II. APPEARANCE

Angel Fire Gateway - Highway 64 and Mountain View

A town center needs to have a level of density, be pedestrian friendly and contain a diverse mix of attractive buildings and developments that fulfill a variety of uses. Public buildings should be part of the town center. Design and right-of-way amenities for this area funded by the Community, along with zoning overlays, can act as a catalyst for private investment in desired design. A town center can give character to the entire community.

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

2.1 GOAL: Angel Fire should begin to develop a cohesive look and character, including a central district with a degree of density and mixed use facilities that can serve as an attractive town center.

2.1.1 Strategy: Update and strengthen Angel Fire's Land Use Plan.

Actions:

2.1.1.1 The Community of Angel Fire should analyze property ownership and create or upgrade a land use plan with designated districts where specific types of development can be mandated or encouraged.

2.1.2 Strategy: Establish a design committee to enhance zoning requirements and guidelines.

Actions:

2.1.2.1. A design committee should be established by the Community to help adopt overlay zoning precepts and guidelines. Committee members should be familiar with New Urban principles, and the committee should include design professionals.

2.1.2.2 The Village should establish strict guidelines for attractive off-premise "clustered" signage by the road for businesses that are located in strip malls with deep set-backs.

2.1.3 Strategy: Determine a district appropriate for central downtown development.

Actions:

2.1.3.1 The Community should determine a central district or town center to help give Angel Fire a sense of place.

- This center seems to be forming at the Mountain View-North Angel Fire Road Intersection, which is central to commercial nodes forming around Angel Fire.

- A town center needs to have a level of density, be pedestrian-friendly and contain a diverse mix of attractive buildings and developments that fulfill a variety of uses. Public buildings should be part of the town center. Public buildings are planned for Plaza del Sol, close to the Mountain View-North Angel Fire Road intersection. Even though this intersection would appear to be the natural downtown for Angel Fire, actual development of a downtown district will hinge to a degree on land ownership patterns in the area and the cooperation of landowners.
- Suggested name for the new downtown area is the Mountain View District.

2.1.4 Strategy: Work closely with developers, property owners and the State on a shared vision and investment plans.

Actions:

2.1.4.1 Secure State capital outlay funding for strategic infrastructure development.

- Downtown development is a long-range strategy. Before amenities such as sidewalks can be put in place, the Community will need to construct storm drains and fill in land adjacent to the main roads. The Community must also secure ownership of the roads from the State Department of Transportation.

2.1.4.2 Involve property owners and investors in Community plans.

- An important incentive for appropriate development will revolve around the creation of attractive plans and the development of design amenities funded by the Community. Property owners should be included in these plans as they are developed. The plans for design amenities and the establishment of a downtown district will increase property values. If landowners are involved conditionally upfront and told that these plans will only proceed with their cooperation to either invest in appropriate development or sell to people who will, it may be possible to obtain private commitments before Community funded development proceeds. The Community should identify one or two strong developers who will work in harmony with Community plans. The incentive is increasing property values that will result from Community planning. A strong developer will be in a position to purchase strategic properties.

2.1.4.3 Establish incentives for renovation.

- If landowners within a designated improvement district agree to renovate their property according to Community design guidelines, then they may be eligible to receive a combination of low interest financing and/or an amount of matching funds. If the Community obtains Tax Incremental District Financing for downtown development, for example, a relatively small portion of those funds can be designated for loan guarantees for district property improvements. The funds can be used to guarantee a low-interest bank loan to property renovations that meet Community criteria. The bank will qualify the borrower and administer the loan. The guarantee will allow the bank to extend favorable terms. The bank may also be able to justify favorable terms as part of their Community Reinvestment Act requirements.

- The community may also be able to set up a matching fund with both community monies and contributions from major developers who will benefit from Community design infrastructure improvements. The fund could be used by itself for small projects or in conjunction with the low-interest loans, and could be used to match property owner direct investments.

2.1.4.4 Establish penalties for non-compliance.

- Penalties for non-compliance will take the form of the Community not approving new plans. The Community Code already includes penalties as provided for in state statutes that can be used in extreme cases.

2.1.5 Strategy: Create incentives for targeted district renovation and develop a financing strategy for implementation of streetscape design and right-of-way amenities within designated districts.

Actions:

2.1.5.1. The Community should implement design and right of way amenities for the downtown area consisting of sidewalks, attractive lighting, brick crosswalks built into the street, trees and planters, areas of parallel parking and site furniture such as benches, drinking fountains and bicycle racks.

- The Mountain View-North Angel Fire intersection can be enhanced and defined through the construction of a roundabout. Roundabouts have many advantages, and will fit well in the environment being suggested for the central Angel Fire intersection. A roundabout can act as a gateway and definition of the town center. Studies by the New York Department of Transportation and the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (published in the New York Department of Transportation Modern Roundabouts Brochure) indicate that roundabouts improve safety and reduce delays at intersections. Roundabouts can be designed with an apron to accommodate large vehicles (such as RVs and 18-wheelers). They will slow down traffic to accommodate pedestrians and an eventual shopping area, and they will serve a traffic function in lieu of signal intersections as traffic increases. Roundabouts are less expensive to install and maintain than signal lights. A roundabout, along with areas of parallel parking, can augment the design amenity plan funded through a TIF.
- Current right-of-way at the Mountain View–North Angel Fire Road intersection is owned and maintained by the State. Angel Fire can work through North Central Economic Development District and NMDOT to apply for State funding for a roundabout. A study was done for a traffic light at the same intersection. The study was flawed because it was done in the low season (April). A new study will likely justify a traffic control device. NMDOT has been advocating roundabouts. As mentioned above, they are less expensive than traffic lights.

Visualization of Angel Fire "downtown" - Mountain View District

2.1.5.2 It will be important for the Community to create a comprehensive zoning overlay district for this area that mandates an architectural style, signage ordinances and other design elements.

- The preferred architectural style in Angel Fire would seem to be a "mountain style" that utilizes gabled roofs and natural materials such as wood, stone and glass. An example of this style is shown in the rendering of a commercial area attached to this plan.

2.1.5.3 The Community should employ Tax Increment Finance Districts for design and right of way enhancements.

- An effective way to fund right-of-way and streetscape projects in Angel Fire in addition to the funds mentioned above is through the use of Tax Increment Financing Districts (TIF). TIF has become an often-used financing mechanism for municipalities. TIF uses future gains in taxes to finance the current improvements that will create those gains. When a public project such as a road, school, or public design enhancement project is carried out, there is an increase in the value of surrounding real estate, and often new investment. This increased site value and investment creates more taxable property, which increases tax revenues. The increased tax revenues are the "tax increment." Tax Increment Financing dedicates that increased revenue stream to finance debt issued to pay for the project. TIF is designed to channel funding toward improvements in areas and to provide incentives to development where it would not otherwise occur. TIF creates funding for public projects that may otherwise be unaffordable to localities. Both projected increases in property tax and gross receipts tax streams as a result of new development may be used in this process. The projected tax increases can then be earmarked for collateral and debt service for a municipal bond. The New Mexico Finance Authority can set this up and extend this type of financing to municipalities.

2.1.6 Strategy: Develop a gateway entrance for Angel Fire.

Debe Holland, Santa Fe landscape architect, in her 2004 newsletter captures the essence of a gate:

> *There's something special about gates. They separate us as well as join us. They create a boundary, but at the same time will open to join person and place together again. They promise an experience; a transition from one place to another; a shift from then to now, leaving behind what was and stepping into what is and will be. There is a tiny marvelous magic in that transition and in every gateway you can experience it. There's something friendly about a gate that earns the appreciation of seeing and passing through...again and again.*

Actions:

2.1.6.1 The Community should work with the State to obtain easement to a small piece of land at the junction of Mountain View Boulevard and Highway 64, to develop an attractive entrance or gateway to Angel Fire.

- A gateway will help create the impression that Angel Fire is a special place and help induce travelers who are not making Angel Fire a destination to stop and explore.
- An attractive gateway should have a broad appeal to residents and create a sense of community pride.
- The Community should involve the community in a design selection process.
- The State Department of Transportation has plans to realign the entrance to Angel Fire in 2009. Angel Fire should work with NMDOT and the Northern Central Economic Development District to apply for auxiliary highway funds for the gateway, and construct the gateway during highway development.
- A gateway can be funded through private donations from local businesses and developers. Contributors can receive recognition through a plaque at the gateway, and at a social event sponsored by the Community designed to raise additional funds.
- It may be possible to augment private and state funding through a Scenic By-ways grant.
- A potential gateway rendering is provided as part of this study.
- Ensure signage and way-finding are attractive, consistent and easily understandable. Visitors cite ease of finding information and directions around the area as being particularly important.
- The Community should create some sort of permanent "signage" near or as part of the entrance monument that would be used to promote local events and activities. This would ensure consistency of appearance and avoid a potentially messy hodge-podge of individual signs.
- Ensure signage and way-finding throughput the community are attractive, consistent and easily understandable. Visitors cite ease of finding information as directions around the area as being particularly important.

Visualization of renovation project