

Community & University R

INTRODUCTION

As home to the University Park campus of Penn State University, the Centre Region faces many challenges and enjoys many opportunities that are brought about by the university's presence. Balancing the needs of the community with the needs of the university can be a delicate mix that requires constant communication and cooperation from both sides. With about 45,000 students and about 24,000 employees living, working, and recreating in the Centre Region, Penn State University has a significant impact on the day-to-day activities of the community. This equates to 47% of the Centre Region's population and 43% of the Centre Region's total employment. To this end, open communication between the Centre Region's elected officials and Penn State University are a key ingredient to a successful, symbiotic relationship for everyone in the Centre Region.

The current relationship between the Centre Region and Penn State University can be described as positive and open. At some levels, constant communication takes place, which benefits the overall community. Resources available from the Centre Region and Penn State University help reduce redundancy and duplication of services within the community as well as allow for efficient use and strengthening of current systems.

For community and university integration, the overall theme will be:

Integration and communication between the Centre Region and Penn State University will continue to remain a core component to overall community values to ensure the needs of both the Centre Region and the university can be met in a way that provides the most benefit to all the citizens of the community.

The Community and University Relations Element is organized into the following sections:

- **Key Issues and Findings**
- **Goals, Objectives, and Policies**
 - **Transportation - Map M10**
 - **Land-Use Integration**
 - **Student Housing**
 - **Communications**
 - **Contributions to the Community**

KEY ISSUES AND FINDINGS

Through the development of the Inventory and Assessment of Existing Conditions on community and university relations, several items were noted as the key findings. These facts will be used as a basis to determine the most appropriate themes, goals, policies, and action items for the 2012 Centre Region Comprehensive Plan:

relations

1. The University Park campus of Penn State University is bound on all four sides by the state transportation corridors of Atherton Street, Park Avenue, University Drive, and College Avenue. These roadways have average daily traffic flows between 8,200 and 21,000 vehicles trips per day (depending on the roadway segment) according to the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT). These busy transportation corridors often act as barriers to the safe and convenient flow of pedestrians between the community and the university.
2. Public transportation from CATA provides consistent service to the university from locations throughout the community to reduce the need for personal automobile trips into the core campus.
3. Penn State University maintains multiple properties throughout the Centre Region, including academic, office, and research facilities that create activity centers throughout the community. These facilities are located throughout the Centre Region including Downtown State College and the rural areas of Ferguson Township.
4. Recreation and cultural amenities supported by Penn State University provide year-round activities for the entire community to participate in and benefit from, including sporting events, passive recreation, and theatrical performances. This includes intercollegiate athletic events, the Pennsylvania Centre Stage, and the Millbrook Marsh Nature Center.
5. Housing the full-time student population enrolled at Penn State University is an issue that should be addressed by both the university administration and the Centre Region as a whole to ensure that a diverse mix of housing opportunities exists throughout the community.
6. Open communication between the Centre Region's municipalities and Penn State University remains a key asset to ensuring issues and ideas are shared. This helps to limit conflicts and identify solutions that benefit the entire Centre Region community. This is accomplished through membership on standing committees, including the COG General Forum, Centre County Metropolitan Planning Organization, the Centre Regional Planning Commission, the COG Transportation and Land-Use Committee, the Emergency Management Council, the Intermodal Transportation Committee, the Penn State Bicycle Advisory Committee, and other committees or groups, as appropriate.
7. Penn State University enjoys tax-exempt status. However, the university contributes resources, including property, monetary support, and staff assets, to many Centre Region programs to help offset the needs for the Region's municipalities to shoulder the full burden of necessary community functions. This is most noticeable as it relates to emergency management and the Alpha Fire Company.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

Transportation

Transportation issues impact the community and the university equally. Coordination and cooperation between the community and the university will help create a more consistent and cohesive transportation network that will benefit the entire Centre Region. This can include connecting transit routes, connecting bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and roadways, for the most comprehensive network of transportation options for the entire community.



The Information Sciences and Technology Building provides a safe passage over North Atherton Street for bicyclists and pedestrians. North Atherton Street sees an average daily traffic count of approximately 21,500 cars per day in this location.

GOAL 1 - Transportation connectivity should promote effective and efficient movements of bicycles, pedestrians, and vehicles between the community and Penn State University facilities.

Objective 1.1

Ensure that adequate transportation alternatives exist to provide links between the community and the university.

Policy 1.1.1

Incorporate transit service, bicycle facilities, and pedestrian facilities into planning efforts as a primary alternative to individual vehicular trips for transportation on or around campus.

Policy 1.1.2

Connect routes that serve public transit as well as bicycle and pedestrian facilities to create a transportation network that can safely serve the needs of the entire community with multiple travel options.

Policy 1.1.3

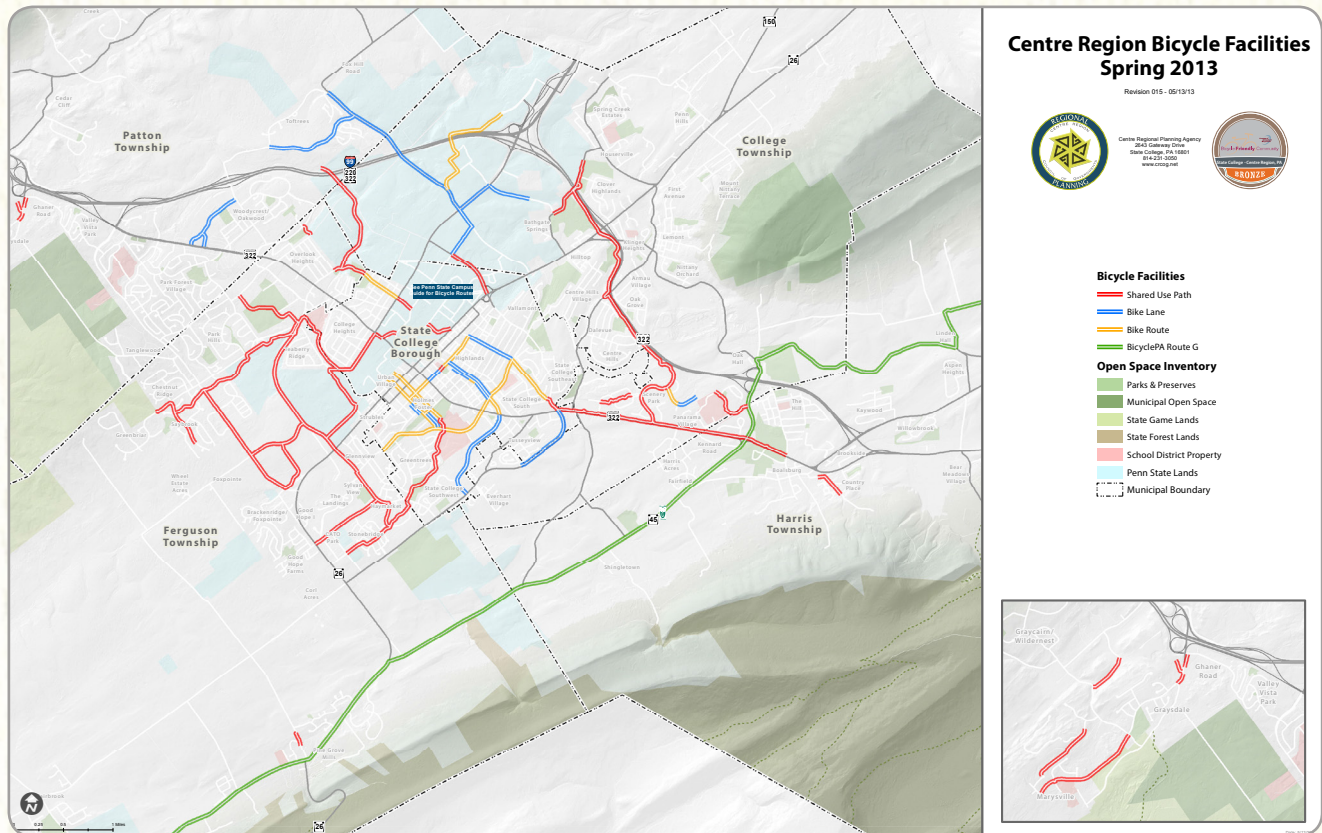
Ensure that bicycle and pedestrian routes throughout the community are sized and located to serve current and future needs of the community and the university.

Policy 1.1.4

Provide safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycle facilities and connections between the community and the university for all users.

Policy 1.1.5

Identify and use nontraditional methods to promote and publicize existing and proposed bicycle routes throughout the Centre Region through cooperative efforts among Penn State University, CATA, the Centre Region Bicycle Coalition, or other community groups.



Snapshot of the Centre Region Bike Facilities map. A detailed map of bike facilities can be found in the Transportation Element.

Objective 1.2

Reduce perceived or actual barriers that stifle the free flow of pedestrian and bicycle traffic between the community and the university, focusing on locations that experience significant concentrations of pedestrians and bicycles. These may include extensive cartway widths, limited access points, or similar barriers.

Policy 1.2.1

Minimize physical barriers between the community and the university whenever possible to allow for the free flow of bicycle and pedestrian traffic.

Policy 1.2.2

Designate specific intersections along College Avenue, Atherton Street, University Drive, and Park Avenue for improved pedestrian and bicycle amenities.

Policy 1.2.3

Explore corridor plans for Park Avenue, College Avenue, University Drive, and Atherton Street to develop consistent and cohesive improvements that better accommodate bicycles and pedestrians while minimizing conflicts with vehicles.

Policy 1.2.4

Limit and reduce the physical barriers between the West End Neighborhood and West Campus.

Policy 1.2.5

Provide additional points of access between the community and West Campus that do not adversely impact the West End Neighborhood or the West College Avenue corridor. This may include vehicle routes, transit routes, bicycle routes, or pedestrian routes.

Objective 1.3

Explore ways to increase accessibility or add modes of travel from outside the Centre Region.

Policy 1.3.1

Encourage increased access to and from the University Park Airport for transit, taxi, or other modes of transportation.

Policy 1.3.2

Explore increased service from the intermodal transportation center to provide more access to the Centre Region.



The Elliott Building, located along Burrowes Avenue in Downtown State College is one of several Penn State University buildings located in the community. The Elliott Building provides office space for the Penn State University functions including accounting services, child care programs, employee benefits, financial reporting, and payroll.

Land-Use Integration

Integration of the community and the university can be greatly influenced by the existing land-use pattern. When university uses are integrated into the community and not isolated in a campus setting, the separation between the community and the university is reduced and cohesion grows.

GOAL 2 - University-related land uses are incorporated into the community to diversify the overall land-use pattern.

Objective 2.1

Integrate university-related land uses throughout the community in close proximity to the University Park campus. Create activity nodes that encourage complementary uses with the understanding that this may impact municipal tax revenues due to Penn State University's tax-exempt status.

Policy 2.1.1

Encourage office or similar uses affiliated with the university to be located in the community. This may create activity centers within the community and provide opportunities for complementary uses to occur.

Objective 2.2

Expand recreational and cultural opportunities within the community to offer a more diverse blend of activities and help expand the relationship between the community and the university.

Policy 2.2.1

Incorporate additional venues for cultural activities within the community that may include artistic and cultural events or community events, with space sponsored by public/private partnerships, when appropriate.

Policy 2.2.2

Explore opportunities to create pedestrian spaces or passive recreational areas in or around Downtown State College and Penn State University that conform to the objectives and recommendations outlined in the 2013 State College Downtown Master Plan, the State College Land Area Plan, the State College Borough Neighborhood Plan, the West End Revitalization Plan, the 2008 Penn State University Park Campus Master Plan, and other Penn State University planning efforts.

Policy 2.2.3

Investigate ways to limit the tax deficiency created by Penn State University's tax-exempt status for buildings that are located in the community.



The Penn State Downtown Theatre Center is a 150 seat theatre located in Downtown State College. This theatre is home to the Penn State Centre Stage, which is the professional theatre company at Penn State University. It was opened in 2003 and occupies a building that includes commercial and residential spaces.



Student Housing

Providing land-use options within the Centre Region to support the student population associated with Penn State University will help ensure that existing neighborhoods are not adversely impacted and housing options can be located where supporting land uses are in place to accommodate student housing.

GOAL 3 - Adequate housing opportunities and options exist within the Centre Region for Penn State University students who choose to live within the Centre Region.



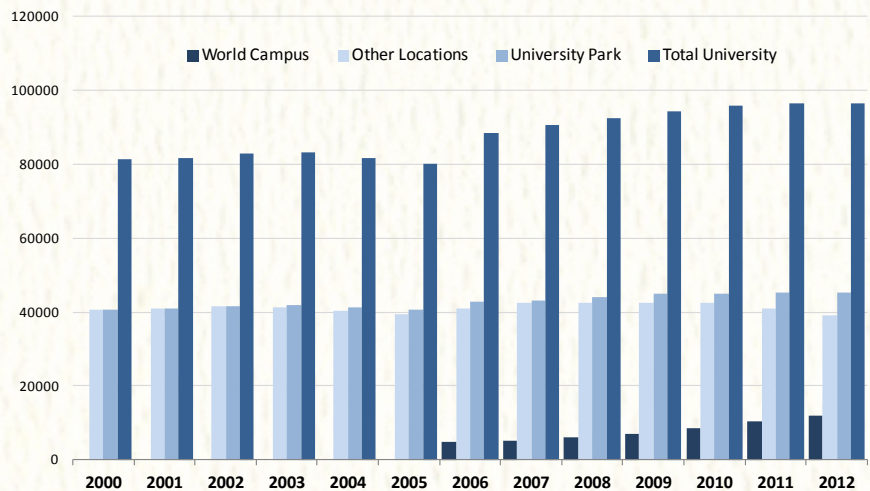
Large residential buildings in Downtown State College provide housing for students within walking distance of campus.

Objective 3.1

Provide opportunities for student housing that protect stable neighborhoods while allowing opportunities for establishing complementary land uses.

Policy 3.1.1

Locate housing for students appropriately throughout the Centre Region in accordance with local zoning ordinances and land development regulations to help limit potential adverse impacts on existing neighborhoods.



Source - Penn State Fact Book.

The above chart shows enrollment numbers for Penn State University from 2000 through 2012. Enrollment at the University Park Campus has been slowly increasing thus creating a need for housing opportunities throughout the community.

Note: World Campus enrollment was not tracked prior to 2006.

Policy 3.1.2

When located within existing neighborhoods, student housing should conform to the design, architecture, scale, density, and style of the surrounding dwelling units in order to more adequately blend into the neighborhood structure without adversely impacting the established neighborhood.

Policy 3.1.3

Locate off-campus housing, including large residential complexes that cater to students, in close proximity to commercial/retail centers, public transit routes, as well as bicycle and pedestrian facilities, reducing the need for individuals to drive cars for daily activities, including trips to campus.

Communication

Open communication between the community and the university is critical to ensure coordination of activities and projects. Including university officials on COG committees and including community officials on university committees provides one outlet for regular interaction. Also, support from both the community and the university for specific programs such as emergency management helps keep the community and the university engaged in issues that impact the entire Centre Region.



GOAL 4 - The Centre Region and Penn State University have open communication and exchange of ideas that relate to and impact the community.

The COG General Forum meets once a month to discuss issues that are important to the entire Centre Region. The General Forum membership consists of all six Centre Region municipalities, Penn State University, and the State College Area School District.

Objective 4.1

Maintain, strengthen, and increase the existing communication between the community and the university to address specific goals and policies by making efficient use of existing relationships and channels of communication.

Policy 4.1.1

Open communication between the community and the university should occur when land-use changes or plans may affect the activities of either the community or the university.

Policy 4.1.2

Encourage multiple outlets for ongoing communication to provide an outlet for active and continued interaction between the community and the university.

Policy 4.1.3

Where appropriate, encourage and support municipal representation on Penn State University committees, boards, or similar groups.

Contributions to the Community

Penn State University supports various programs within the Centre Region, such as the Alpha Fire Company and the Centre Region Emergency Operations Center. This collaboration provides a substantial benefit to both the Centre Region and Penn State University.

GOAL 5 - The Centre Region municipalities and Penn State University continue to improve the overall community and strive for successful partnerships and community relationships.



The Alpha Fire Company operates out of three different stations to serve the Centre Region municipalities; College Township, Patton Township, and the Downtown Station (pictured above). This all volunteer fire company is supported by many of the Centre Region's municipalities and Penn State University.



The Central Pennsylvania Festival of the Arts takes place every July in Downtown State College.

Objective 5.1

Maintain and strengthen the relationship between the community and the university.

Policy 5.1.1

Continue to support the various programs between the community and the university including, but not limited to: Alpha Fire Company, volunteers serving the majority of the Centre Region; the Centre Region Emergency Operations Center on University Park campus; CATA, providing transit service to both the community and the university; and the Centre County Airport Authority.

Policy 5.1.2

Continue to encourage and support the artistic, cultural, and civic activities that occur throughout the year, including the Central Pennsylvania Festival of the Arts, First Night State College, THON, Fourth Fest, and similar community activities that occur both on and off campus.

Objective 5.2

Promote the ongoing engagement of university students in the community.

Policy 5.2.1

The Centre Region municipalities and Penn State University work to promote opportunities within the community for students to be engaged during and after their time at the university.

Policy 5.2.2

The Centre Region municipalities and Penn State University should work with local businesses to provide workforce development opportunities for university students.

Policy 5.2.3

The Centre Region municipalities and Penn State University should work to identify the need for and help to establish independent cooperative working environments when appropriate.

