



## **Purpose:**

**The purpose of the Eastridge Neighborhood Plan is to enhance the physical conditions of the plan area in order to improve the overall quality of life for neighborhood residents.**

**Neighborhood plans are a tool for change by targeting public investment, connecting community partners and attracting private investment.**

## **Vision Statement**

The Eastridge neighborhood is a community of different faces, from different places, where many cultures are celebrated. It is a place we call home with room to roam; a community with opportunity to grow economically, spiritually, educationally—with family and friends—all for a better way of life.

In the future is a place that...

- will be proud that it is a family-friendly neighborhood. Residents choose to live there to raise their families, not because they have to live there. The homes are well-cared for, the streets and sidewalks are safe for people of all ages, and pride of ownership is evident.
- provides good job opportunities and quality housing options for people near one of Amarillo's major economic centers.
- is recognized for its small businesses. It is desirable to own a business in this area. Businesses serve residents, but they also attract people from all over Amarillo to shop handicrafts, experience ethnic food and attend events.
- will offer innovative urban agricultural practices. Residents utilize previous farming skills to grow products and generate income.
- offers an exciting Route 66 gateway into Amarillo. Enhanced landscaping, signage, and lighting welcome Route 66 travelers as they first enter the city and business opportunities result from this tourist activity.

# SWOT Analysis

## Strengths

- Eastridge Elementary is central to the neighborhood
- Diverse community, culturally rich
- Smaller houses, starter home neighborhood
- Locally-owned businesses
- Multiple local markets for shopping
- Vacant land for development
- Quiet neighborhood

## Weaknesses

- Crime-theft and drugs
- Highly industrialized with vacant lots and dilapidated buildings along Amarillo Blvd.
- Lack of street lighting
- Poor sidewalk conditions
- No organized neighborhood association
- Most residents work grueling jobs at the meatpacking plants – negative impact on family life and well-being
- Older children not integrating as well
- Bulk trash
- Slumlords and the deteriorating effect on the rest of the neighborhood
- Water and sewer undersized for new development
- Lack of pride (“Not anyone’s goal who lives in Eastridge to stay in Eastridge.”)
- Issues with unsafe drivers speeding throughout the neighborhoods
- Lack of police patrol within the area
- NE 24<sup>th</sup> and the train tracks (trains blocking crossing) are unsafe to the community
- Condition of public parks and lack of community areas to gather
- Lack of timeliness for City services (after snowstorms, etc.)

## **Opportunities**

- Building soccer fields as a unifying factor of the neighborhood
- Ethnic food restaurants/market- potential for economic catalyst
- East gateway Route 66
- Better jobs that offer upward mobility
- Access to farmland
- Increased community support – language programs, childcare, etc.
- Community center
- Cultural expressions – handicrafts and events for communal celebration
- Support to open small businesses
- Ways to make a living through agriculture
- Vision for vacant land around the neighborhood
- Many want to beautify the neighborhood and support the idea of a Neighborhood Clean-Up Day.

## **Threats**

- Difficulty cooperating between groups
- Low levels of English proficiency
- Few opportunities for upward mobility
- Barriers to small business development
- General negative perception of the neighborhood
- Lack of access to city government/civic participation
- Youth leave for better opportunities, leave aging parents without support system
- The crime will increase if people do not take care of their homes or properties
- Lack of pride for the neighborhood will disrupt its ability to grow

# Goals and Projects – DRAFT

## Our Two Transformative Goals for Eastridge

### 1) Break the Cycle: Economic Opportunity

Working notes and comments: Create a new path for upward mobility for families locating to this area for the meatpacking jobs. Comments: “Break out of set expectations” “Change the cycle of low-level education, secondary migration and home life that is not stable for families” “Appeal to second income owner” “children can access better jobs” “high school talent wants to stay in Amarillo”.

#### Idea 1: Support small businesses

- Provide small business training in native languages
- Work with businesses to upgrade appearances, meet code requirements and enhance conditions for cleanliness
- Facilitate a coordinated marketing strategy for Eastridge restaurants
- Complete a market assessment to determine entrepreneurial opportunities to support large businesses and companies
- Connect small businesses with tax incentive programs
- Introduce high school students to entrepreneurial career opportunities – help them become their own bosses; (partner with WT Enterprise Center and Amarillo College)

#### Idea 2: Provide opportunities for those with agricultural skills to make a living here from those skills

- Join Amarillo’s efforts for a community center to support refugee families for business development and social services. Consider the opportunity for satellite programs/locations in Eastridge specifically related to urban agriculture.
- Work with Amarillo College to develop agricultural related curriculum

#### Idea 3: Create strategies for Eastridge residents to work at nearby major employers

- Provide English language classes at convenient times and locations
- Convene ACC, AEDC and major employers to discuss workforce needs and develop workforce training programs that are tailored in date/time, language and content to Eastridge residents
- Plan for adequate public transportation to and from major employers with dependable schedules - **Transit**

#### Idea 4: Create a childcare training program to meet childcare needs and provide business opportunities

## 2) Put the Pride Back: Housing

Working notes and comments: Reestablishing community pride through housing conditions and neighborhood appearance. “Put the pride back in – start with the homes.” Need code enforcement. Like the idea of rental registration. Look at condemned homes list and partner with Potter County on tax foreclosures. Consider Tradewinds in a case study for Future Development. Families want to stay but cannot find homes to buy. Also, a reputable business that can offer payment plans or other kind of special lending needs to be established to help with barriers to home financing. Cultural challenges with borrowing money.

Idea 1: Conduct targeted code enforcement to improve the physical appearance of property – Building Safety

- Use existing code enforcement tools to improve the condition of the Evergreen Apartment complex.
- Create a community awareness program for expectations about property maintenance.

Idea 2: Explore with other neighborhood partners and the City of Amarillo the possibility of implementing a Rental Registration program to improve the conditions of renter-occupied housing – Building Safety

- Create a first-time renters education program

Idea 3: Partner with Potter County on acquiring tax foreclosed properties for rehabilitation and resale

Idea 4. Work with the City to proactively demolish condemned homes and rebuild – Building Safety

Idea 4: Leverage new commercial development in the area to facilitate quality new home construction. – Planning, Utilities, CP&DE

- Identify infill lots and determine development barriers to new home construction
- People want cleaner, safer, more affordable homes ex: Tradewinds is a case study for new construction as many people have moved to that neighborhood from Eastridge
- Assess utilities and infrastructure needed for new residential subdivisions on nearby vacant land
- Identify opportunities for larger lot homes with land area to grow gardens, have workshops, etc.
- Follow this plan’s zoning recommendations (different section) to ensure future compatibility with residential development

Idea 5: Develop a reputable program for alternative financing such as a payment plan to assist with home ownership and equity-building.

## Our Other Plan Goals

### 3) Safer Places and Spaces: Crime and Public Safety

Working notes and comments: “Trust is broken” “Language barriers” “Whenever I see cops... what does it matter? They don't care about this community.” “This community isn't actively being policed.” “They think, if I call them, it won't matter anyway.” Issues with under-reporting (fear of retaliation)

Idea 1. Consider enhancing the Neighborhood Police Unit presence with officers that are multi-lingual and can better communicate/build trust with the neighborhood - Police

Idea 2. Develop a community crime watch program with more support from APD. - Police

Idea 3. Monitor and enforce traffic speeding with cameras - Police

Idea 4. Create more awareness for rehabilitation from drugs and alcohol, consider counseling programming

### 4) Change the Perception: Community-Building Projects

Working notes and comments: “Not anyone's goal who lives in Eastridge to stay in Eastridge.” “Would like to see more social services in the area.”

Idea 1. Build a multi-use amphitheater in the park - Parks and Rec

Idea 2. Install welcome signs

Idea 3. Explore opportunities for public space with a lake amenity (use the reservoir currently) - Parks and Rec

Idea 4. Utilize an existing vacant building for a community/event center – it should provide a flexible space for meetings, events, social services and youth programming especially sports. - Parks and Rec

Idea 5. Explore ways to celebrate the rich cultural traditions through a festival or event that builds off of existing efforts

Idea 6. Develop a marketing campaign to promote and celebrate special events and holidays to attract other Amarilloans to Eastridge

Idea 7. Establish a neighborhood organization that fairly represents all of Eastridge's residents

Idea 8. Consider the addition of soccer fields, preferably indoor, as a unifying public space in the neighborhood - Parks and Rec

Idea 9. Preserve and protect original Route 66 historic elements as part of neighborhood gateway and beautification projects on Amarillo Boulevard

## 5) Enhancing Neighborhood Quality of Life: Infrastructure and Beautification Projects

Working notes and comments: “Train on NE 24<sup>th</sup> causes numerous traffic and safety issues.” “Plant more trees, fix the streets.” “Better lighting to reduce crime and gang activity.” “Want neighborhood to be cleaner, no trash like there is today.” “Speed limit reduced on Fritch Hwy.” “Lack of sidewalks around NE 24<sup>th</sup>” “Better streets- no one takes care of snow or ice during winter weather.”

Idea 1. Solve the issue with trains stopping traffic on 24th – Overpass? Develop relationship with railroad, work on scheduling – CP&DE ?

Idea 2. Install sidewalks along 24th from Travis Middle School to Eastridge neighborhood – CP&DE?

Idea 3. Install lighting in alleys and main corridors – Public Works-Traffic

Idea 4. Install bus shelters for students that wait in the elements - Transit

Idea 5. Prioritize bulk trash and large debris removal from alleys and private property – Public Works

- Coordinate a major clean-up to get ahead
- Educate residents about bulk trash removal
- Work with the City to target and enforce illegal dumping activities

Idea 6. Educate residents about code requirements and the enforcement process – Building Safety

- For example – start with addressing parking on front yards and sidewalks – educate residents about where they should be parking and why. Then start with targeted enforcement.
- Determine what other offenses residents overall do not want to see and follow-up with same process.