

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT & NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AND NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION ELEMENT

10.0 GOALS

1. Encourage new development, infill, and redevelopment of downtown property according to Downtown Development and Main Street goals and objectives.
2. Promote the protection, preservation and rehabilitation of historic and cultural landmarks and resources.
3. Encourage community initiatives that would help stabilize neighborhoods within the downtown.
4. Promote the reuse, rehabilitation or redevelopment of vacant or obsolete downtown buildings.

10.1 PURPOSE

The purpose of the Downtown Development and Neighborhood Preservation Element is to describe the existing conditions and obstacles facing the City, as well as providing goals and objectives that will help draw businesses, residents and tourists to the historic downtown core area and to the City as a whole.

10.2 EXISTING CHARACTER

Historically, Eloy prospered as a center of cotton production. Its agricultural roots supported a vibrant downtown that drew customers from a wide local area. Historic photos show a bustling downtown full of citizens coming to town for goods, supplies and entertainment. As agriculture began to decline and neighboring towns diversified, Eloy's business district began to decline. Today, few businesses remain and many of the storefronts are filled with services and government agencies.

Downtown Eloy exhibits the signs of aged buildings; many in varying conditions of dilapidation and disrepair. Buildings are boarded up, or bear the signs of collapse or severe structural damage. Some properties contain only a few walls with the remaining property overgrown with brush and weeds. In contrast, there are also some buildings, which display upkeep and maintenance where weeds have been removed, buildings have been repaired and windows in good condition.

Main Street does still exhibit life and has many assets including:

1. Pioneer Park
2. Historic Buildings (Theatre, Churches)

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10.1 PURPOSE

10.2 EXISTING CHARACTER



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3. Parades, celebrations, fiestas
4. Government Facilities
5. Proximity to Schools
6. Vacant, or nearly vacant land
7. Reasonable stock of available buildings
8. Human (pedestrian) Scale
9. Anza Trail
10. Width of Main Street
11. EDGE (Economic Development Group of Eloy)

Downtown Eloy is comprised of the areas illustrated on the following map:



For additional information regarding recommendations for revitalizing the Downtown, City Hall has copies of two documents which discuss the Downtown in length. The first document is *Put Feet on the Street: Recommendations of the Downtown Revitalization Resource Team* which was presented at a public meeting November 15, 2007. The second document is the *Community Core Overlay Districts* document drafted by Community Sciences Corporation in August 2008.

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10.3 DISCUSSION

Obstacles

The older, central neighborhoods of the City of Eloy can be preserved and revitalized. There are, however, several situations which discourage redevelopment or revitalization of property. These situations include:

1. Antiquated platting of properties has created nonconforming lots that are either too small or oddly shaped. Substandard lots are intimidating to developers due to the potential cost of obtaining enough parcels that can then be used for a development which can actually satisfy zoning requirements.
2. High maintenance, repair, or upkeep costs are also prohibitive to new and revitalized development.
3. Decline in land value also creates hardships and proves to be an obstacle to downtown revitalization. This is due to property owners who may not be able to obtain what they paid for the property. They will, therefore, hold onto it instead of selling or will attempt to sell above market value to recoup costs.
4. New Tools (Modified Zoning Ordinance, Overlay preservation zone, Incentives, etc.) are needed to accommodate any revitalization effort that meets the desires of the community with respect to their downtown.

Opportunities

The community has many assets as mentioned above which can be turned into great opportunities to draw developers into the community. Following is a list of specific opportunities that are currently present and could help to jumpstart the communities dreams and goals of revitalization:

1. Vacant land - Adopting "incentive" policies to help developers assemble land for development should be explored.
2. Historic Buildings - Preserving these structures gives the City a starting point for creating design guidelines and standards for new downtown development to mimic or copy. These buildings also give businesses a place to locate. Zoning standards may need to be altered or customized to make these buildings viable again since many have been vacant for long periods of time and any grandfathered non-conforming status will have been lost.

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1. An Economic Development Group - Many communities do not have an economic development department (many do as well) let alone a group dedicated to this purpose within the community. Use of the Economic Development Group of Eloy (EDGE) and the Downtown Development Office may help to draw businesses to the community and will be of great benefit to any revitalization and preservation initiative the City undertakes.
2. Downturn in the economy and a slowdown of development - Some property may be able to be purchased at the fraction of what it would have sold for even one or two years ago due to the loss in property value. Further property incentives may be able to entice developers to do business in the community.
3. Proximity to I-10 - Showcasing the community from I-10 will be important to draw visitors and businesses alike into the community. There may be some grant opportunities that would allow the City to invest in landscaping trees or other types of visual improvements to the properties adjacent to I-10.
4. A City budget operating in the Black - Financial incentives may be implemented to help developers or new business owners make the financial leap in the current economy to invest in the Community.

10.4 OBJECTIVES

1. Enforce and expand on the adopted Downtown Overlay Zone, which currently includes variable setbacks, parking standards, landscaping requirements, mixed use and design standards to be used only in the downtown area.
2. Create a community identity which visitors and businesses will identify with the City. For example:
 - a. Chandler, AZ is known for its regional shopping and high end residential developments.
 - b. Glendale, AZ is known for the sports arenas (i.e. Westgate) and antique shops.
 - c. Prescott, AZ is known as the territorial capital and its history, and its large array of Victorian Architecture.
3. Adopt an incentive program that would include financial options (either through fee waivers or bonuses) to property owners to help in land assembly, maintenance, and rehabilitation.

10.4 OBJECTIVES

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4. Adopt design review criteria, guidelines and standards to be used in review of new construction, and for the maintenance, upkeep, repair and preservation of existing (historic and otherwise) buildings.
5. Research viable options for the City to purchase land, develop, update, rehabilitate the property then lease to private businesses.
6. Use financial options such as Large-scale Capital Improvements, or grants for improvements to infrastructure and / or as an incubator for new or expanding businesses and business incentives.
7. Create standards for density transfer, incentives or live-work opportunities to increase allowable densities.