

# SUNSET COMMUNITY

CURRENT ISSUES & FUTURE VISIONS FOR THE NEIGHBORHOOD

## THE VISION FOR SUNSET IN 2030:



A stable, safe neighborhood with vitality and opportunity—a good place to live with a real community feeling! A clean and beautiful Sunset area, it is filled with gardens, smooth sidewalks, nice lighting, and safe, sheltered transportation hubs providing links to anywhere in the city.



The neighborhood offers quality living for seniors and plenty of new homes for families scattered throughout the area. Sunset Terrace has been revitalized as a village with beautiful housing for any age and income.

There is a modern Community Center with facilities for learning, recreation, fitness, and programs for training people in technology, business, careers, the arts, financial literacy and home ownership. The Center provides art space, science and learning labs as well as tutoring, mentoring, and other academic support programs.

Nearby are great playgrounds connected to a Boys & Girls program and state of the art sport facilities like pools, tennis courts, baseball fields and a huge water park with fountains. There is a corridor for nature trails, and jogging paths along the Fourche Creek woods.

A new complex of clinics, classrooms, offices, shops, and stores distinguishes the neighborhood. Fresh foods, groceries, even small restaurants surround the complex. New spaces incubate small, neighborhood owned businesses. A bustling healthy foods market, greenhouse, and community garden provide local foods and products for sale in the city's restaurants. Children are actively engaged in growing food, marketing, and running businesses--all providing cool jobs close to home.

The city's universities and colleges partnered with the neighborhood to bring classes right into the community. There are plans for a new public elementary school to be the centerpiece of the neighborhood.

*On the inside pages, we have included a summary of the issues, problems, and priorities that we've collected from the community.*

This short paper summarizes many Sunset Community members' perceptions, ideas, feedback, and dreams provided since May, 2011 to the Sunset Community Planning process. This planning effort is sponsored by the Little Rock Housing Authority, which is committed to partnering in the future revitalization of the neighborhood.

In September and October, we will be focusing on goals and priorities that will build upon the strengths of the neighborhood and bring this vision to life over the ten years.

If you are willing to participate and contribute your ideas, please contact any member of the local planning team:

Ken Hubbell: 372-1716  
Kwendeche: 952-5594  
Constance Sarto: 476-1460  
Joyce Williams: 374-3214  
Freeman McKindra: 375-3312  
Sandra Taylor Smith: 221-3391  
Tom Fennell/Amy Ehlers-  
Fennell Purifoy Architects  
372-6734

or

Sabra Miller (Sunset Terrace): 340-4726

You can email your ideas to [southendlr@gmail.com](mailto:southendlr@gmail.com)

## SUNSET: FIRST WORDS THAT COME TO MIND

- Home
- Family
- Fairgrounds
- Drugs; “the Hood”
- End; Declining
- Projects
- Renovation, improvement
- Mitchell, Ish schools
- No medical clinic or shopping
- Need housing fix
- Safe place to “start over”
- Neat-clean community, very settled and calm
- A rich and beautiful historic place
- A community in decline

## BEST FEATURES OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD

- Centrally located in town—lots of promise
- Near Downtown, Coliseum
- Easy access, bus stops here
- Friendly; mostly peaceful
- Trustworthy neighbors
- Nice views; small community
- I live close to my job and church
- Home, relatives lived here
- The heart of the city
- Swinging on the swings with my friends

## IMPORTANT RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

- New homes in Whitmore Circle
- MLK Cultural Center
- Rebuilding from 1999 tornado
- Speed bumps on Wolfe Street
- Returning “natives” re-investing as homeowners
- Uptick in crime, shootings
- Identification of nearby Fourche Creek—it could become a valuable tourist attraction
- Businesses moving out, infrastructure decaying but some places get repaired
- A few vacant homes and abandoned houses have been torn down

## HOPES & DREAMS

- More crime patrols and safer streets
- People being happy
- Laundromat
- Swimming Pool
- People go to college
- Decent sidewalks and streets: I’ve been here 40 years and no promise for them has been kept
- Build new, nice homes, not just low-income houses
- I see a vibrant community where pride is taken in the upkeep and curb appeal of the homes

# COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS OF SUNSET

## DREAMS BARRIERS URGENT PRIORITIES

These are the actual responses from our community surveys and conversations during May-June.

### PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE FUTURE REDEVELOPMENT ACTION:

- Ensure that the city places real value on this community!
- Rebuild our people
- Create better health for all
- Eliminate the area as a “food desert:” develop healthy stores with fresh foods
- Remove vacant lots
- Train leaders for the city’s future
- Create safe places for children—enrich the youth and honor the seniors.
- Emphasize ownership—a stake in the community and its future!
- Take back our community-one day at a time: Regular meetings and community gatherings, night watches and clean up events. Everybody getting together in fellowship.

# TOP PRIORITIES TO IMPROVE THE NEIGHBORHOOD IN THE NEXT DECADE

- Improving public safety, more police patrols & get rid of drug dealers
- Increase sense of neighborliness
- Improve infrastructure, drainage
- Grow number of homeowners
- Improve housing stock that reflects character of area; provide renovation loans and grants to restore older homes
- Expand affordable housing and more affordable, new apartments.
- Fix drainage, especially at the South End
- Create more recreation, even a golf course; improve parks & recreation—more green places!
- More activities for children; develop youth training programs
- Maintain vacant lots and develop more infill housing
- Demolish condemned houses
- Clean up the streets
- No cars parked in yards
- Make use, access for outdoors in Fourche Creek
- Provide sidewalks, street lighting, walking trails
- Develop good grocery store
- Expand local shopping choices
- Consider appropriate historical designation to save vintage structures
- Create nearby charter school
- Make it like McArthur Park, Governors Mansion district
- Community “hall” or center for families
- More support for working families and homeowners who are not “low-income”
- Attract developers
- Host regular sunset barbeque for the community
- Help the homeless better themselves
- Get rid of liquor stores and convenience stores

## MAIN BARRIERS TO A BETTER FUTURE

- No place for community pool or Boys-Girls club
- Children are being forgotten
- Not enough day care nearby
- No resolve to clean out drug houses and enforce safety; too much crime
- Not enough new homes and quality affordable houses
- Uncertainty about Fairgrounds, property
- Small lot sizes inhibit building better houses
- Fair creates traffic, mess
- Too many cars in yards
- Continually boarded-up houses
- Delayed response from City; City officials lack of concern
- Overgrown lots, eyesores-vacant houses
- Loud music, drugs, gangs
- People don't want to change; lack of interest. Not enough helping each other.
- Taxpayers too silent
- Lack of businesses
- No home improvement funds
- Negative labeling by the media
- Money, better incomes for people from good employment
- Lack of neighborhood jobs for youth

*If you have other ideas and recommendations, please contact any member of the Sunset Community Planning Team at the numbers listed on the front page--we'll be happy to include your thoughts and consider them as we continue developing the future plan for the area. Don't forget to provide your name and address so we can alert you to the next meetings in the Fall.*



# SUNSET COMMUNITY PLAN: 2030

## A VISION FOR A HISTORIC SOUTH END NEIGHBORHOOD

The Little Rock Housing Authority (LRHA) Board made a commitment earlier this year to engage the Sunset community in a new process to determine the future of the area and design the neighborhood for the next century. A unique combination of opportunities and challenges could affect the area: the State Fair is actively evaluating the options for relocating or redeveloping, and the age, style, and condition of LRHA's Sunset Terrace housing units makes this property a top priority for renewal. LRHA is committed to assisting neighborhoods in Little Rock to develop their own community plans and to create good places to live.

LRHA contracted with a *local team* of community historians, planners, and architects to facilitate a planning process. This group is interviewing neighborhood and Sunset Terrace residents, elders, businesses, City and State Fair leaders, various agencies, nearby colleges-universities, and numerous neighborhood association and faith leaders. The team has collected surveys, interviewed people, and hosted two listening and visioning sessions in the Sunset community. The ideas will eventually be pulled into a "master community plan." The plan will integrate community, housing, economic, environmental, and cultural development strategies for an area between Martin Luther King and the railroad tracks adjoining the Fairgrounds and between South End Park and the Fourche Creek wetlands on the south and Barton Park --23rd St. on the north. ***This report summarizes the first ideas and recommendations from the community.***



THIS WAS ONE OF THE VISION DRAWINGS FROM THE COMMUNITY MEETING HELD IN JUNE AT THE STATE FAIR