

3.9 Downtown Development and Neighborhood Preservation Element

3.9.1 GOALS

1. Encourage new development, infill, revitalization, and redevelopment to enhance Downtown vitality.
2. Promote the protection, preservation, rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of historic and cultural landmarks and resources.
3. Protect, stabilize and reinvest in downtown neighborhoods.
4. Continue to make significant public investments in buildings and infrastructure to foster private capital investment and job growth.

3.9.2 PURPOSE

The purpose of the Downtown Development and Neighborhood Preservation Element is to provide an overarching blueprint to reinvigorate Downtown Eloy as a major economic engine and livable community that is a magnet for residents, businesses, retail and tourism.

3.9.3 EXISTING CHARACTER

Historically, Eloy prospered as a center of cotton production. Its agricultural roots supported a vibrant downtown that drew customers from the surrounding area as shown on Map DD-1, Downtown Eloy map. Historic photos show a bustling downtown full of citizens purchasing goods, supplies and entertainment. As agriculture began to decline and neighboring towns diversified, Eloy's business district began to falter. Today, few businesses remain and many of the storefronts are vacant or contain a variety of services and government agencies.

While downtown Eloy exhibits the signs of an underutilized heart of the community, many of the existing buildings exhibit good “bones” but have exhibited various signs of deferred maintenance. The City, Chamber of Commerce and Downtown Advisory Committee have been working diligently to clean up the area, foster pride in building and vacant lot ownership and aggressively seek new tenants to absorb the existing building inventory.

The frontage of Main Street has been recently resurfaced and is still the City's front door. It exhibits many assets that can lead to its successful revitalization, including:

1. Main Street Park
2. Historic Buildings (Theatre, Churches)
3. The site of all of the City's key events (i.e. Fiestas Patrias, Holiday Parade, Memorial Day Parade, Veterans Day Parade, Martin Luther King Day Parade)

4. Government Facilities (i.e. City Hall, City Police Department, City Parks and Recreation Department, City Municipal Court, Pinal County Court, Pinal Hispanic Council, US Post Office)
5. Santa Cruz Valley High School/Public Library
6. Vacant land zoned for retail or office uses
7. 7. Available buildings in a range of sizes
8. Inhabited neighborhoods that create a proximate resident base for goods and services sold on Main Street.
9. Eloy Veteran's Center and Park

Downtown Eloy is generally bounded on the north by Battaglia Road, on the south by Hinton Street, on the east by Tryon Avenue, and on the west by Eleven Mile Corner Road/ These boundaries create a total area of approximately 865 acres.

3.9.4 DISCUSSION

Obstacles

The older, central neighborhoods of the Downtown Core can be preserved and revitalized due to the fact that the majority of existing housing can be renovated. There are, however, several situations which discourage renovation of residential properties. These situations include:

1. Antiquated platting of parcels has created lots that are either too small or oddly shaped. Substandard lots are intimidating to developers due to the potential cost of assembling enough parcels that can then be used for a development which can conform to zoning district setback requirements, while providing enough buildable area to satisfy market demand.
2. Extensive maintenance, repair, or upkeep generates costs that are prohibitive to foster new and revitalized development.
3. Lack of comps in land value also creates hardships relative to land appraisals that can fairly value land and buildings, creating another obstacle to downtown revitalization.
4. Absentee Ownership-There are a significant amount of property owned by interests outside the City and State.
5. Dilapidated Existing Buildings-The inventory of existing buildings contains many that have been vacant and under maintained for many years. The presence of deferred maintenance increases the cost associated with bringing the buildings in compliance with the City's adopted building codes.

Opportunities

The Downtown also has many assets which can be turned into great opportunities to enhance the Downtown Core. Following is a list of specific opportunities that are currently present and could help to jumpstart the City's intention for a viable and vibrant heart:

1. Vacant land – Transitioning public lands into private ownership and adopting "incentive" policies to foster the revitalization and development of buildings that serve the market demand of the surrounding area.

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.

1. A Defined Economic Development Presence – The City has an Economic Development Specialist of which the Downtown Core is one of his focus areas within the community. Use of this Specialist and the Eloy Chamber of Commerce will assist in attracting businesses to the community and will provide an immediate catalyst to any revitalization and preservation initiative the City undertakes.

2. Existing Market Conditions - Many properties may be able to be purchased at appealing values, relative to the prices in more urbanized areas. The adoption of property incentives by the City Council may entice developers to stand up a business or provide residential properties in the Downtown Core.

3. Proximity and gateway 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 dedicated fund to assist with implementation – The City has adopted a 2% food tax which is dedicated for community and economic development improvements.

3.9.5 OBJECTIVES

1. Continue to utilize the Downtown Core Overlay, to exert appropriate flexibility relative to setbacks, parking standards, landscaping requirements, mixed use and design standards.

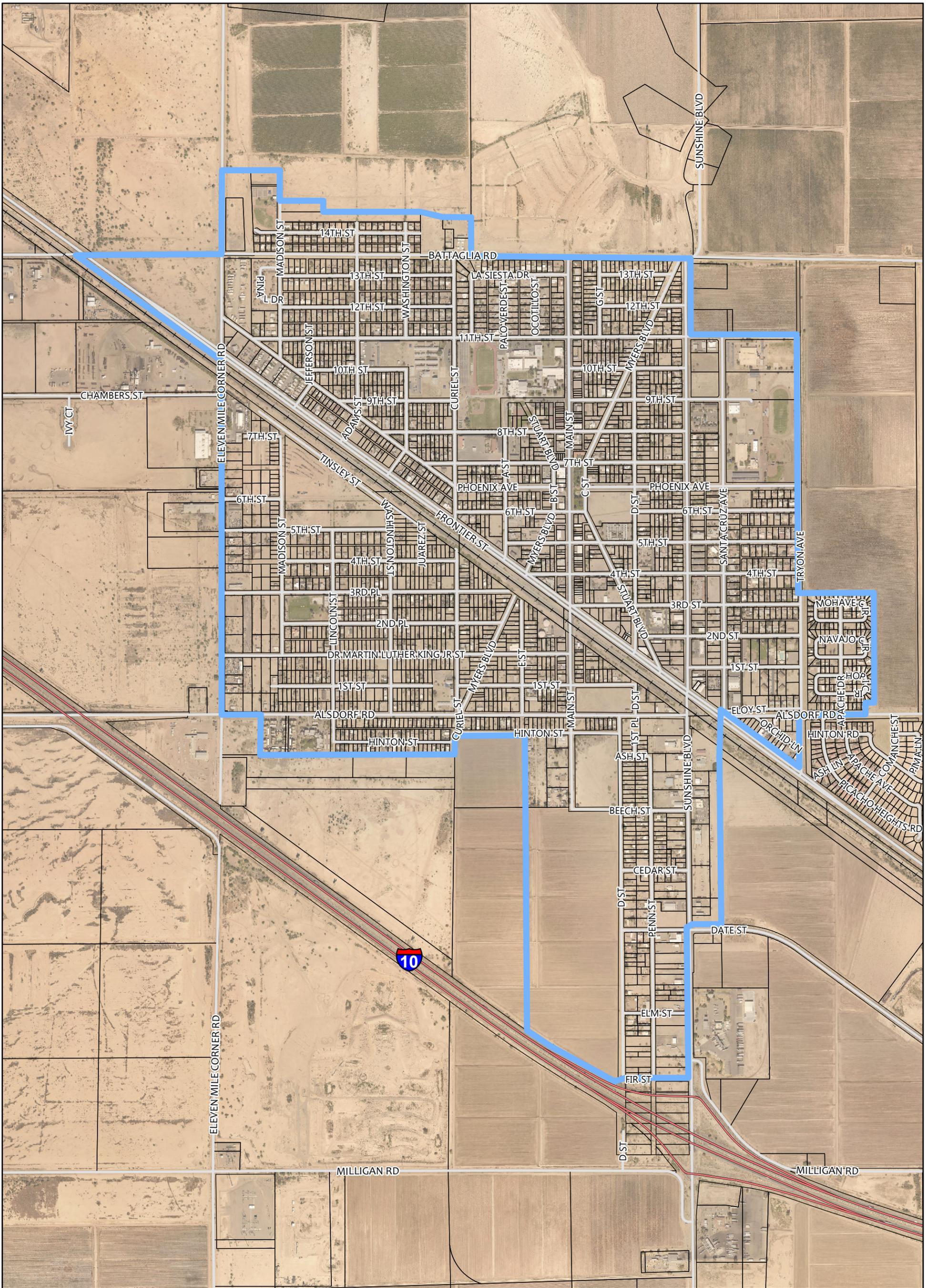
2. Create a brand and unique identity which residents, visitors and businesses will identify with the City.

3. Adopt a comprehensive infill incentive program that would include a host of financial, development, policy options to property owners to help in land assembly, revitalization and new development in the Downtown Core.

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/sell to private owners who are committed to constructing buildings and having viable uses.

6. Continue to focus roadway, sewer and water and fire protection upgrade projects in the Downtown through the City's adopted Capital Improvements Program. 7. Consider an existing City building as a satellite for a post-secondary educational, workforce training and/ or maker/incubator space.



-  Parcel
-  Downtown Core Overlay

Downtown Eloy Map

Eloy General Plan

