improve the workings of other community groups.

The map at right highlights areas of the neighborhood for which particular goals and recommendations are relevant. Many of these recommendations apply to the neighborhood as a whole. Additionally, many residents suggested specific ideas that apply to many of these recommendations, which are listed on the following pages.



This map identifies locations in which the Plan's recommendations could be applied. These locations were identified through SWOT analysis exercises with residents as well as Planning Commission and staff analysis.

Application of Goals

The following are recommendations from each of the following goals that are of high priority for the Highlands neighborhood. These have been matched with SWOT analysis input of residents. Items marked with an * are items that neighborhood residents identified as the most important. Items in italics can be found on the map.



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

Recommendations: 1.B., **1.C.**, **1.D.**, 1.F., 1.G., 1.H.

Use the SCLAP to address land uses and densities in transitional areas of the neighborhood. Provide opportunities for flexible reuse opportunities for historic properties.



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

Recommendations: **2.A.**, **2.C.**, 2.D.

Incorporate uses in the Hamilton Avenue Shopping Center that will be attractions for neighborhood residents. Downtown redevelopment should compliment neighborhood character.



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

Recommendation: 3.C.



Goal 4: Address neighborhood-scale transportation safety and multi-modal transit opportunities.

Recommendations: **4.A.**, 4.B., 4.C., **4.D.**

Maintain walkable and bikeable character of neighborhood. Ensure safety at crossings such as near Easterly Parkway Elementary school.



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

Recommendations: 5.A.,* 5.B., 5.C., 5.D.

Uniform enforcement of zoning and ordinances. Identification and management of football homes.



Goal 6: Create programs and partnerships for improving the management of rental housing.

Recommendation: 6.A.,* 6.B., 6.C.,* 6.D., 6.E.,* 6.F.

Accurate inventory of rental housing conditions, enforcement of rental permits and Student Home ordinance. Improve maintenance of rental properties.



Goal 7: Expand programs, incentives and other strategies for increasing homeownership in the Borough's neighborhoods.

Recommendations: **7.A.**,* 7.B., 7.D., 7.E., 7.F.

Maintain and attract additional households with families, long-term residents, young professionals. Increase homeownership and affordable housing. Ensure that rental housing does not move further into the single-family, owner-occupied parts of the neighborhood.



Goal 8: Consider impacts on neighborhood sustainability as growth occurs in the Centre Region.

Recommendation: 8.A.

Monitor growth of University and impacts on neighborhood housing conditions and quality of life.



Goal 9: Maintain and expand diversity of Borough residents and improve relations among student, non-student and regional neighbors.

Recommendations: 9.A., 9.C., 9.D., 9.E., 9.F.,* 9.G., 9.H.

Continue to improve neighborhood conditions as they are home to both student and non-student neighbors. Improve behavior and reduce crimes associated with rental housing. Engage landlords in neighborhood issues.



Goal 10: Improve communications among residents and community leaders, elected and appointed officials, and Borough staff.

Recommendations: 10.A., 10.C.

Make information about neighborhood conditions more easily accessible, and up-to-date. Provide regular updates to neighborhood residents about changing conditions.



Goal 11: Improve communications with neighboring municipalities in order to discuss impacts of new development and decision-making.

Recommendation: Borough-wide initiatives



Goal 12: Market the positive benefits of living in the Borough's neighborhoods.

Recommendation: 12.A., 12.D.

Ensure that homes are properly represented to prospective buyers. Promote the neighborhood as a positive example of town-gown relationships. Effectively convey responsibilities of neighborliness to prospective student residents.