

RESOLUTION NO. 35-2001

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ABILENE, TEXAS,
ADOPTING THE SEARS NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN - 2001.

WHEREAS, the Sears Neighborhood is generally bounded by Mockingbird Lane on the west, Vogel Avenue, Old Anson Road, and Ambler Avenue, on the north, Grape Street on the east, and North 18th Street on the south.

WHEREAS, The City of Abilene supports the efforts of citizens to improve the areas in which they live and therefore improve all of Abilene.

WHEREAS, this Council has received a request to adopt the Sears Neighborhood Plan - 2001; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ABILENE, TEXAS:

PART 1: That the document entitled Sears Neighborhood Plan - 2001 is hereby adopted as indicated by Exhibit "A".

PART 2: That the Planning and Zoning Commission shall periodically review the Sears Neighborhood Plan - 2001 and recommend to the Council extensions, changes or additions to the Plan which the Commission considers necessary in the light of changing conditions.

PART 3: That this resolution shall take effect immediately from and after its passage.

ADOPTED THIS 27 day of September, A.D. 20 01.

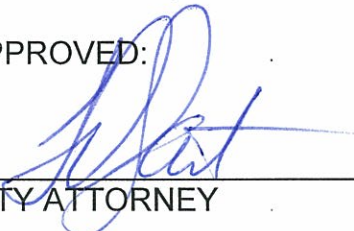
ATTEST:



CITY SECRETARY



MAYOR

APPROVED:


CITY ATTORNEY



Sears Neighborhood Plan

Sears Neighborhood Revitalization Committee/Community Development Department



*City of Abilene
September 2001*



**City of Abilene /
Sears Neighborhood
Revitalization Committee**



Sears Neighborhood Plan

Recommended for Adoption:
Planning & Zoning Commission

September 4, 2001

Adopted:

September 27, 2001

Abilene City Council

Resolution # _____ 35-2001 _____

Mayor's Signature _____

Grady Barr

Acknowledgments:

Sears Neighborhood Plan

The formation of the Sears Neighborhood Plan was a shared effort between the Sears Neighborhood Revitalization Committee, the City of Abilene Community Development Department's Planning Services Division, the Sears Park Advisory Board, and other interested citizens.

The Sears Neighborhood Revitalization Committee members are Billy Enriquez, Ovelia Campos, Joel Loya, Beckie Joy, Dr. Julian Bridges, Susan Allen and Jimmy Defoor. The committee, with the assistance of City planning staff, held meetings at the Sears Park Recreation Center. A group of interested citizens and the revitalization committee were divided into six committees. The following people served on the various committees:

Public Services

Susan Allen, Tony Rodriguez, Richard Garcia, Jr., Kim Allimand, and Joshua Lopez

Health and Welfare

Angie Najera, Merle Pallarez, Ovelia Campos, Monica Rodriguez, and Lyndee Pursley

Community Development

Mike Hernandez, Joel Loya, Brenda Coleman, Carlos Rodriguez, Santos Sosa, and Barbara Lohmann

Housing

Elizabeth Nunez, Judy Reyes, Anna Martinez, Billy Enriquez, Irene Paredes, and Rachel Wilks

Historic or Cultural

Maria Romero, Dr. Julian Bridges, Dr. Joe Alcorta, Paul Romero, Alfredo Marquez, Emily Marquez, Lee Fields, Joe Tolentino, and Maria Tolentino

Land Use

Tony Pallarez, Tom Aguilar, Miguel Quinones, Beckie Joy, and Jeanne Jester

Contents

Sears Neighborhood Plan

Chapter 1	1
Introduction.....	
Purpose of the Plan (Mission Statement)	1
Boundaries of the Sears Neighborhood.....	2
The History of the Area.....	4
Chapter 2	
The Planning Process.....	5
Previous Small Area Land Use Study	5
The Community Reorganizes and Re-energizes.....	6
Chapter 3	
Neighborhood Inventory and Analysis.....	10
Development Pattern.....	10
Land Use and Zoning.....	10
Historic Structures and Areas.....	14
Streetchlights.....	16
Housing.....	16
Streets.....	21
Sidewalks.....	21
Parks and Recreation.....	21
Bus System.....	24

List of Photographs

Sears Neighborhood Plan

Sears Park Recreation Center.....	Cover
Billy Enriquez, Joel Loya, HUD representatives & Mayor Grady Barr at City Council Meeting	Acknowledgments
Open Space on Old Anson Road (Ball Estate).....	2
Sears Park Sign.....	2
Sears Park Recreation Center.....	6
Joel Loya receiving SER Certificate for Access Center.....	8
Children at Cinco de Mayo Celebration.....	9
Ball Estate on Old Anson Road.....	10
2200, 2700 Block Ambler Avenue.....	13
Ambler Avenue at Catclaw Creek.....	13
1802 Swenson Street.....	15
2442 Old Anson Road.....	15
2102 Swenson Street.....	15
Houses in Sears Neighborhood.....	18
Houses in Sears Neighborhood.....	20
Youth Baseball in Sears Park.....	22
Sears Park and related activities.....	23
Fannin Elementary School.....	24
Vincent Garcia @ St. Vincent Church on Cinco de Mayo.....	25
ACCESS Learning Center, 2102 Ambler Avenue.....	29
Sears Park activities.....	30
Child.....	32
Yucca Plants in Sears Park	36
Scenes from Sears Park.....	43
Revitalization Committee Members.....	45

Chapter 1

Introduction

Sears Neighborhood Plan

Purpose of the Plan

The Sears Neighborhood Plan will provide guidance to citizens, the City of Abilene, non-profit groups, private firms, and others in developing ways to improve conditions within the Sears Neighborhood. The Sears Plan will document a course of action to enhance the physical, economic, and social environment of the neighborhood that can be achieved with effective implementation.

Sears Neighborhood Mission Statement:

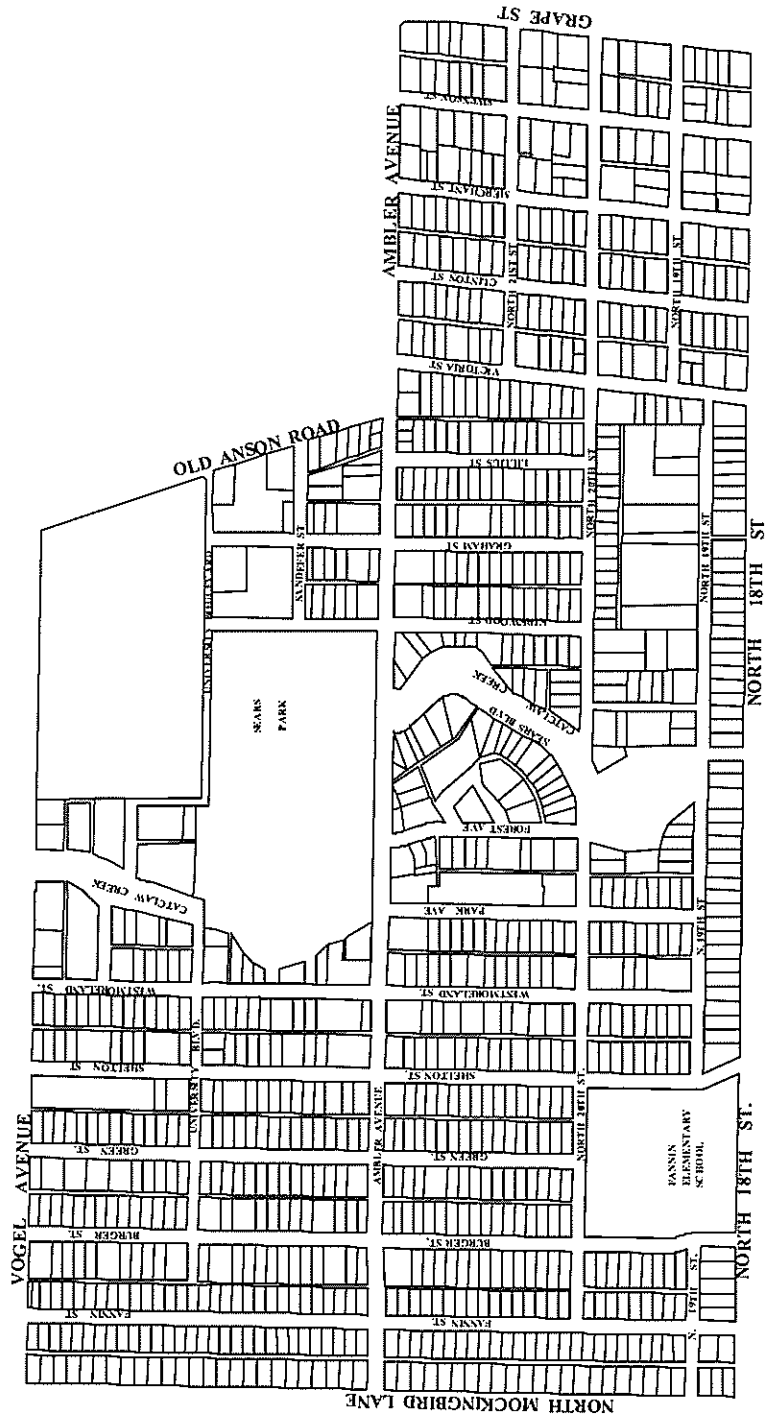
"The Sears Neighborhood is committed to making changes that will improve the quality of life for our children and us."

Sears is an older neighborhood located in the northwest section of Abilene. It contains numerous residences, some businesses, and a high percentage of undeveloped or underdeveloped land. Many of the buildings are in need of

improvement. Neighborhood improvement and change can not be generated by the work of a single organization. The implementation of this Plan will result in partnerships between groups that can make a difference. These groups include individual citizens; non-profits, local government, and business organizations working together to solve the urban neighborhood challenges that are unique to this important part of Abilene - the Sears Neighborhood.

This document is intended to present a planning process with a clear mission. The goals, objectives, and strategies of the mission are designed to maximize resources and revitalize the Sears Neighborhood. The Plan contains a detailed neighborhood inventory of existing conditions and can be used as an information resource. Information on the physical and social conditions of the neighborhood can be used for grant writing, development reports or proposals, and activity reports needed by current and potential redevelopment partners. The data can serve as a baseline to measure neighborhood changes in Sears over a 5 to 10 year Plan implementation timetable. Commitment from all the partners along with time, energy, and finances can fulfill the intentions of this Plan and strengthen the Sears Neighborhood and Abilene.

SEARS NEIGHBORHOOD



Chapter 2

The Planning Process

Sears Neighborhood Plan

Previous Small Area Land Use Study

An early planning effort for the Sears Neighborhood by the City of Abilene was a small area land use study.

In 1980, a land use study was initiated in response to zone change requests. In 1982, the City Council approved the Sears Neighborhood Land Use Study.

The study area encompassed census tract 104 and was bordered by Vogel Street on the north, Mockingbird Avenue on the west, N. 18th Street on the south, and Grape Street on the east.

The recommendations listed several goals and policies to encourage a more desirable arrangement of land uses for area residents:

- Conservation of housing stock with generally good quality and minimizing encroachment of commercial activities into neighboring residential areas.

- Discouragement of strip or ribbon type commercial development parallel with Ambler and other major streets.
- Transformation of existing scattered commercial activities along Ambler into cluster-type development at strategic locations to serve a neighborhood market.
- Minimization of conflicts between shallow-depth commercial lots and residential dwellings by designation of appropriate limits and buffers.
- No development in flood-prone areas.
- Encourage improved neighborhood appearance in areas with high vacancy rates and with high concentration of low quality housing.
- Phasing out of existing nonconforming uses, particularly those located in residential areas.
- Encourage infill development in accordance with zoning regulations to take advantage of existing city services without corresponding costs.
- Strengthening enforcement of existing City's building, electrical, plumbing and fire codes.
- Developing new controls to facilitate infill development.

in the interior of the building. The racquet ball court walls were coming down and there was gymnastic equipment on the gymnasium floor of the main gym. Telephone calls were made and it was determined that the City of Abilene was in the process of expanding a city wide private gymnastics program that had been at the center for 18 years. The expansion involved eliminating the racket ball courts.

After a period of time and many conversations, the neighbors, in their opinion, were concerned the expansion of the gymnastics program would take over the center. It was felt this was not in the best interest of neighborhood and that the residents of the neighborhood were not made a part of the decision. It was believed the children of the Sears Neighborhood were generally not a part of the gymnastics program and would be displaced from their activities.

It had been many years since the predominately Hispanic community had a disagreement with the City of Abilene as the neighborhood leaders had been satisfied with what had been going on. This incident with the racket ball wall changed all of that. The issue instigated renewed interest in improving the neighborhood for the betterment of the residents.

The citizens of Sears met together continuously for 8 weeks every Monday night starting in November after the election. The first meetings drew several hundred people, but eventually about 125 came for the remainder of the meetings. The Sears residents organized themselves and a new generation of leadership emerged. The residents brought in different agencies, had meetings with City leaders, and even the district's U.S. Representative got involved to help with the discussions.

From the meetings, there came a strong consensus from the residents that primarily neighborhood families had used the center and that it should remain that way and that special interest groups should not dominate it. They contended the children of the neighborhood should have priority.

The group came up with a mission statement and gave it to City leaders for comment. They proposed activities for the various age groups and were able to come up with goals and objectives. It was about that time the core group (4 or 5 people) came together and realized they needed to analyze what had happened and what was needed to improve the neighborhood. They asked Hardin-Simmons University to do a survey of the neighborhood residents. They also asked City staff to begin working toward a Plan to guide neighborhood development and the City's Department of Community Development agreed to assist in the effort.

Overall, the neighborhood felt it benefited from the controversy and experienced a sense of community and ownership by coming together.

Another benefit was the ACCESS Center (Abilene Child Center Education Support Services) that was an idea that came from the meetings. The center teaches computer skills to youth and is in the process of starting other programs to benefit the entire community.

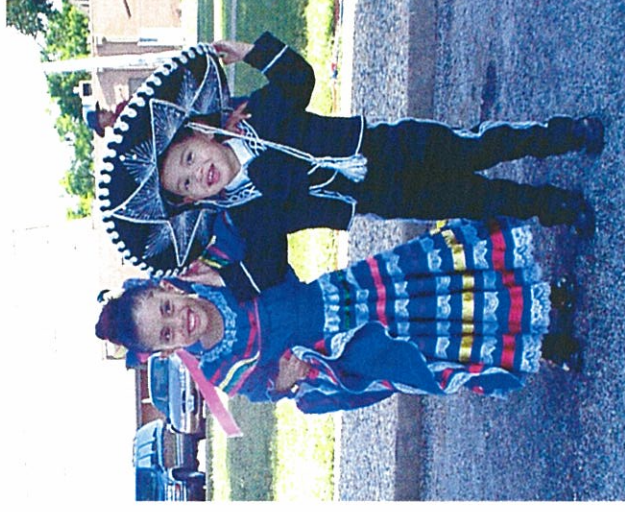
Another activity that has improved because of the controversy is the yearly Thanksgiving Dinner. It has grown and now has a permanent sponsor. One of the current leaders says, "We are a society of laws, and it was interesting that those laws have worked for us."

Abilenians survey. Considering that little was done, two suggestions were made by the HSU Plan:

1. Continued efforts by the Board (Sears Park Advisory Board) and community residents to organize the neighborhood in order to "constitute a powerful enough force" to be perceived by the City as a power with whom they must contend in the distribution of community resources, and
2. Continued efforts to assist the neighborhood to act in its own behalf.

In January and February, 2000, six meetings were held by the Sears Revitalization Committee and City staff, with an average attendance of twenty people that were divided into six committees called, Public Services, Health and Welfare, Community Development, Housing, Land Use, and Historic / Cultural. All of the committees were asked the following questions: What do we have in our neighborhood? What do we need? Where are we going? How are we going to get there?

At the conclusion of the committee meetings, the group came up with goals and objectives that were outlined and sent out in a newsletter to the Sears Neighborhood in May 2000. These goals and objectives form the basis for strategies used in the neighborhood Plan document and are found in Chapter 4 of this Plan.



Children at Cinco de Mayo Celebration

Chapter 3

Neighborhood Inventory and Analysis

Sears Neighborhood Plan

Development Pattern

Generally, the Sears Neighborhood developed toward the west and the north from Grape Street. The major subdivisions are Sears Park, College Heights, and Woodland additions. Most of the area was subdivided in 1927 as the Sears Park addition.

It is primarily a residential area built around Catclaw Creek. Most of the residential lots are standard or smaller sized at 6000 sq. ft. It has three focal points or major areas of interest. They are Sears Park, Fannin Elementary School, and Catclaw Creek. Also, to the north on Vogel Avenue is Ortiz Elementary. Although out of the neighborhood or study area, it is a point of interest and actually serves more students from Sears than Fannin Elementary. Retail development has been limited over the years and has been located primarily along Ambler Avenue. Ambler Avenue is the main east-west street and one most Abilene residents identify when they think of the Sears Neighborhood. For

many years Ambler Avenue was unimproved and was a low water crossing over Catclaw Creek.

Another unique land use feature is the Ball Estate because of its size and history that is referenced in the historic section of this Plan. Like all neighborhoods there are numerous churches scattered throughout the area. Hardin-Simmons University also acted as a magnet for development for the whole north side of Abilene.

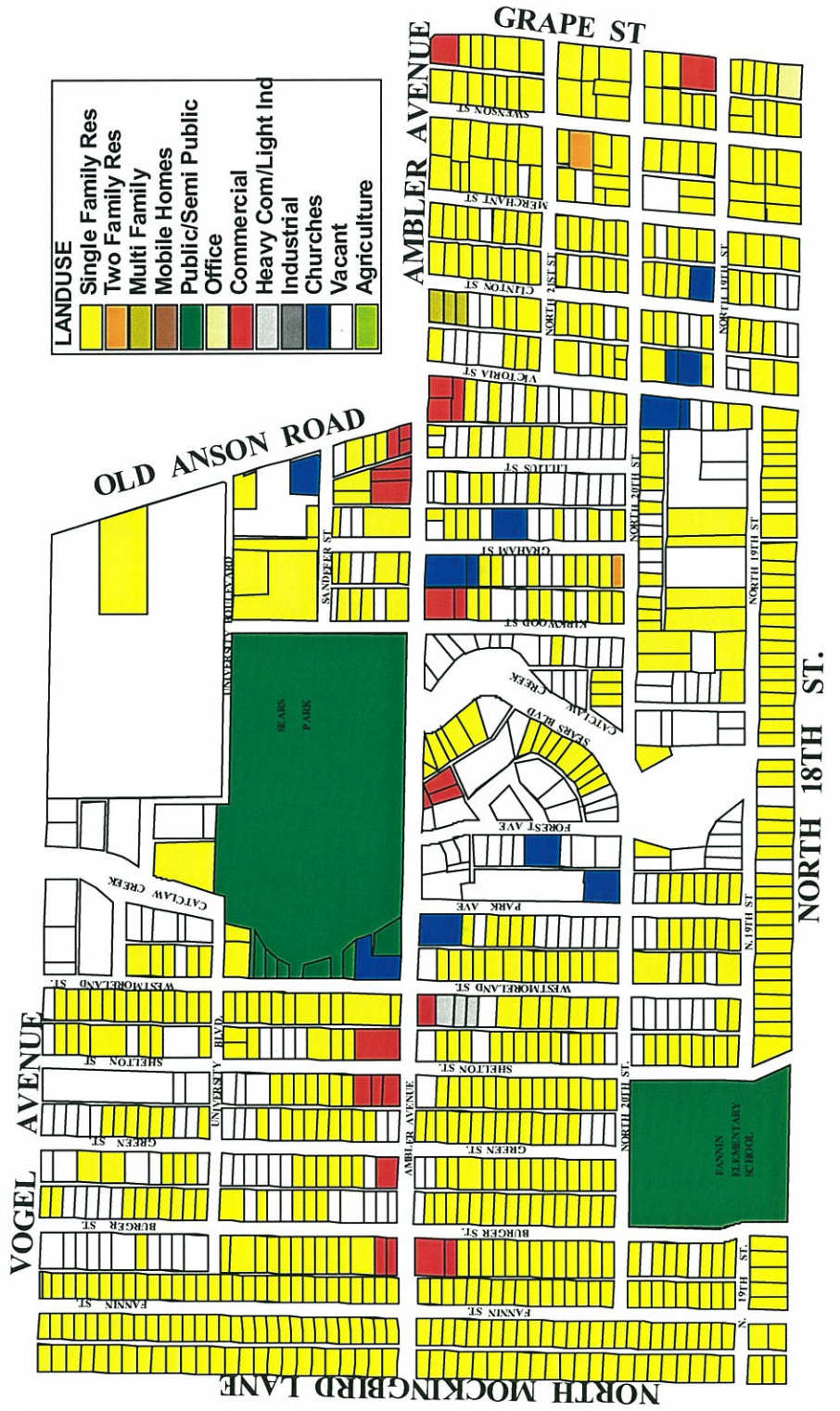


The Ball Estate, Old Anson Road

Land use and Zoning

The following maps explain the land uses and zoning districts for the Sears Neighborhood. The designations on the zoning map are as follows: **RS-6** is Residential single family; **RS-6/H** is Residential historic; **SC** is Shopping Center; **RM-1,2 and 3** is Residential multi-family; **LC** is Limited Commercial; **GC** is General Commercial;

SEARS NEIGHBORHOOD



Historic Structures and Areas

In 1988, the City of Abilene and the Abilene Preservation League contracted with Hardy, Heck and Moore, an Austin consulting firm, to do a survey of historic properties within the city. The Sears Neighborhood is included in the historic survey. Approximately 121 properties were identified as being historic. The vast majority of the properties are marginally historic because of changes that have been made to them over the years or because of poor condition. The consultant listed approximately 101 that are in that category and they are called low priority historic properties. The remainder are a medium or a high priority and three have Historic Overlay Zoning and as such are the only locally designated properties in the neighborhood. Historic Overlay Zoning can be obtained by an application process that involves review by the Landmarks Commission and designation by the City Council. The Landmarks Commission consists of seven members appointed by the City Council to review historic properties.

There is an inadequate concentration of historic properties to recommend a historic district, (one way of conserving an area is a conservation district and that type of district is possible in Sears) but it is important to the neighborhood, and the City, that at least the properties that are above low priority remain historic. Nine properties are medium priority and are listed below. Two of the three properties that have historic zoning are on Swenson Street. They contribute to the area of the historic Swenson House at 1726 Swenson, which is just out of the Sears Neighborhood.

The most important historic property is the Ball Estate at 2442 Old Anson Road. It was granted Historic Overlay Zoning in 1986. The Historic Overlay Zoning covers about 20 acres of land and a home that was built in 1903. It was

originally built by Dr. Dodge and purchased by Dr. J.H. Ball in 1920. The home has Craftsman style features with Prairie style influences. The home in its history has had a 400-acre tree orchard and grape vineyard. The front gate and entrance was added in the 1920's by Dr. Ball and was moved closer to the house and improved in 1989 because of the widening of Old Anson Road. The property is still in the Ball family.

Because of its size and location, this is an extremely important property to the Sears Neighborhood and the City of Abilene. The property could eventually make a positive addition to Sears Park as a museum, heritage center, or educational working farm. Obviously, that may not be possible, but if the property remains intact and historic, its contribution would remain immeasurable.

Medium and High Priority Sears Neighborhood Properties by address:

Medium priority: 2166 Clinton Street, 1802 and 2110 Merchant Street, 1826, 1902 and 2101 Swenson Street, 1826 Grape Street, 1789 North 19th Street, 1790 North 18th Street

High priority: 2102 Grape Street, 1802 and 2102 Swenson Street, and 2442 Old Anson Road

Designated historic properties by address;

Historic Overlay Zoning; 1802 and 2102 Swenson Street, 2442 Old Anson Road

National Register of Historic Places; 2102 Swenson Street

Streetlights

Inadequate public lighting has been a concern since the beginning of the committee's discussions regarding improvements for the neighborhood. The Planning Services Division conducted a visual survey of streetlight locations and there are approximately 165 streetlights that are maintained by AEP West Texas Utilities. All of these lights are along street rights of way.

The map in this study shows the number of lights and the distribution of light at a radius of 150 feet for each light. (Some lights may be private lighting and private lighting was generally not counted in the survey) In addition, lighting in Sears Park is not included in this total. The overall lighting penetration seems to be adequate, but there are gaps in the pattern.

The block between Green Street and Shelton Street south of Vogel Avenue does not have lighting. Two blocks between North 20th Street and North 21st Street between Clinton Street and Swenson Street does not have lighting. Likewise, the block surrounded by North 20th Street, North 19th Street, Clinton Street, and Victoria Street does not appear to have any streetlights.

Generally, the area around Fannin Elementary, North 19th Street and Catclaw Creek appears to need additional lighting. The lighting in Sears Park appears to be adequate, especially with the recent addition of the lighting along the pathways.

The 1998 survey showed the following results for citizen satisfaction of street lighting

Satisfaction with street lighting

Poor	12	15.4%
Fair	19	24.4%
Good	27	34.6%
Excellent	20	25.6%
Total	78	100%

Housing

A survey and review of housing stock in any residential neighborhood is paramount to understanding existing conditions and implementing strategies. The total acreage for the neighborhood is 269.5 acres and there are 1,021 parcels of land. Commercial development for Sears is along Ambler Avenue and the remainder of the land usage is residential or residential in nature like the park, churches, open space along Catclaw Creek and a school.

In 1999 the Sears Neighborhood Revitalization Committee surveyed the building inventory and generally concluded that the majority of the buildings are in good to fair condition at 54.7%. Also, 30.5% of the land is vacant.

The residential property conditions were given an overall ranking of good, fair, poor, vacant, and condemned by the Committee. In addition, the Committee generally used the following criteria to arrive at their ranking.

- Roof: unblemished; few missing shingles and general wear; major shingle loss and structural problems
- Walls and Eaves: unblemished; slight peeling of paint or siding damage and minor wood damage; major paint or siding damage and / or wood damage
- General Window Condition: all intact; one broken window; boarded up

There are approximately 754 occupied housing units in Sears with about 165 (22%) of these units being renter occupied and about 589 (78%) units that are owner occupied. The vacancy rate is about 3%. In addition, about 43% of the residents have lived in the neighborhood from 15 to 54 years according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

The following two maps show house conditions by acreage and parcel. The photographs on the next page after the maps show different types of houses and vacant land in Sears ready for new residential construction.



House for sale in the Sears Neighborhood



An older home in Sears with some remodeling.



A house under construction in Sears



Vacant lots in Sears suitable for new housing



A home in Sears with extensive remodeling

Parks and Recreation Master Plan, Sears Park currently covers 28.17 acres of land and has 3 covered picnic shelters, a picnic pavilion restroom, a children's playground, restrooms, 11 picnic tables, two-lighted baseball fields, and 2 backstops.

In addition to the facilities at Sears Park, there was recognition during the neighborhood meetings that there is considerable use of the 11 acre Mann Sports Complex facilities by residents in the Sears Neighborhood. The Mann Sports Complex consists of four soccer / football fields and three practice backstops. The complex is located at Mann Middle School at 2545 Mimosa off Vogel Avenue, approximately 1 mile west of the neighborhood boundary.

Sears Park received relatively good ratings on the 1998 Residential Survey. The following shows a breakdown of survey participant responses when asked about rating park facilities within the Sears Neighborhood.

Park Condition	Percentage
Excellent	25%
Good	48.8%
Fair	16.3%
Poor	5.0%
Total	



Youth baseball in Sears Park

Bus System

The Abilene CityLink public bus service provides a transportation network with connections to all the major areas of the city from the CityLink Station located at 1189 S.2nd Street. According to 1998 CityLink information, two bus routes run along and through the Sears Neighborhood. They are bus routes #3, The North Mockingbird route and #5, the Hickory route. With transfers to other lines at the CityLink Station, the bus system connects the Sears Neighborhood to most parts of the city, with access to schools, health care, government buildings, parks, and major shopping areas.

Representatives from CityLink have mentioned at various public meetings that bus stop shelters were a priority, and that sidewalk ramp cuts required by the Americans with Disabilities Act, have been a primary concern throughout Abilene.

During the 1998 Residential Survey, residents were asked to comment on the condition of the public bus system. Approximately 58% of residents felt that the bus system was good to excellent. The following table indicates survey responses.

Bus Service	Percentage
Excellent	18.8%
Good	38.8%
Fair	20.0%
Poor	7.5%
No Opinion/Response	11.3%

Schools

Children that live in the Sears Neighborhood attend Ortiz and Fannin Elementary Schools, Mann and Franklin Middle Schools, and Abilene High School. The following table has been prepared using year 2000 Abilene Independent School District (AISD) data for population to show statistics for the schools.

	Abilene High	Mann Middle	Franklin Middle	Ortiz and Jones	Fannin Elem.
White	59.1%	48.0%	50.3%	34.6%	21.9%
Hispanic	30.4%	40.6%	39.3%	59.1%	67.9%
African American	8.9%	10.1%	9.1%	5.7%	10.2%
Other	1.6%	1.0%	1.3%	0.67%	0%
Total Students	2507	562	702	601	352



Fannin Elementary School on North 18th Street

According to preliminary 2000 Census Data, all of Census Tract 104 provides the following data:

Total population, all ages	2,273	
Total population, 18 years old and older	1,546	
Total population, Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	1,563	68.8%
Hispanic or Latino, 18 years old and older	997	64.5%
Total population, White	602	26.5%
White, 18 years old and older	480	31%
Total population, Black or African American	83	3.7%
Black or African American, 18 years old and older	54	3.5%
Total population, American Indian & Alaska Native	12	5%
American Indian & Alaska Native, 18 yrs. old & older	8	.5%
Total population, Asian	3	
Total population, two or more races	10	

The following tables indicate occupations of those that participated in the 1998 neighborhood survey:

Do you work in the Sears area?

75%, no; 15%, yes; 10%, no response

OCCUPATION	%
Professional	7.5
Technical	12.5
Sales	6.3
Administrative Support	5
Service	5
Industrial	1.3
Agriculture	3.8
Homemaker	12.5
Unemployed	8.8
Retired	17.5
Other	21.3

The percentage of respondents that felt they needed home health care:

No	86.3%
Yes	3.8%
No Response	10%

The percentage of respondents that participate in health screenings:

No	57.5%
Yes	32.5%
No Response	10%

The percentage of respondents that have childcare needs:

No	12.5%
Yes	48.8%
No Response	38.8%

In summary, the Sears Neighborhood is a residential neighborhood with abundant character and potential partially due to Sears Park, Catclaw Creek and the desire of residents to improve their area. The main concerns are housing, education, and health care.



Above: basketball game in Sears Park

Right: Senior citizens at a dinner in the Sears Park Recreation Center



Chapter 4

Achieving the Mission: Goals, Objectives and Strategies

Sears Neighborhood Plan

Overview:

Although part of the larger planning document, Chapter 4 is designed as a Sears Neighborhood **ACTION PLAN** and is intended to be used as the primary guide for all who may be involved in the process of revitalizing the Sears Neighborhood.

As outlined in the Chapter 2 of this Plan, in The Planning Process section, the Sears Neighborhood Revitalization Committee adopted the following Goals and Objectives from which the Plan Matrix Tables were derived.

Finally, in this chapter the Plan Implementation and Evaluation section is written to ensure realization of the Plan. All of the final strategies fit into the fundamental purpose of the Sears Neighborhood Plan, which is to achieve the mission as stated in Chapter 1 under the Introduction, which is:

"The Sears Neighborhood is committed to making changes that will improve the quality of life for our children and us."



2. Increase owner occupancy for all age groups of people.
3. Seek ways to repair and update existing housing while maintaining neighborhood conservation and character.
4. Encourage organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, and Neighborhoods in Progress to develop projects.
5. Maintain a current survey of housing type and condition.

Community and Economic Development:

Goal: Achieve business opportunity, employment for all age groups, and job creation / retention.

Objective: Create opportunity and funding sources by improving the over-all business climate.

Strategies: 1. Maintain a neighborhood-based organization to promote economic development.

2. Identify and seek businesses that will maximize available and accessible jobs and / or job training.

3. Utilize community agencies to assist in promoting economic development.

4. Provide education, job placement and job training for residents, that includes, but is not limited to computer training.

5. Seek businesses that provide neighborhood goods and services that are pedestrian oriented.

6. Develop plans and financing for landscaping and street -scaping projects.

Public Services:

Goal: Provide for the expansion of public service and public participation.

Objective: Enhance the quality and level of public service.

Strategies: 1. Educate the residents concerning different community resources available to them.

2. Encourage recreational activities of all types for all ages.

PLAN MATRIX TABLES:

Goals / Objectives / Strategies / Partners / Funding / Timeframe

The Plan matrix is the core of the Sears Neighborhood Plan. It details how the objectives will be accomplished in support of the goals and fulfill the mission.

The matrix is intended to be a working document and the various elements may change. As the Sears revitalization process continues, the partners outlined for each strategy are encouraged to mark revisions, updates, or other changes to the objectives. Changes should be reviewed and approved by the Sears Neighborhood Revitalization Committee as well as the Planning & Zoning Commission. More detail of the process implementation and evaluation of the Plan is discussed in the Plan Implementation and Evaluation section in the Goals and Objectives chapter.

The Plan matrix is designed to maximize and organize the information. Acronyms and abbreviations are explained at the end of the matrix tables.



Yucca plants in Sears Park.

and photographs.	Anticipated PARTNERS or executing strategies	Anticipated FUNDING sources	Anticipated TIMEFRAME	Remarks/ Status
Strategies				
2. Prevent deterioration of sites with historical value.	SNRC, City CD	CDBG, grants	Short term	
3. Sponsor ongoing and additional cultural celebrations	SNRC, City CD & CS	Grants, City budget	Intermediate	
<u>HOUSING:</u>				
Goal: Increase the quantity and quality of housing.				
Objective: Provide an adequate supply of affordable, well constructed and safe housing.				
1. Encourage the development of a variety of housing types.	SNRC, City CD, NIP, HFH, Private investors or contractors	CDBG, HUD, grants, NIP, HFH	Short term & on-going	Would need to be a part of a zoning strategy.
2. Increase owner occupancy for all age groups of people.	SNRC, City CD	HUD	On-going	
3. Seek ways to repair and update existing housing while maintaining neighborhood conservation and character.	City CD, HFH, NIP, CAP	CDBG, HUD, grants	Short term	
4. Encourage organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, and Neighborhoods in Progress to develop projects.	SNRC, City CD		Short term	
5. Maintain a current survey of housing type and condition.	SNRC, City CD, university	CDBG, City, grants	Long term	

PUBLIC SERVICES:

Goal: Provide for the expansion of public service and public participation.

Objective: Enhance the quality and level of public service.

Strategies	Anticipated PARTNERS or executing strategies	Anticipated FUNDING sources	Anticipated TIMEFRAME	Remarks/ Status
1. Educate the residents concerning different community resources available to them.	City CD, CD, ED, Fire, Health, Police, PW		Short term	
2. Encourage recreational activities of all types for all ages.	SNRC, City CS	City, grants	Short term	
3. Improve access to public transportation and provide public bus stops.	City Transit	City, transportation grants	Intermediate	
4. Improve access to and parking in Sears Park.	City CD, PW	City, CDBG	Long term	
5. Make sidewalk improvements where necessary to encourage safe pedestrian movement.	City CD, PW	City, CDBG	Long term	
6. Clear and clean the northern portion of Catclaw Creek to reduce flooding and property damage.	City CD, PW	City, CDBG	Intermediate	
7. Develop a linear walking/bicycle trail along Catclaw Creek as a part of a citywide trail system.	City CD, PW, CS	City, CDBG, TEF	Long term	

Strategies	Anticipated PARTNERS or executing strategies	Anticipated FUNDING sources	Anticipated TIMEFRAME	Remarks/ Status
5. Work with the City to adequately handle public health nuisances.	SNRC, City Health, TC	City, TC, grants	Long term	

**

City CD = Community Development

City CS = Community Services

City PW = Public Works

SNRC = Sears Neighborhood Revitalization Committee

City ED = Economic Development

THTC = Taylor County Historical Commission

CDBG = Community Development Block Grant

APL = Abilene Preservation League

NIP = Neighborhoods in Progress

HFH = Habitat for Humanity

CAP = Community Action Program

HUD = Housing and Urban Development

CoC = Chamber of Commerce

TEF = Transportation Enhancement Funds

TC = Taylor County

Plan Implementation and Evaluation

The most critical element of any plan is the ability for implementation of the proposed goals, objectives, and strategies. Responsibility for implementation for a neighborhood plan falls upon the groups, agencies, and individuals that wish to have an impact on the area. Each entity should have the freedom to establish methods of implementation based on their abilities.

Even though the Sears Neighborhood Plan specifies proposed partners, funding sources, and timeframes, the reality of the implementation will take commitment from the neighborhood. The Sears Neighborhood Revitalization Committee is a good example of a commitment from the neighborhood and the effort by the committee or others is what will make the Sears Neighborhood a better place to live.

The first step in the process of implementation should be formal Plan adoption by the City of Abilene through the Planning & Zoning Commission and the City Council. The adoption by City government will indicate a commitment to the goals and objectives. Periodic evaluation of the Plan will ensure that the Plan can continue as an active document. Many of the planning tools and processes employed to develop this Plan may be utilized later to amend the Plan. The Plan should be evaluated no later than five years after adoption. As stated in the Introduction chapter, the Plan is intended to be implemented over a ten-year period, and Plan evaluation can be a way to ensure that the goals, objectives, and strategies are fulfilling the mission. Reviewing the Sears Neighborhood Plan by 2006 will allow implementation to occur toward the Plan goals and objectives, and the chance for evaluation of strategy effectiveness.

Potential Roles for Residents:

- Bring neighborhood issues and concerns to the planning process
- Personally participate in projects / activities that revitalize their neighborhood
- Motivate other residents to participate

The power of individuals in revitalization efforts is often under-emphasized. If neighbors make an effort to stay involved with community meetings, speak out about concerns, and assist all the other partners interested in helping to revitalize Sears, efforts to improve the neighborhood will be more effective and lasting. Residents are stakeholders and they should protect their investment.

Potential Roles for Private Organizations:

- Invest resources in Sears
- Target advertising efforts in the neighborhood
- Make a commitment to advance revitalization

Private firms have a personal stake in building strong communities. A healthy economic and social environment can reinforce a vibrant business climate. Small business loans, home loans, insurance, and consumer lending can spur economic vitality leading to a higher demand for products and services. Local entrepreneurs can allow neighborhood commercial properties to become more successful and improve property values and community pride for all residents. Existing financial institutions could



Notes

Appendices

The following chart shows the reported crimes over the last eleven years in the Sears Neighborhood. It is taken from the Uniform Crime Report, Abilene Police Department.

<u>Years</u>	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00
Murder	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rape	5	1	2	3	3	2	1	1	4	0	0
Robbery	3	4	1	5	3	6	5	1	4	6	5
Aggre. Assault	26	17	34	21	15	21	29	16	20	14	4
Burglary	35	40	29	22	28	29	42	19	35	27	30
Theft	50	60	59	56	43	61	67	57	47	75	49
Theft Motor V.	2	3	3	3	7	6	3	10	8	8	4

Renter occupied housing units 165, 22%

Vacant housing units 119

Housing units valued at less than \$50,000 562

Housing units valued from \$50,000 to \$99,000 22

Housing units valued from \$100,000

0,000 to \$149,000 1

Median rent in dollars \$218

Highest rent category \$499

Household Size & Type

1 person household

male 53

female 111

2 or more persons

Family households:

Married couple family:

With related children 259

No related children 189

Other family:

Male householder, no wife present:

With related children 17

No related children 11

Technicians and related support.....	10
Sales.....	89
Administrative support, including clerical.....	90
Private household.....	14
Protective service.....	6
Service, not household or protective.....	284
Farming, forestry, and fishing.....	25
Precision production, craft or repair.....	116
Machine operators, assemblers, & inspectors.....	62
Transportation and material moving.....	42
Handlers, equipment cleaners, helpers, laborers.....	64
	Industry Category
Employed persons 16 years and over.....	863
Mining, agriculture, forestry,.....	30
Construction.....	68
Manufacturing.....	113
Communications and public utilities.....	41
Wholesale trade.....	36
Retail trade.....	190
Finance, insurance, real estate.....	17

\$10,000 to \$14,999.....	98
\$15,000 to \$24,999.....	185
\$25,000 to \$34,999.....	152
\$35,000 to \$49,999.....	75
\$50,000 to \$74,999.....	23
\$75,000 to \$99,999.....	8
\$100,000 plus.....	0
Median household income (dollars)	\$16,423

Income Type in 1989

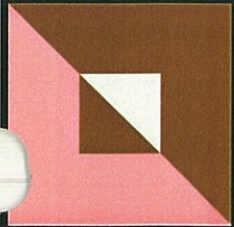
Based on 779 Households

Wage & salary income.....	544
Non-farm self employment income.....	21
Farm self employment income.....	7
Social Security Income.....	217
Public assistance income.....	125
Retirement income.....	135

Poverty Status in 1989

Based upon 2,319 persons

Below poverty level.....	719	31%
Persons below the poverty level 18 years old & over	475	
Persons below the poverty level 65 years & over.....	157	



Sears Neighborhood Update

City of Abilene
Planning Services
Division

Sears Neighborhood Update
May 2000

Sears Revitalization Committee works on Neighborhood Plan

In November of 1998, the Sears Park Advisory Board conducted a neighborhood survey to ask the residents what improvements were needed to make our area a better place to live. Many of you completed the survey. From the survey we established a Neighborhood Revitalization Committee to put together a plan to address the needs and concerns of the Sears Neighborhood. The Sears Neighborhood Revitalization Committee members are Billy Enriquez, Ovelia Campos, Joel Loya, Beckie Joy, Dr. Julian Bridges, Susan Allen and Jimmy Defoor. The committee, with the assistance of City planning staff, held meetings at Sears Park. The group was divided into six committees; Public Services, Health and Welfare, Community Development, Housing, Land Use, and Historic /

Cultural. Six meetings were held in January and February with an average attendance of twenty people. All of the committees were asked the following questions: What do we have in our neighborhood? What do we need? Where are we going? How are we going to get there? After all the meetings the group came up with the goals and objectives that are outlined later in this newsletter. These goals and objectives will form the basis for strategies used in the neighborhood plan document. The following people were on the various committees:

Public Services

Susan Allen, Tony Rodriguez, Ricard Garcia, Jr., Kim Allmand, Joshua Lopez

Health and Welfare

Angie Najera, Merle

Pallarez, Ovelia Campos, Monica Rodriguez, Lyndee Pursley

Community Development

Mike Hernandez, Joel Loya, Brenda Coleman, Carlos Rodriguez, Santos Sosa, Barbara Lohmann

Housing

Elizabeth Nunez, Judy Reyes, Anna Martinez, Billy Enriquez, Irene Paredes, Rachel Wilks

Historic or Cultural

Maria Romero, Dr. Julian Bridges, Dr. Joe Alcorta, Paul Romero, Alfredo Marquez, Emily Marquez, Lee Fields, Joe Tolentino, Maria Tolentino

Land Use

Tony Pallarez, Tom Aguilar, Miguel Quinones, Beckie Joy, Jeanne Jester

THANKS TO ALL WHO PARTICIPATED

Inside this update:

Goals and Objectives (English)	2
Goals and Objectives (Spanish) + Street Projects	3
Neighborhood Map	4



Special points of interest:

● PLEASE RETURN THE INSERT WITH YOUR SUGGESTIONS, NEEDS, AND CONCERNS FOR THE NEIGHBORHOOD

G-R-E-A-T Things Are Happening At Sears Park!

Have you noticed the construction of our restroom facilities near the tennis court? Soon a gazebo will be added.

How about the repairs to our walking track, and the many improvements to our

Little League baseball fields?

Yes, our park is the most utilized and the most attractive city park in Abilene. We should be very proud.

THE SEARS NEIGHBORHOOD IS COMMITTED TO MAKING CHANGES THAT WILL IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR US AND OUR CHILDREN.

Goals and Objectives

LAND USE:

Goal: Promote a compatible land use pattern

Objectives:

- A. Rezone along Ambler Avenue from shopping center to general commercial
- B. Encourage property owners to build on vacant lots
- C. Encourage recreational activities and beautification of the area

COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

Goal: Establish a basis and funding resources for business opportunity and growth in the Sears Park area.

Objectives:

- A. Utilize Neighborhoods in Progress Inc. (NIP) and other community agencies to assist in promoting economic development.

HEALTH, WELFARE, AND SAFETY

Goal: Improve and educate the Sears Neighborhood residents on resources in regards to health and safety issues.

Objectives:

- A. To provide adequate lighting and improve access to Sears Park baseball complex.

HISTORY & CULTURAL:

Goal: Preservation of Culture at Sears Park and the Sears Neighborhood

Objectives:

- A. Establish or develop a center or location for archiving the Sears Park and Neighborhood History
- B. Collection of oral history

- B. See commercial revitalization to attract new businesses, increase employment and convenience.

- C. Provide educational job placement, and job training for residences, including but not limited to computer training.

- B. Serve the health needs of residents, focusing on adult, public health nuisances and education on resources available.

HOUSING:

Goal: To provide affordable and safe housing for the residents of the Sears Neighborhood.

Objectives:

- A. To provide affordable housing for young couples.
- B. To provide affordable housing for the elderly.
- C. To upgrade existing homes.

PUBLIC SERVICES:

Goal: To enhance the level and quality of public service in the Sears Neighborhood.

Objectives:

- A. Improve and expand Sears Park community facilities.
- B. Improve infrastructure and physical conditions.
- C. Improve safety concerns of residents.

The J. H. Ball House at 2442 Old Anson Rd. was built in 1903. It is Prairie style architecture. The estate at one time had a 400 tree orchard & a grape vineyard. It has been in the Ball family since 1920. It is the only property in the Sears Neighborhood with Historic Overlay Zoning.

- D. Enhance public transportation serving the Sears Neighborhood.
- E. Enhance awareness of community resources available to residents.
- F. Promote beautification in the Sears Park area.



Meta y Objetivos:

USO DEL TERRENO:

Meta: Promover un sistema conveniente del uso del terreno.

Objetivos:

- Hacer cambios de dividir en zonas en la avenida Ambler de centro comercial divide en zonas a comercial general.
- Estimular a los propietarios a edificar en sus solares vacantes.
- Estimular actividades recreativas y embellecer el area.

HISTORIA Y CULTURAL:

Meta: Preservación de la cultura y historia en Sears Park.

Objetivos:

- Construir o acondicionar un local para archivar la historia de Sears Park.
- Recoger datos históricos oralmente.

LA COMUNIDAD Y EL DESARROLLO ECONÓMICO

Meta: Establecer una base y recurso monetarios para optunidad de negocio y crecimiento en Sears Park.

Objetivos:

- Utilizar vecindades en Progreso, Inc. (NIP Inc.) y otras agencias de comunidad para asistir en promover el desarrollo económico.
- Ver una revitalización comercial para atraer

SERVICIO PÚBLICO A LA COMUNIDAD:

Meta: Acrecentar el nivel y cualidad del servicio publico de la vecindad de Sears Park.

Objetivos:

- Mejorar y entender el edificio Sears Park de la comunidad.
- Mejorar la infraestura y condicion fisica.
- Mejorar la seguridad que concierne a los residentes.
- Acrecentar la

transportación pública que sirve a la comunidad de Sears Park.

- Aumentar el conocimiento de los recursos que hay en la comunidad para residentes.
- Promover embellecimiento en el área de Sears Park.



VIVIENDAS:

Meta: Proveer viviendas seguras y económicas as alcance de Sears Park.

Objetivos:

- Proveer viviendas al alcance de parejas jóvenes.
- Proveer viviendas al alcance de personas mayores.
- Mejorar las casas que existen.

negocios nuevos, y aumentar empleo y conveniencia para todos.

- Proveer colocación de empleo educacional y entrenamiento para empleo para los residentes encluyendo pero no limitarse a entrenamiento de uso de la computadora.

SALUD, BIENESTAR Y SEGURIDAD

Meta: Mejorar y educar a los residentes de la vecindad de Sears Park en los recursos en cuanto a salud y seguridad.

Objetivos:

- Proveer alumbrado adecuado y mejorar el acceso a el área del beisbol del Sears Park.
- Servir en la necesidad de salud de los residentes, consentrando en adultos, recursos de salubridad pública y educación de recursos disponibles.



Street Projects:

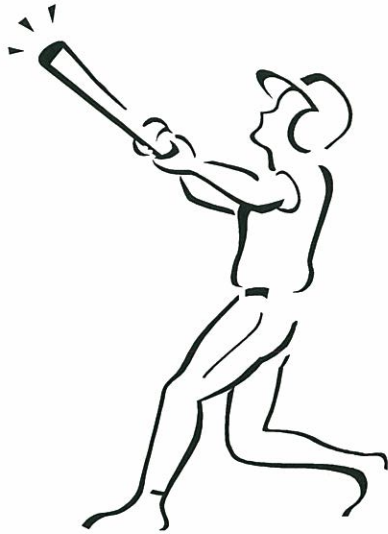
Do you remember the days when Ambler Ave. was a dirt, low water crossing?

A future proposed street project is to improve Ambler from Mockingbird to Pine.

The Sears Park north entry street improvement was approved by the City Council earlier this year and a constuction date is yet to be set..

The intersection of Ambler and Mockingbird is currently being improved with a concrete surface.

Sears Neighborhood
Update



**The boundaries for the Sears
Neighborhood are:**

North: Vogel Ave. & N. 21st St. South: N. 18th
St. East: Old Anson Rd. & Grape St. West:
Mockingbird Ln.

**City of Abilene
Planning Services Division**

P.O. Box 60
Abilene, TX 79604

SEARS NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENTIAL SURVEY

SPRING 1998

Hello. My name is _____ . I am helping the Sears Park Advisory Committee talk with residents about interests and ideas for the Sears neighborhood. The information we gather from you and other residents of the neighborhood will be kept confidential and will be used strictly to build a master neighborhood plan to revitalize the Sears community. Could you give me about 10 minutes of your time to answer some questions?

I. First, I would like to ask some questions about your neighborhood and some of the services it receives.

1. How would you rate the following facilities or services in our neighborhood? (Circle one)

Police Protection	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Opinion/Not Sure
Fire Response	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Opinion/Not Sure
Trash Collection	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Opinion/Not Sure
Parks	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Opinion/Not Sure
Flood Control	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Opinion/Not Sure
Street Maintenance	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Opinion/Not Sure
Water and Sewer	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Opinion/Not Sure
Health Care	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Opinion/Not Sure
Public Transportation	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Opinion/Not Sure
Recreation Centers	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Opinion/Not Sure
Senior Centers	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Opinion/Not Sure
Street Lights	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Opinion/Not Sure

What other community or government services would you like to see in the neighborhood?
(Example: Day Care, Career Stop, etc.)

2. How would you rate the overall appearance of our neighborhood? (Circle one)

Excellent Good Fair Poor

3. How would you rate the "quality of life" for you in this neighborhood? (Circle one)

Excellent Good Fair Poor

4. How often do you interact with your neighbors? (Circle one)

Daily Occasionally Rarely Never

5. Do you attend church in this neighborhood? No _____ Yes _____

Name of the Church you attend: _____

6. Where do you shop most for groceries? Location: _____
If a supermarket like HEB were built in the area, would you shop there? Yes _____ No _____

7. Could you name someone in the neighborhood who is considered a leader?

Name: _____

8. Do you feel safe walking in our neighborhood in the evening? Yes _____ No _____
Do you feel safe in your home? Yes _____ No _____

9. Are you familiar with the Sears Advisory Board? Yes _____ No _____
The members include Billy Enriquez, Joel Loya, Ovelia Campos, Beckie Joy and Melinda Hill.

10. What types of services or businesses would you like to see in our neighborhood?

11. Overall, would you say the neighborhood is better or worse off today than 5 years ago?

Better _____ Worse _____ No Response _____

II. The Sears Advisory Board is also interested in learning about residents' skills and abilities. This information can be useful in helping people contribute to improving the neighborhood, finding jobs, or starting businesses. When answering the following, think about skills and interests pertaining to your family, church, community, and/or job experiences.

12. When you think about skills, what things do you think you do best? (Some examples to think of are computer skills, arts and crafts, mechanical repairs, childcare, caring for the sick, cooking, construction, painting, etc...) List up to 3 below:

13. Name any skill you would like to learn.

14. Name any skill you would like to teach.

15. Do you participate in activities at Sears Park Recreation Center? Yes _____ No _____
If not, are there specific activities that would motivate you to participate? Please List.

15a. Do you participate at a center other than Sears Park? Yes _____ No _____
If yes, where? _____

III. I would like to ask you a few questions related to the health and welfare of you and your family.

16. What is the most important concern you have about you and your family's health and well-being?

17. Do you receive home health care? Yes _____ No _____

18. Where do you go for healthcare/medical care? _____
Are you comfortable with the care you receive? Yes _____ No _____

19. Do you participate in free health screenings offered in the community? Yes _____ No _____
If yes, where? _____
If not, why not? _____

20. Is there anything in our neighborhood that you feel is a public health nuisance? Explain.

21. Are your childcare needs being met? Yes _____ No _____
If not, why? Availability issues _____ Affordability issues _____
Other reasons: _____

22. Do you have any traffic and child safety concerns in the neighborhood? Explain.

23. If available, would anyone in your household be interested in furthering their education or job training skills. Yes _____ No _____

24. Is anyone in your household in need of job placement assistance? Yes _____ No _____

IV. This part of the survey deals with general demographic information for averaging and general comparison purposes.

25. Is your age between:
0-19 20-39 40-59 60-79 80+ (Circle one)

26. How many years have you lived in this neighborhood? (Circle one)
5 or less 6 to 10 11 to 20 21 to 30 31 or more

27. How many people live at this residence? (Circle one)

1-2

3-4

5-6

7+

28. How many individuals under the age of 18 live here? _____

29. How many individuals age 62 and over live here? _____

30. Does anyone in the household work in the Sears area? Yes _____ No _____

31. Which of the following categories best describes the occupation of the head of household at this residence?

- a. Executive, administrative, or managerial
- b. Professional (e.g. teacher, doctor, accountant)
- c. Technical (e.g. plumber, or other repair services, mechanic, carpenter)
- d. Sales (e.g. retail, insurance, real estate)
- e. Administrative support (e.g., clerical, secretarial)
- f. Service (e.g., delivery, food server, other private services)
- g. Industrial (e.g., factory work, manufacturing)
- h. Agriculture
- i. Homemaker
- j. Unemployed
- k. Retired
- l. Other _____

32. Have you or your family had an incident happen to you and you didn't report to the police? If your answer was yes, why didn't you report it?

33. Do you rent, own, or are you buying your current residence? Rent ___ Own ___ Buying ___

34. What is your monthly rent (indicate with "R" for rent); or mortgage (indicate with "M") payment? Under \$300 _____ \$301-\$400 _____ \$401-\$500 _____ above\$500 _____
None _____

35. What is your average monthly utility (water, gas, electric) payment? (Circle one)
Under \$50 _____ \$51-\$100 _____ \$101-\$150 _____ Above \$200 _____

36. If you are a renter would you be interested in owning this home or another in the neighborhood? _____ If yes, what would be an acceptable/affordable mortgage payment? Select amount from #34. _____

37. Do you need or plan to make any repairs or alterations to your property? Yes _____ No _____
If yes, what _____

38. What kind of assistance would you need to make repairs to your property?
Financial _____ Labor _____ Materials _____ None _____

39. What do you rely on for most of your daily transportation needs?

Personal vehicle _____ Public transportation _____ Walk/bicycle _____
Friends/relatives _____ Other _____

40. Would you be willing to serve on an advisory committee for the revitalization of the
Sears Park neighborhood? Yes _____ No _____

Thank you for your assistance in completing this survey. We hope that this information can help us, help you and our neighborhood. We are going to try to make some significant improvements to the neighborhood, although it will take time and the uniting of the Sears neighborhood.

OBSERVATION CHECKLIST:

Gender: Male _____ Female _____

Race: White _____ Black _____ Hispanic _____ Other _____

Address: _____